

NOTES ON THE TRAP SESSION - EBBA WORKSHOP
By Jane Church

The Workshop session on traps, mazes and banding equipment, held at the annual meeting in East Stroudsburg, and led by Raymond Middleton and Fred Mears, was well-attended and lively. Equipment of all kinds had been brought in and everyone who attended went home with ideas for adapting his own.

Mrs. McEntee showed maze traps which she had made thirteen years before and which still appeared new. These had been painted with flat black paint for two reasons - one, to prevent rust and deterioration of the traps and two, to enable both the birds and the bander to see the food in the trap more easily. Differences of opinion were aired here as some banders swear by green paint, some by brown, and some by no paint at all. A painted trap is easier to see into than an unpainted one and presumably should catch more birds. If traps are, however, left unpainted they may be treated with Derust or Rustoleum for longer life. As the EBBA Workshop Manual Vol. 2, 1963, contains six diagrams of trap construction plus descriptions of twenty traps it is unnecessary to describe the traps themselves. (This Manual may be purchased from Miss Wilde Mellenkamp, 223 Matsonford Rd., Radnor, Pa. - price \$2.15 incl. postage).

Traps are generally made with either $\frac{1}{2}$ " mesh hardware cloth or $\frac{1}{2}$ x 1" welded wire. The latter may be purchased by mail from Montgomery Ward (and possibly other mail order houses) in a 2' x 100' roll for \$26.00. While welded wire is considerably more expensive than hardware cloth and more difficult to bend, trapped birds do not hurt themselves above the bill or catch their bills in it. This wire is also available in $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 2" x 100' rolls. Carrying handles and other metal parts may be made with #12 galvanized wire.

This reminds me that Walter Bigger had put extra long carrying handles on his traps. Many more traps may be carried at a time because of this and an extra convenience is that the handle may be slipped up on your arm, leaving both hands free. Walter Bigger, who makes excellent traps, uses ninety single-cell and fifteen three-cell Potter traps. He generally puts a wooden bottom in them in order not to lose food in the snow, and also adds a $3/4$ " thin strip of wood outside around the base to keep food from being pushed out the sides by the captive bird. Another bander covers traps with Milar (a thin sheet plastic) during snow storms. This keeps the snow out, the food visible, and makes practically no noise which would frighten birds away.

One of the more valuable bits of information picked up during this session was to put an extra heavy wire above and around the tops of doors on which birds perch and trip the treadle from the outside. One top-opening trap had been built with an entire extra stationary hardware cloth door over the top of the hinged door to keep long-tailed birds from

knocking the door closed. This also happens often with Potter-type traps which have been built with the sliding door level above the roof level. An extra wire above the door eliminates this hazard.

Fred Mears showed a gathering box constructed with no screws or nails. It was multi-celled, of masonite held together by fiberglass tape (which comes in a roll as adhesive tape does. The swinging panels on the back were of plexiglass (also hinged with the fiberglass tape) and the front was of soft nylon screening. This should eliminate bill damage which Vireos, Robins, Catbirds, etc. may incur when metal screening is used in carrying boxes. I forgot to lift this box to see how heavy it is (a major consideration for many banders who walk long distances between traps and nets.)

Christopher Rose, also an excellent trap-maker, had two very small gathering boxes made of hardware cloth. These had room for two small birds or one large bird and should be very useful on slack days when you are lucky to catch a bird or two at a time. George Collins from nearby Cresco had brought a multi-room Purple Martin house adapted for nestling banding as the doors to all rooms were removable.

One further gem: hinged, snap-on clothespins do an excellent easy job of keeping doors open on traps when the bander wishes to be away.

There seems to be no cardinal rule for placing traps other than changing location if the trap is not catching birds. Mrs. McEntee places traps on top of cinder blocks which are easily movable. Merrill Wood has already mentioned in EBBA News that putting traps on top of fence posts may greatly increase the take. Putting burlap under traps for greater bait visibility will frequently increase trapping as will placing traps, burlap and all, on tables. (If you by chance have a barn wall with knot holes, traps may be placed inside the barn behind the holes and curious Starlings may go right in!)

Not too much was said about various baits. Walter Bigger mentioned that he uses 100 per cent cracked corn which he puts through his wife's food mill (he has bought her a new one for her own use!). A variety of bait is probably the best means of attracting the largest number of species to traps. (Mrs. Dater was overheard later mentioning that she had trapped three hundred Goldfinches during the previous two weeks. They had been attracted by millet which she buys in 100-pound sacks from a feed store at the surprisingly low cost of \$6.00.) A 100-pound sack of medium cracked corn (with no wheat or other grain mixed in) is bright yellow, visible for a good distance, and sells for about \$4.00. Sunflower seed is a must, of course, and seems generally to be purchased in quantity from wholesalers in the midwest. Its cost this past year has been about \$12.50 per hundred pounds, freight included.

Water may attract birds which do not come in for food. A full bucket with a small hole in its bottom is placed on top of the trap with a metal pan below inside to catch the drip. Birds are attracted by the sound, particularly during hot weather.

Mrs. Rose is to be commended for the superb canvas banding kit which she made. Everything you needs fits securely into its own compartment -- bands, pliers, rulers, clip board, etc. It zips together with twin zippers which meet at top center -- this insures that the kit may be opened out flat for easy use.

Fred Mears had brought his "Annual Banding Kit" with him. It was much larger and held 2000 bands on long wires, pliers rulers, pad, etc. This would be rather elaborate for the back-yard bander but should be invaluable for people who change banding locations regularly. I again forgot to see how much it weighed but it looked heavy. A standing board with screw eyes or nails attached is an excellent simple device for holding strings of bands. The band-size numbers may be written in above each string for quick identification.

This was an excellent Workshop session. The only improvement might have been a greater variety of traps on display. For example, there was no Bal Chatri and no woodpecker trap. This is a small criticism for an extremely interesting and informative hour and a half.

Janelia Farms, Ashburn, Virginia.



RECORD KEEPING AND PROJECT PLANNING SESSION - EBBA WORKSHOP

By Ruth J. Rose

My husband and I are very interested in methods of keeping records, other than our own, and also the type of data which might be of value in project planning. We found in this Workshop Course the answers to many of our questions.

Our instructors were Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Dickerson and Mr. Allen Duvall, Chief of the Banding Office.

In leading the discussion, Mrs. Dickerson brought out the important data which should be kept in order to send accurate records to the Banding Office each year. While most of us are aware as to what is necessary data, it is a good idea to recheck your records frequently to make sure you haven't left out something of importance. The accuracy of your Band Numbers is of vital concern on your records, with the small size bands being double checked for accuracy. Next in order should be the Name of the Species. If there is any doubt as to the identity of the bird, you