

At night we set out incars to examine sand banks and culverts for anything that could be banded. In one bank were caught a number of White-fronted Bee-eaters, 3 Brown-hooded Kingfishers and 1 Sand Martin. Last year they caught Black-collared Barbets also. The 3 kingfishers and the Sand Martin were all recoveries from last year. Under the culverts along the highway they hand-caught 3 species of swallows and 2 of swifts. The rest of the trip was devoted to bird-watching rather than banding.

Throughout these operations the leader of the Club lolled comfortably while everyone else worked. However he kept all the records and made certain that each of his assistants was doing the job properly. It was an example of meticulous efficiency and organization. And the assistants were having the time of their lives.

This makes me wonder how much help we may be wasting at our EBBA stations and excursions. I understand that in "Operation Recovery" we use some unlicensed help, and certainly this has been done at times with large Chimney Swift projects. We are, of course, bound by legal obligations and restrictions that do not apply in South Africa. But nevertheless the example I have just witnessed makes me think that there might be situations in which the enlistment of volunteer groups such as Boy Scouts might add significantly to the value of our work. In a reverse sense it would help recruit serious bird students from a promising youthful group of this sort, for instead of earning a routine merit badge for birdstudy by compiling a list of common bird identifications, there would be the stimulation of aiding in useful and active bird enterprises.

I have always been a solitary bander, whether at home or among tern colonies at the shore. Somehow I prefer it this way, and when I see some one a half a mile away I begin to become uneasy. This would not be the case if the public at large were more bird conscious, and especially bird-banding conscious. The bird atmosphere in South Africa seems to be shared by almost everyone -- at least they all know what is going on, whether they are active in it or not. How can we accomplish the same effect but by allowing more people to share our ventures with us?

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BARRELS FOR GULLS  
By Geoffrey Gill

An open barrel, standing on end, with a 3 or 4 inch board across the top baited with an old fish, will trap adult gulls at a dump. Attach a cord to the board on which the piece of fish has been placed and carry this string to a spot at some distance. When the gull alights on the board, quickly pull the string so that the gull falls into the barrel. The bird's wing-spread will prevent it from flying out of the barrel. A battery of several barrels placed on a dump where gulls flock in winter or early spring will enable an operator to catch a goodly number in a short time. \*\*\*