

* These two Finches must have been hatched in 1958 or before and are therefore at least 7 years old. All other Finches shown above were hatched in 1959 or before and are at least six years old.

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CYLINDER TYPE GATHERING CAGE

By Ralph K. Bell

The drawing (by Anne Shreve) shows the type of gathering cage used at our Operation Recovery Station on top of the Alleghany Frount Mountains at Red Creek Campground (approx. 10 miles southeast of Davis, W. Va.)

I much prefer to band and release at the net site without using gathering cages, but there are times when gathering cages are quite handy. . . such as when special studies are being made, when we get heavy flights, hard winds, the approach of rain storms, etc. when it is imperative that the nets be cleared as soon as possible.

Two experimental models were used during the 1964 season. Improvements were made and seven were used this year (1965).

They are cylinder containers made of heavy cardboard and painted white to keep them cooler on sunny days (but they still should never be left in the sun for any length of time). The cages are 12" high and 8" in diameter. The bottom is entirely covered (for sanitary purposes) with $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2" welded wire. Although I have never seen but one case of foot pox at Red Creek (a Junco several years ago) chances of promoting possible spread are minimized

by taking the following precautions: warblers and sparrows are never put into the same cage and cages are turned "bottoms up" to the sun when not in use. The wire bottom is scrubbed periodically with a good disinfectant.

Advantages of this type of gathering cage are many. By being dark, most birds remain relatively quiet and do not use up a lot of vital energy fighting to get out. So-called "poor keepers" can be kept overnight (if caught late) and released early the next morning with no ill effects. Also, a bunch of warblers in one of these cages tend to warm up on a cold day as they are being processed. One of these cages will hold 25 warblers safely. The only disadvantages we have noted so far is that Wilson's warblers may sometimes get their heads through the wire mesh. Also the cages should be kept well painted or they will deteriorate in rainy weather.

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