

I have just read Robert P. Yunick's article in the latest EBBA News ("Decoys, Baits and Net Sets," Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 81-85). (Bob Spencer gets a copy: I opened it as he is currently ringing in Jordan), and I thought you might be interested in some comments from a British ringer (that's what we call banders over here).

We find it very important not to smother one's trapping area with nets or traps and to always allow some spare space for the birds: at Wisbech sewage farm, where the partly treated sewage is fed into lagoons we often have three suitable for waders at one time but never try to trap at more than two, flushing birds from the third into the trapping areas at the most opportune moment.

In Great Britain poles for mist-nets which are in use vary from ringer to ringer. Seth Low's famous article (which we reprinted) recommending a quarter-ton truck and conduit tubing created tantalising visions of opulent American banders (especially to students struggling to pay for rings and a few nets and cycling about the countryside!!!). I started off with garden canes and aluminium ferrules: these were too whippy and I then made ones from 4" broomhandles and aluminium ferrules which I still have. They can be erected to any height (well guyed at Sand Martin colonies I have had them 5 high or 20' up with two 9' nets on the one pole), they are very strong and can be concealed in a ditch and quickly stuffed in the back of the car of the unsuspecting giver of a lift if one has to resort to hitching about the country.

The great majority of British ringers use 12' bamboos tapering from about 1.2 inches at the base to 0.8 at the tip. Sawm in half between two nodes with aluminium tubing added they are easily portable, light and strong and only 6'6" long. They can be erected to 18' or 24' where necessary with really good guying. With aluminium 24 sections cost about 45/- (say seven dollars) +3 hours' work.

Our nets are made in Great Britain from terylene. They cost more than the Jap nets you use but are far stronger and last very much longer by factor of 3 or 6 (ask Elise Dickerson!). Whenever we net we put a lot of tension on the nets and guy them very tautly.

At Chichester where we are netting roosting Bank Swallows over water we put four guys on the end pole of the line of nets and guy intervening poles both ways. We put as much tension as we dare on the guys and then walk another 2 feet: the shelf strings (trammel lines) very seldom break. Set like this the best nets (4 shelf 9' high 1 1/4 inch mesh 60 foot long) often catch 200 birds at once and sometimes more without any danger of the bottom birds going into the water (bottom of

the nets set about 3' above the water surface). All the nets I have bought for the last few years have been tethered by the makers using the fish-line technique (discovered here independently of the Poles some years ago): it is invaluable.

Terylene netting is quite supple and the small mesh catches nearly everything including *Regulus* which go into it. If any one you know would like to try some British nets we can supply them (after having checked they have a banding and netting permit).

BTO, Beech Grove, TRING, Herts.

CONSERVATION AWARDS

We take especial pride in the conservation awards given to EBBA members in recognition of their work in this field which is so closely related to bird banding activities.

Of the ten awards made by the American Motors Corporation to professional conservationists one went to EBBA member Ted S. Pettit, Somerville, N.J., director of conservation for the Boy Scouts of America, "for his more than two decades of conservation promotion through the Boy Scouts. He was instrumental in the insertion of natural resources conservation into the scouting program . . . also directed the highly effective nationwide Conservation Good Turn program in which 3,700,000 boys and leaders participated."

And of the ten awards to non-professionals, "whose conservation efforts are a voluntary expression of good citizenship," one went to Robert W. Patterson, of Mt. Desert Island, Maine (who doubtless helps his wife - EBBA member - in banding) "for spearheading a campaign to save the Allagash region of Northern Maine from commercialization."

