

COOPERATIVE REDWINGED BLACKBIRD NESTLING BANDING PROGRAM

By Brooke Meanley

The Cooperative Redwinged Blackbird Nestling Banding Program of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center had a very auspicious beginning in its first year of operation (1959). Approximately 1100 nestling Redwings were banded by some 60 cooperating banders in 15 of the Eastern Seaboard states. This represents a great deal of hard work on the part of cooperators, for which we are deeply grateful. By comparison, in 1957 only 18 nestling Redwings were banded in this area. Because of the successful first year's effort the project is to be continued in 1960. We are hopeful that banders in the eastern United States and eastern Canada will band a larger number during the coming nesting season. In the early spring banders in this area will receive a letter containing a more detailed breakdown of the 1959 banding operation and a postpaid postal card for listing their 1960 nestling bandings.

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THE DATER METHOD OF REMOVING BIRDS FROM MIST NETS

By Eleanor E. Dater

All directions for removing birds from nets that I have seen advise starting with the feet. Usually about 50% of removal time is consumed in releasing the feet. The method I use eliminates this time. I have never had a broken wing or leg in the several years I have been using this system.

First ascertain from which side the bird entered the net. Working from that side, place your thumb, either right or left, on the bird's back, at the same time slipping your two middle fingers under the breast with the tail pointed toward your wrist; your little and first fingers will automatically slide under the bird's wings. You are now ready to remove the meshes from the bird.

With the other hand work the mesh off the bend of one wing. The wings are the most flexible part of the bird's body with which to work. You will be surprised how easily the net can be removed. The wing may be spread out or folded tight against the body for this operation. Don't be afraid to use a little pressure on the joint at this stage. Then ease the meshes from the second wing and lastly from the head.

The head is usually left until last but may be first or after the first wing, depending upon the extent of the entanglement. By the time the wings are released the bird feels free to fly and usually automatically releases his own feet. If not, it is a simple matter to slip the meshes off the feet, with your fingers or, if needed, the assistance of a manicure orange stick. This stick is handy to use if the tongue has become caught.