

BANDING TIMESAVERS
By Thomas A. Sherratt

In this complex life we live today, most of us have all too little time to devote to banding. Consequently our banding must be confined to few and far between vacations and short weekends. Thus it becomes necessary for us to carry on banding as quickly and as efficiently as possible. We should, however, I might hasten to add, not sacrifice quality for quantity.

In the following paragraphs I shall try to put down a few of the simple pieces of equipment which have saved so much time in my limited banding experiences. Some have originated from my own questionable ingenuity. I have, however, been able to glean most of my equipment from back issues of EBBA News.

All that is basically necessary to band are the forms, a pen, an instrument to open bands and an instrument to close them and, of course, the bands, the traps and/or nets. With a little ingenuity and work one can modify these basic pieces of equipment to cut down actual banding time by at least one half, as I have.

Perhaps the most useful instruments of all are my pair of Kennard banding pliers. They not only close band sizes 0, 1, 1B and 1A perfectly by means of two different size holes bored in the jaws, but also open them evenly in one stroke by means of a split pin. They also cut the time of opening and closing them by two different instruments such as long-nose pliers and an awl by at least one-fourth. They can be obtained quite reasonably from R. N. MacDonald of Lynnfield Center, Mass. for about the same price of an awl and a pair of good long-nose pliers. Another piece of equipment which saves much time if you transfer the birds from your home station inside is a multi-celled gathering cage. This can either be made or it can be bought, but it certainly beats bringing in several birds in one cage. It consists of eight cells with a screen wire back and doors which swing in but not out. Not only is this cage handy, but it is absolutely necessary with certain species such as the Evening Grosbeaks, which literally mutilate each other on being confined together in a small space.

If you band inside as I do you naturally need a desk, storage for bands, files for records, and also storage for one or two books for quick reference. I finally solved all these problems with a cheap (less than twenty dollars) heavy gauge steel desk. It has a top opening legal size file which is divided into two sections. One section I use for forms, report sheets, and various other research papers. The other section I use for three reference books.

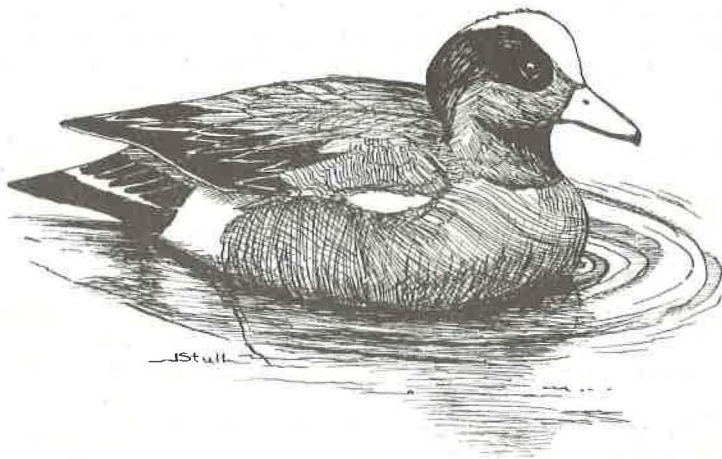
The top to this file has a metal pocket which is just large enough to store a seventy-five cent ring binder notebook and several ball-point pens. The file can also be locked if you desire. Directly under the files are two shelves which are the perfect size to accommodate a small parts storage chest. The working space of the desk can be folded up to take up as little space as possible when not being used.

The small parts chest which I mentioned in the previous paragraph is the perfect piece of equipment to store bands and other pieces of equipment such as cuticle scissors and extra band holders. The chest is 10" long by 8" high by 6" wide with fifteen small drawers each 6" long by 2" wide. Each drawer can hold a hundred bands each on a safety pin holder made from fairly soft wire to fit the drawers. From the front this chest closely resembles a miniature chest of drawers with the contents labeled on the front of each drawer.

As to traps, I personally find the Reed type Potter trap to be the most efficient for most birds. I do, however, use an all purpose trap for birds which are ground feeders.

Thanks to the equipment described above, I find it surprising to look back on my first year of banding and compare it with the banding I am doing now.

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American Widgeon. Drawing by Jean Stull.