

## LEG BANDS IN COLD CLIMATES

By Mrs. Ilse K. Dunbar

We got brave at 7:00 A.M., threw back the covers and shivered into our clothes, scooted down into the kitchen and hung over the blessed coal stove whose banked fires had just burned through to a warm, rosy glow over which to stretch our chilly hands.

It was February; the thermometer at the window read -17 F. and already in the early morning sun the chickadees were at the window feeder, chiselling away at the hard suet. We threw out some new sunflower seeds and watched the resulting rush and flurry. The birds were cold too. Their feathers puffed out like dandelion seeds, they sat on their legs and we noticed that often they stood on one leg, and it was always the banded leg that was drawn up. Moreover, when there was wet snow, as during and right after a storm, a gob of ice formed on the band and clung there.

Well, if you had a piece of metal around your bare leg in weather like that, - it would be cold.

I have long worried about this and have not been able to think up a solution for it. It would involve the use of a non-conducting material for bands, which has apparently not been obtainable in any form which would meet the other requirements for leg bands, such as thinness, or durability, etc.

But now we read about so many forms of plastic and other synthetic materials, - some of them hard and strong enough to be used for shell casings. Maybe it would have to be put on like a chicken's leg ring, which is a spiral, or some other change in practice might be necessitated, but surely, in cold climates, some measure should be taken to correct the discomfort which the heat conducting metal rings engender upon those poor little critters.

This is a job for scientists, and we hope there are such in the Fish and Wildlife Service, who have the means of investigating and testing such new materials for this purpose. I have great confidence that they will find the solution for our problem.

Kingston, N.Y.

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