

great many others can not. Sooner or later the household budget becomes waterlogged, and somebody sits down with a pencil to figure a few banding costs. Then pliers and bands are slipped into a closet and the door is closed. The 1957 turnover in EBBA membership tells this story better than words. While our membership stands at an all time high, there are less sustaining memberships, and more banders are giving up banding than ever before. Most of these folks will tell you quite frankly, at today's prices they simply can't afford it.

Is there a solution? Is there a way to cut banding costs? This bander thinks there is.

The way to cut banding costs is to plan ahead. At least one banding station -- the Washington Crossing Park Station -- has its own bank account. Set aside what you think you can afford to spend on banding, and spend no more. Keep accurate records of banding expenses, travel mileage, and other costs. Use natural food plantings to help with winter feeding costs, and buy your feed in 100 pound lots. Avoid over-feeding. Live-trap your squirrels and dead-trap your mice and rats during the summer. And don't fall into the pitfall of being oversold on mist netting. One welded wire trap will last for ten or fifteen years. A mist net though less costly is an ephemeral thing that a buck deer, or a dog, or a falling limb can destroy in a second. Limit yourself to whatever number of mist nets your banding budget can afford annually.

While a bander works for free there's a cost tag on every bird in his hand. It's up to you to decide how many birds you can afford this year. Many of the best things in life are free no longer. And banding is one of them.

BANK SWALLOW BANDING In a period from June 14th through July 8th I,
By Harmon Nodecker with the very able assistance of my wife, banded
a total of 450 Bank Swallows plus 12 Rough-Wings.
That in spite of the fact that during that time I held down two jobs
totalling 65 hours per week.

We used two mist nets and would set them up about four feet in front of, and slightly below the nest openings. We learned that the old birds would freely enter the nests with food for the young, and in departing would drop just enough to become caught. At no time did we net long enough or late enough to cause undue hardship to the young birds.

I've been banding for 23 months, and my total is now a flat 1600 birds of 69 species. I've been using mist nets since May 8th and my total on that date was 940 birds, so I've added 660 in a bit over two months. Actually 51 birds by traps, etc., and 609 by mist nets.
