

MIST NET SETTINGS

Dr. H. Elliott McClure has sent us "An Asian Bird Banders Manual," the 120 page book put out by him for the Migratory Animal Pathological Survey, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Tokyo, Japan. Dr. McClure, EBBA member and bander of long standing, writes, "We now have teams ringing in Malaya, Thailand, Philippines, Taiwan, Korea and Japan." The following pages show mist net settings taken from the Manual.

The Mist Net

Mist net setting can be as varied as the terrain, operator, or circumstances demand. The accompanying sketches illustrate some of these settings. (See drawings on next two pages - Ed.)

Figure 47, hillside mass netting. If you have enough helpers and with or without live decoys, a ridge of this type over or along which migrants fly will net hundreds of birds. I have watched a single netter with two or three helpers and 10 or 15 live decoys take 2000 birds a week from such a setting. (See note below on use of live decoys - Ed.)

Figure 48, stubble field or grassland setting. This type of open area setting is best put up at sundown in areas where snipes, shorebirds, or larks are known to feed or roost. Such a setting is equally good in bullrushes or at the edge of marshes. It is night work, for after sundown you and your helpers walk through adjacent areas flushing the birds. Most species will fly low before settling down and some may strike a net. I have taken as many as 25 skylarks, snipe, and plovers in such a setting in one evening. At heavily populated roosts in rushes or low shrubs a night setting like this will take many birds.

Figure 49, shorebird setting with decoys. This is a manually operated setting. The net poles are tied to stakes and a line extends from the far pole to a third stake. The operator puts this setting at the edge of a rising or falling tide and places shorebird shaped decoys in front of it. (Japanese netters use this method making decoys of actual shorebird skins.) The operator sits about 100 feet away on a small stool within some kind of blind (a blind is not always necessary.) When a flock of birds alights amid his decoys he flips the net by a tug of the rope. As the tide recedes or rises he moves the net and decoys. Japanese netters increase the efficiency of this setting by imitating shorebird calls.

Note on Live Decoys

Figure 46, using live decoys. Japanese professional netters use male thrushes and finches as live decoys. These pets are carefully tended and fed with surie, a food prepared of dried shrimp, rice endosperm, and lettuce. The birds are held in darkened rooms in late summer with electric lights lengthening the day to bring them into full song. These singing males, placed at nets before dawn, will bring flock after flock of migrants into them.

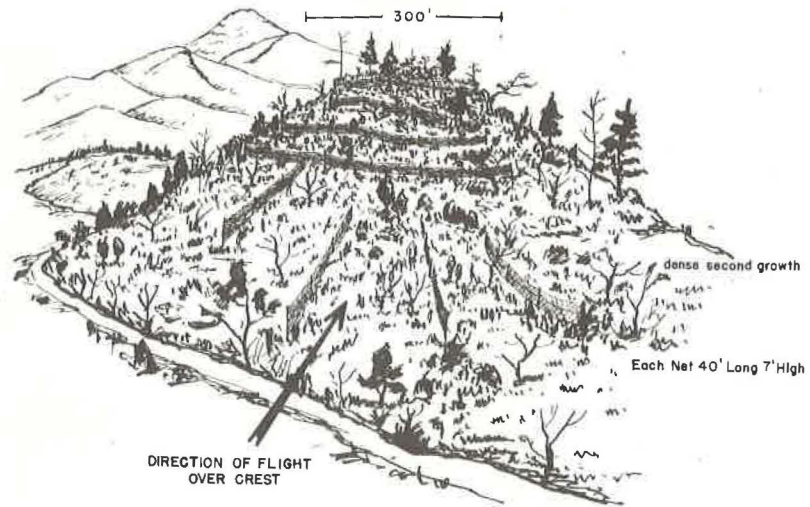


Fig 47. Netting on a strategic hillside where migrants pass.

