

the even lighting you need for good close-ups.

How much does all this cost?

Set of extension tubes, \$7 (see Spiratone ad). Bellows, \$15. Basic strobe unit, \$45. Ring flash, \$35. Mighty-lite or Helland strobes are recommended.

Is it safe to buy those things by mail?

We have seen some attempts at unsatisfactory substitutions by a few of the large stores. If possible, bring a knowledgeable friend to help you do the shopping in person; if not, you have ten to thirty days to try out the equipment and return it without charge if it isn't just what you want.

How can you take a photograph of a wild bird without holding it?

By doing photography in a totally dark room - a trick learned from Dr. Fluck. Set your camera on a tripod and focus it on a twig beforehand. Bring your bird in, turn out all lights, and set the bird on the twig. Generally it will sit perfectly still and you can get three or four shots in a row. It is advisable to take at least two, since the bird looks more alert after the first flash.

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#### A CARNIVOROUS SQUIRREL

By G. Hapgood Parks

We have always considered the gray squirrel (Sciurus carolinensis) to be nothing worse than a disconcerting source of annoyance at bird-feeders. This morning, however, we find ourselves obliged to classify him as another menace to the lives of netted birds.

Watching our single net from the kitchen window I saw several birds fly against it. I started at once, stopping only long enough to don my rubbers against the dampness of the morning dew. The net is situated about 75 feet from our back door.

As I approached the net I observed a gray squirrel astride of a motionless Slate-colored Junco in the bottom tier of the net which the animal's weight had forced down against the ground. The squirrel fled and I discovered that the bird's head had been severed and apparently eaten or carried away. Less than two feet away in the same tier a second Junco was found to be dead. Its head was severely crushed. No other part of either body revealed mutilation of any sort.

Four other Juncos were removed from the net unharmed.

P.S. Having just completed the above report I turned from my typewriter to look across the back yard. I was able to discern a single Junco hanging in the net's next-to-the-bottom tier. A gray squirrel was stalking toward the bird's location. Without waiting to observe further I hurried downstairs and out of doors, but I was already too late. The squirrel had reached the bird, had torn it from the net, and was crouching over it when I arrived. Much after the fashion of a cat, the squirrel took the bird in its mouth and ran with it to the base of a large maple tree, then up the tree to an almost horizontal branch about 30 feet above the ground.

With binoculars Mrs. Parks and I watched the squirrel for at least 15 minutes as it held the Junco's body against the branch with its fore paws and tore at the flesh with its teeth much as a hawk would do. We could not be completely sure that it was swallowing the flesh, but it appeared to do so.

At last, leaving the mutilated remains of the Junco draped across the branch, the squirrel stepped over them and proceeded for a foot and a half or so. There we watched it "whet" its snout against the bark as do so many birds to clear the bill after having partaken of a meal. Then the squirrel reversed its position on the branch, once again facing what remained of the bird. There it lay itself down with its tail lying along its own back and apparently went to sleep.

Need I add that the netting and trapping at our station is to be strictly curbed until this carnivorous rodent has been removed from the vicinity?

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#### BANDING WITH A PURPOSE

By LeRoy C. Stegeman

There is still so much we need to know about birds and their ecology! We need a better understanding of their many relations to man's welfare. Through banding, we have learned much about their numbers, their locations, their travels and their ages. We need to know more about what they carry from place to place in the way of foods, parasites and diseases. This information could become very important in working out public health problems. In fact, it is now recognized by the Public Health Department and much work is being done.

If each bander would contribute what he can, in the form of accurate records, external and internal parasites, analysis of stomach contents, weights and measurements and probable cause of death, this information would become increasingly valuable. These things can be accomplished quite readily if the proper equipment is kept on hand. No doubt your nearest wildlife research station would appreciate receiving these speci-