

OPEN HOUSE WITH THE NEELS
By Frank P. Frazier

A memorable day at a lovely home in western Pennsylvania -- an ideal spot for an inland bird banding station.

Some twenty-odd banders, many of whom had attended EBBA's annual meeting three weeks before, spent a most interesting and delightful day with the Neels at their "open house". Chip and Chuck Neel have several different habitats on their 60 acres. As one enters, one crosses the stream that runs through their property, and from there the ground slopes upward through swamp and fields to the wooded ridge several hundred yards behind their house.

The Neels have done considerable planting of berry and fruit shrubs and trees with birds in mind, and there are no neighbors within sight or hearing, so deep in the country are they (a situation envied by this backyard bander whose small station is in a New York City suburb some 15 miles west of the Empire State Building.)

My note book includes the following:

1. Use grape shears to snip twigs that get caught in nets.
2. Keep opened bands on vertically held knitting needles.
3. Hummingbirds (and the Neels attract many) seem to like Hawk Mt. feeders filled with sugar and water syrup colored with red cake coloring.
4. Ted Grisez promises EBBA News an article on the soil auger he demonstrated -- wonderfully quick and easy way to sink holes for hot poles.

Among those who spent a worthwhile and most enjoyable day with the Neels were: Mr. & Mrs. George Collins, Clinton Hanes, Walter Fye, Robert Butts, Clare Nicholls, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Leberman, Ronald Leberman, Mrs. Russell Pillsbury, Dr. & Mrs. Lewis Kibler, Mrs. Phryne Birmingham, Mr. & Mrs. Ted Grisez and Mr. & Mrs. Norman Samuelson.

Facing page (photos by Frank P. Frazier):

1. With Chip Neel at left -- the house from the fields.
2. Discussing traps, etc. at lunch in the shade.
3. Watching Chuck extract a warbler from a net.
4. Chuck at his banding table.
5. Australian Crow Trap -- Bluebird house at left.

