

THE

EDITOR'S

OPINION



THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

Every bander must come to a time when he asks himself, "What am I doing this for? Why do I spend time and energy and money on trying to outwit birds and wind and weather in order to put little aluminum rings on unwilling tibia? What is it that keeps my mind occupied with plans for circumventing squirrels, cats, dogs, children and other mammals--all of whom seem bent on thwarting my intentions? How can I continue to endure the harassment of mosquitoes, cat briars, poison ivy, sharp ends of rusted wire, deliberate contrariness of nylon netting and all the other major and minor hazards that surround this pursuit?"

"And where is it getting me?"

Bird banding is old enough now to have stood the test of time. It is widespread enough now so that ever-increasing reports of banded birds may be expected. It is enough accepted today by ornithologists so that its use as a method of gaining important data is a necessity.

Bird banding is also young enough so that each person who puts an 0-size band on a warbler or a #7 band on a gull is a pioneer. Bird banding can be a hobby for a lifetime--it may also be an adventure in exploration that can add invaluable data perhaps even leading to a great leap forward in our knowledge of the living bird.

There is a great deal of information of all sorts about even quite common birds that is unrecorded. A unique opportunity to fill in yawning gaps in ornithological data beckons every bander. A 10- or 20-minute carefully recorded examination of each bird handled, rather than banding birds at a bird-a-minute rate, adds purpose to one's exploration of the world of birds.

Some study of what gaps there are in information on a species can show a bander how his particular abilities, or situation in relation to that species, can give him the opportunity to direct his efforts towards a meaningful result.

"What am I doing this for? Where is it getting me? "

The answers are there for each of us to find for himself. Bird banding, for anyone who wants it enough, is the chance of a lifetime to contribute a part of oneself to the future.

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