

I only wish he could have been with us these past five years to enjoy the thrilling experience of netting at the annual Island Beach Operation Recovery, when a good single day's catch often exceeded many of his annual catches.

With eyesight failing so that I can't fat-class a bird, and hearing missing many a bird call, it's very unlikely that I'll still be banding in 1978, my official anniversary, so perhaps I'll celebrate mine this year, shaky as my claim may be.

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COMMENTS ON TRAPS By Mabel Gillespie

In the President's message, September-October issue of EBBA News, 1962, Merrill Wood tells of raising his Chardonneret traps off the ground for greater efficiency. This scheme I, also, have found effective. My property on Martha's Vineyard Island is partially surrounded by a rustic fence. I have nailed flat boards, somewhat larger in area than the base of a Chardonneret trap, horizontally to the tops of the posts, and then tied the traps to these platforms. I find that Blue Jays, Flickers, and particularly Gray Squirrels can upset the traps if they are not fastened, and a fall to the ground does them no good. In Glenolden one of these traps is tied to the top platform of an old step ladder.

The mention of Chardonneret traps sparked a thought that has been smoldering for some time. In the first place I was delighted to hear that someone else than myself still uses this old-time trap. A couple of years ago, when my last two Chardonnerets faded away like old soldiers, I was fortunate in finding a wood-worker who agreed to make some. I ordered five for myself and three for Grace Meleney. I had been so enthusiastic about Chardonnerets that she decided to try them.

Now here is the point to which I am circuitously leading. Grace was very much disappointed with the performance of her Chardonnerets. Yet I, a mere eighth of a mile distant from her Martha's Vineyard banding station, obtained excellent results with them. The subject of this brief discourse, then, is that what works for one bander doesn't necessarily suit another.

Some seven years ago I painfully and laboriously constructed an all purpose trap, cutting the dimensions by about a third. The fabrication consumed a vast quantity of time and tears, and then I never had any luck with the thing.

Last April at the EBBA meeting I exhibited two "multiple catch" traps. The specifications for the original trap, given in the Western Bird Bander for October, 1956, were developed by a couple of ornithologists for field work. They wanted a trap that would be immediately efficient without preliminary baiting. Any number of adaptations can be based on the original specifications. I had a shortage of traps at the time and this sounded intriguing, so I proceeded to make one of the original type, and followed with several adaptations. The original kind, three feet in diameter, is the most successful trap I have ever used. Its only fault is that birds can escape and occasionally do.

During the crowded Saturday afternoon meeting at Cape May, I found myself with one unplanned period and wandered into the discussion on traps which Raymond Middleton was conducting. Just as I entered the room he held up one of my multiple catch traps, made a few criticisms, and dismissed it as not very good. This was most amusing, like a planned situation in a play. Raymond is a good friend of many years' standing, and he was giving an honest opinion. If anyone should be qualified to pass judgment on traps it is he. He had no idea I would barge in at that moment; he didn't even know the trap was mine.

This diverting experience is given only to illustrate my thesis. Not even the experts can always tell what will work best for an individual situation. Merrill Wood and I have had good luck with Chardonneret traps, particularly when raised off the ground. Grace Meleney was disappointed in their performance. I tried the highly recommended all purpose trap in California where the Nuttall's Sparrows, Hermit Thrushes, Brown Towhees, House Finches, etc., completely ignored it. Maybe I would have luck with it in Glenolden or on the Vineyard.

If it were practical it would be most helpful to have an Association collection of traps which EBBA members could borrow as books are taken from a library. In this way banders could find out which traps would be most efficient in their particular habitats. As things are, I hope that banders, particularly new ones, will not be discouraged if highly recommended traps fail to deliver birds into their hands.

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