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EBBA'S PRESIDENT SAYS From all indications 1957 was a record year for banding. If we use the 700,000 birds banded in 1956 as a measuring stick, 1957 totals should top that figure by considerable, provided of course game bird banding has been carried on at the same rate as in 1956.

A glance at some still untabulated banding statistics for 1957 will confirm this prediction. Bennett Matlack of Bridgeton, New Jersey topped the 10,000 mark on November 26th. The Reverend Garrett Detwiler had passed the 6,000 mark when this bander last saw him. Don Bleitz of California was close to the 5,000 mark with more than 200 species for the year. In addition quite a few other banders have told this bander that they expect to make or come close to the 5,000 bird mark this year. Operation Recovery's 10,000 birds and the accelerated Mourning Dove program will help to swell the total.

Why is banding booming at this unprecedented rate? There seems to be a number of reasons. First, banding is experiencing a boost from the tremendous present-day interest in all outdoor activities. In 1957 more than 60 million people visited the National Parks. According to Roger Barton there are more than ten million bird fans in the country. And the Audubon screen tours were seen by a combined audience of more than three-quarters of a million people last year. No wonder EBBA's membership has gone well over the 300 mark, and that Mrs. Dickerson, EBBA's Treasurer writes that 11 new members have joined up since November.

Perhaps the most important reason for this big buildup of banding totals is the change-over from easy-going garden-banding methods to modern mass-production banding methods. Whether this speedup is good for banders, or for birds, this bander respectfully declines to comment on. But mass-production banding methods are paying off numerically! Many banders who formerly operated a few one cell and Brinkle traps now have their yards filled with large all-purpose traps, and possibly even an Australian Crow Trap, capable of taking as many as 50 to 100 starlings, grackles, and cowbirds in a single catch. Mist-netting has added whole families of birds to a bander's list, and today any bander with a netting permit,

and time, energy, and enough of that important "where-with-all" to pay expenses, can band as many different Passerines as he wants to write schedules for.

Noteworthy too is the development of an entirely new banding technique which someone has already christened "Gypsy-bird-banding". Without missing a minute's sleep, a meal, or a shave, a bander from Boston, New York, or Philadelphia can set up substations in southern New Jersey one day, and in Virginia the next. Like as not he will spend the weekend in Florida banding Burrowing Owls. Some banders have actually traveled farther and faster than the migrants they are banding, and at least one bander is planning to follow a favorite species over its whole migration route.

What about the future of Bird Banding? Will spiralling totals finally be too much for the Patuxent filing cabinets? Will enthusiastic and energetic banders voluntarily specialize to ease the chore of schedule-writing? Or will some nuclear physicist throw a monkey-wrench into banding by developing specific radio-active tracer substances that will supplement bands or replace them altogether. May the day never dawn when Geiger Counters will replace banding pliers.

USING THE BINOCULAR AS A MAGNIFIER By The Reicherts

All of you, when you work at your banding traps, undoubtedly keep your binoculars handy. And perhaps you sometimes wish you could convert the glasses into a magnifier for close examination of a bird band. You can easily do this by looking through one side of the binocular the reverse way, with the bird band about 1 - 1½ inches from the eye lens of the binocular. But -- to an amazing extent -- the magnification you obtain depends primarily ON YOUR EYES! Whether a 6x or an 8x makes little difference; what matters is your ability to focus on close objects ... in short, on your "reading distance". The following figures (based on a 6x) are indeed astonishing:

If your reading distance is 10 inches, you see the band magnified 6 times. But if you hold print 20 inches away to see it clearly, the magnification is 3; if 30 inches, the magnification is only 2! However, if your reading distance is much over 10 inches, you doubtless use reading glasses, or wear bi-focals. If so, when you use your binocular as a magnifier, look through your reading glasses or the lower (reading) part of your bi-focals. You will obtain higher magnification -- probably the full 6 power.

Also, the further out you screw the bridge of the binocular, the greater the magnification. Few glasses can be screwed out as far as is