

SOME TIPS ABOUT BANDS FOR THE NEW BANDER

By Mrs. Frank L. Townsend

When the bands first arrive, acquaint yourself as thoroughly as possible with the sizes and numbers. This will make things much easier for you when you actually start banding. Note, for instance, that bands 1B are smaller than 1A -- it took me at least a couple of days to notice this!

In the beginning you will find it necessary to check your list of band sizes with each new species trapped. You may find it easier to work with an alphabetical list, rather than the A.O.U. list provided by the Banding Office. Such a list is easily compiled with the help of an index in a good bird guide, limiting your list to the birds found in your area. Be sure to make several copies -- one to keep with your bands, another with your records, and so on.

Most of the time you will want to follow the band sizes suggested by the Banding Office. Occasionally, however, you will find that the suggested size is too loose or too tight, as birds' legs vary so, especially in some species. Juncos, for instance, frequently need a larger band than the recommended 0, and a 1 must be used. Female Redwings are often better fitted with a 1A band than the 2 band recommended. You will find it easier to judge as you go along, but a leg gauge will prove helpful. (One can be purchased from the Massachusetts Audubon Society at a nominal cost.)

A band is too tight when it can't be turned or moved up and down freely. This is important as a too tight band interferes with circulation and may result in the withering and loss of the leg, or even death from gangrene. A too loose band is nowhere near as likely to be dangerous, though it may interfere with the foot or possibly catch on small twigs or the like.

Equally important is that the band be properly closed. By that is meant that it is tightly closed, the ends in alignment and no overlap. Birds with powerful bills, such as Cardinals, have been known to crush an ill-fitting band until it is imbedded in the leg in an effort to remove it.



DO YOU NEED MIST NETS?

You will find full instructions on how to get them on page 51.