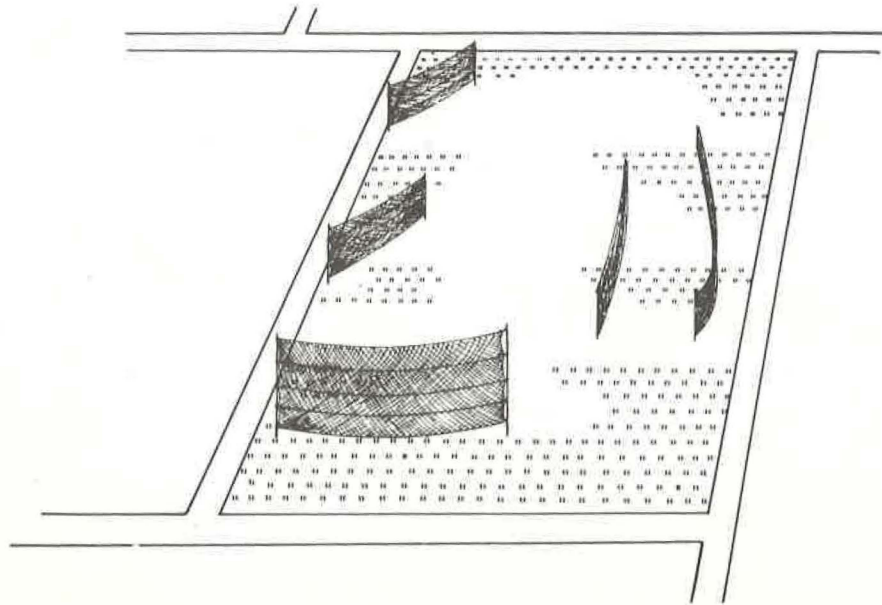


Fig 48. Net settings in a stubble field or grassland for capturing flushed birds at night.

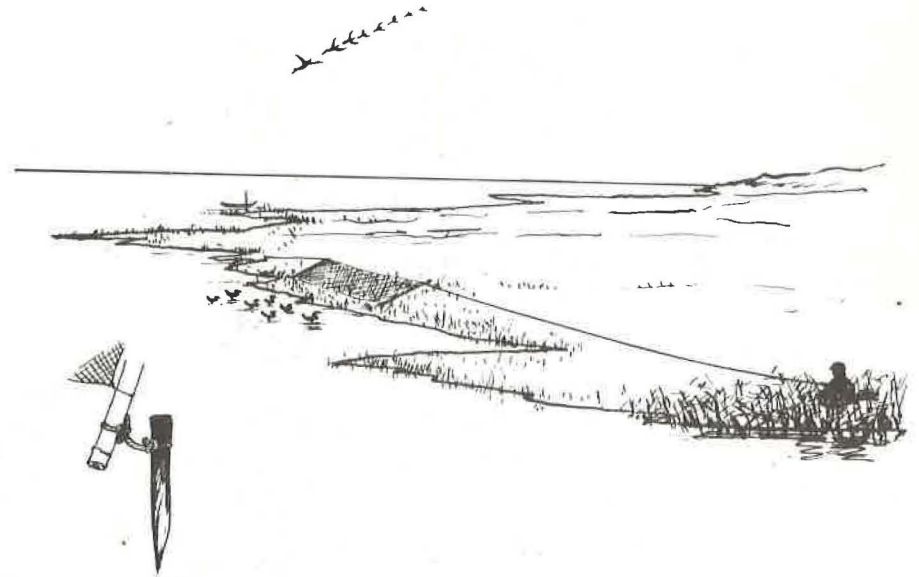


Fig 49. Manually operated throw net with decoys for shore birds.

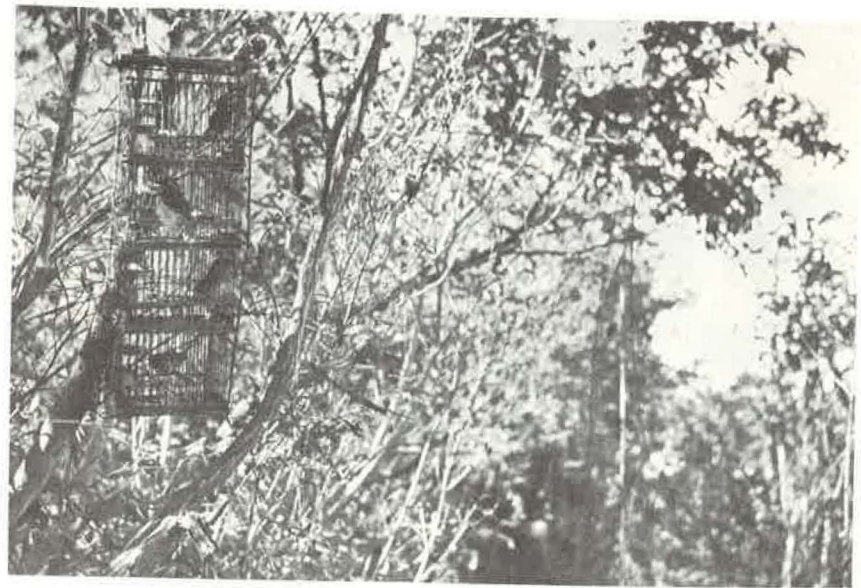


Fig 46. Cages of singing decoys at a mist net.