

BOA W/BAND IN BELLY
By C. Brooke Worth

Dear Fellow Members Of EBBA:

Any of you guys have any of your banded birds knocked off by boa constrictors lately? If you had, I guess you'd brag about it and send a note to EBBA NEWS. And so would I. The fact is that we have boa constrictors here but also some smaller species. One of them is known as Cook's Tree Boa, and it is just about ordinary snake size. The other day one of our field workers picked up a young Cook's Tree Boa at our camp in Bush Bush Forest in Nariwa Swamp. It had an obvious swelling indicating a recent meal. Our men have instructions to send all biological specimens to our laboratory in Port of Spain. The snake was hardly two feet long and was easily kept in a Mason jar. Today it disgorged its meal, and here was a half-digested bird with a band on its leg. It was too far decomposed to recognize, but the band proved it to be a House Wren that had been banded by me near the site of capture of the snake on Nov. 29, 1963. The wren had appeared once again in the net on January 2nd of this year. Thus it met its death slightly less than four months after banding. House Wrens in the tropics are considered by some authorities to be a distinct species from the North American one, but by others as a subspecies. Anyhow they look and sound like House Wrens, despite the fact that they can be found in clearings in the tropical forest. The Cook's Tree Boa is arboreal, as its name indicates, and also nocturnal. I imagine that it climbs about searching for roosting, sleeping birds. Wrens often sleep in cavities, but the snake could investigate these too. This boa has a nasty disposition, despite its small size, and will continue trying to bite even after being in captivity for months. In contrast, Boa constrictors become docile.

Well, Friends, at least it was a boa!

Post Office Box 164, Port of Spain, Trinidad, W. I.



WANTED -- BANDER-NATURALIST to fill post of Naturalist at the Nature Education Center. Full time work. Small salary to start which will be increased. Wonderful opportunity for bander who wants to make nature education a career, or for a retired teacher, or anyone with an interest in people, especially in children, and birds. College degree is desirable but not essential. Write: Director, Nature Education Center, Washington Crossing, Pa.