



HOLDING THE BIRD FOR BANDING
By Willetta Lueshen

Whereas most bird banders have already established their preferred methods of handling birds and will not care to change a well formed habit, some may find merit in the method pictured above and be willing to change. Certainly for the benefit of all newcomers in the banding field, or for that matter, anyone having cause to handle live birds, the following instructions should be beneficial.

Place a small bird on his back in the palm of the left hand with the head extending between the forefinger and the middle finger, with the tips of these fingers touching but with the knuckles separated, the neck of the bird resting in this gap between the fingers. The thumb, ring finger and little finger are thus free to aid in placing the band on the leg. The right hand is free to handle the pliers. Small birds placed on their backs in this manner usually make little effort to free themselves. The bird can be held so loosely that feathers are not ruffled and examination of the bird is relatively easy, without danger of loss of the bird.

Birds that normally feed in an upside-down position such as woodpeckers, chickadees and nuthatches are more restless than others when lying on their backs, but the fingers can be closed lightly around the bird to restrain it, without danger of squeezing it too hard nor of losing it. Even birds as large as the Bob-white can be handled in this manner. Eventually one can learn to handle several small birds in his hand at one time, placing the heads of the birds between the fingers of the hands. As many as three or four birds up to the size of those requiring a 1A band can be held in one hand without difficulty. For anyone handling quantities of birds this method is undoubtedly the most satisfactory. It is both time saving and safest for the bird.

Wisner, Nebraska. (Drawing by C. G. Pritchard)

RED-TAILED HAWKS

From Benjamin P. Burt's Letter to the Editors

"...very little to report as yet. Since 1953 I have banded about 215 redtails and have had 14 recoveries. So far, they do not seem to indicate any special trend or movement. It does not appear that as in other species, the birds are most often recovered during their first year of life. During their first winter, the recoveries come from states 200 to 600 miles further south.

"Very few adult birds have been recovered and in part this may be due to the bird's ability to remove the band. Certainly, if a hawk gets hold of the band near the opening and pulls, he would be strong enough to open the band. After several trials over a period of months, I suspect he could remove the band easily. Consequently, during the past two years I have been using an experimental type band which clamps on and would be impossible to remove. I will be interested to see if more adult birds are recovered where the new band is worn.

"This is really about all I have learned so far and it does not seem to me that there is material here for an article. My techniques were briefly discussed in an earlier picture story (EBBA NEWS XIX, 2, pp. 22-23) so that these probably would not interest you.

"I am sorry I do not have more material to report, but when something conclusive seems to be evident, I shall be happy to publish it."

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MAKING BAND NUMBERS MORE READABLE ----

Marie Dumont, veteran bander of Pequannock, N.J., writes: "I was given this information by our good friend and fellow bander Patrick Garland, now of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., a bander of many years.

Just take a lady's lipstick and go over the string of bands. Rub off any excess and the numbers become very readable. And it's no trouble to carry with you in your banding kit, ready for use at a moment's notice"