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Let Us Band Together

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President: Dr. C. Brooke Worth, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa.
Treasurer: George Dock, Jr., 119 Brite Avenue, Scarsdale, New York
Sec. & Ed.: Geoffrey Gill, 24 Overlook Drive, Huntington, L.I., N. Y.

NEW JERSEY HOLDS FIRST REGIONAL MEETING

Mrs. Marie Dumont and Mr. Carl A. Pedersen deserve the compliments of the entire organization for a very successful meeting of New Jersey banders, held at the residence of Mrs. Dumont in Pequannock on Sunday, September 22nd. Mrs. Dumont and her two sons were hosts to what we sincerely hope will be the first of many such informal get-togethers in every state of the area allotted to our association.

While it is freely admitted that the attendance at this gathering could have been greater, it should be remembered that the average bander is a modest retiring soul, much attached to his own fireside and his banding station. It is very difficult to decide upon a date when all can assemble, and while the thought may be expressed awkwardly, it might be added, that it is even harder to foster suddenly an enthusiasm for sociability among bird students, who for years past, have been "lone eagles" in their respective fields.

Those present at this meeting were: Beecher S. Bowdish and J. H. Garland, both of Demarest; Carl Pedersen of Montvale; Mr. and Mrs. Gustave Dumont of Lyndhurst; and Mrs. Marie Dumont and her son, Mr. Dumont.

Methods of trapping, trap ideas and banding thoughts were generally exchanged. Cooperative plans were laid and the work of charting the recoveries from each station was discussed. This work is to be collated at a later date so that there will be one main chart showing all the recoveries from the State of New Jersey. It was also decided to conduct a survey of the species banded in the state and to learn the numbers of each species banded.

Not the least important feature of the report of the meeting sent in by Mr. Pedersen are two excellent photographs of the gathering. Personally, having a great admiration for a certain saying attributed to Napoleon, the photo depicting the banders gathered around the festive board heaped with good things to eat, is most intriguing. The smiles on the faces of one and all, gathered around the tables set beneath the trees on Mrs. Dumont's estate, evidence a satisfactory feeling of conviviality. Particularly gratifying is the smile of discovery portrayed by Beecher Bowdish as he faces the camera and surreptitiously delves into the cookie bag for just one more. All in all, it is fully believed that the members present "got something" out of the meeting and the next will undoubtedly draw more Jersey banders closer together.

PHILADELPHIANS TO MEET SOON

Horace Groskin and Dr. C. B. Worth are making arrangements to hold a regional meeting of the banders in and around the Philadelphia area in the latter part of this month.

NEWS FOR THE BIRD BANDERS

Horace Groskin of Ardmore, Pa., reports, "Adult Tufted Titmouse banded May 25, 1937, returned May 4, 1938, returned May 27, 1939, and again on July 7, 1940. Now at least 5 years old. Not bad for a permanent resident of southern origin in 40 N. latitude, near limit of northern range!"

Barton L. Sharp of Lititz, Pa. questions the migratory theory concerning crows. He banded one May 15, 1933 which was shot $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant in January, 1934. Another banded in the same month and year was shot in zero weather on Feb. 10, 1934 within 100 yds. of the place of banding. 7 other crows, he reports, returned in winter near the place of banding. In the current issue of The Wilson Bulletin, there is an article on banded Crows in Oklahoma, showing that crows migrate in the west. Is the western branch of the corvus family wiser than their Pennsylvania relatives or are one bunch "just sissies"?

R. E. Ware of Clemson, S. C. reports the banding of 467 Blue Jays in the last six years. This is good news for the more northern banders as many of the long distance recoveries of this species, reported by banders, show Jays on a winter range in Prof. Ware's neighborhood. We'll get each others birds yet! William Pepper of Wyncote, Pa., has had a Blue Jay recovery reported within 13 miles of your secretary's scene of operations, here on Long Island. In retaliation I have had a recovery from a town several miles north of Wyncote. 1940 is apparently a big year for Blue Jays. Everyone please trap and band them at every opportunity.

The September issue of The Wilson Bulletin carries an interesting article on The Inland Bird Banding Association and three other papers pertaining to the banding of birds.

Allan D. Kirk of Wilkinsburg, Pa., has been running a bird sanctuary on two islands north of Pittsburg during each summer for the last three years.

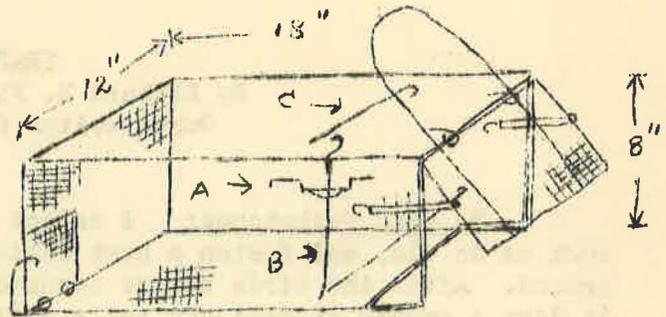
George Dock, Jr., of Scarsdale, N.Y. asks what is the policy on Cowbirds? Reports a terrific invasion of them. "Clouds of hundreds swarm into the garden to feed. Never heard that they are much use", states Mr. Dock, "They are bad for any birds in whose nests they lay their eggs. Have banded 30 in the past two days, having let a lot of them go because I don't want to run short of bands of that size with White Throats coming. I have banded only the males and have destroyed a good many females." Oh, Mr. Dock, where is your chivalry? But then, a man's home is his castle. If invasion is imminent, Ebba advises you to man the ramparts! Drag out every drop trap available! Capture the invaders and call Washington for more bands! But, alas, maybe the days of the gallant Minute Men are but a memory. Possibly it is better, before taking any action to write Washington first. What do you think, Banders?

To combat any impression that the Nus may have unwittingly created about an excellent bander, by broadcasting the above outburst, also one about the retreat from a skunk in his traps some issues back, may we relate an incident depicting Mr. Dock's resourcefulness. Recently "some strong animal" broke into a cage of English Sparrows and killed all of them. It then transferred its attention to a cage containing two white pigeons, killing one and tearing the wing off the other. Mr. Dock arrived on the scene too late, but enough was enough. Gathering all the steel traps in the vicinity, buying more, then using the remaining pigeon as a decoy the following night, the raid was avenged. "The 'possum population in Scarsdale is now one less", is Mr. Dock's laconic report. All Ebba can add is that McIlhenny of Avery Island, La., who has caught alligators in his traps, had better look to his laurels, when "Brother" Dock goes into action. If his next letter reports the capture of a bear, we won't "bat" an eye.

TRIP THREAD AUTOMATIC TRAP

By Daniel Smiley, Jr.
Mohonk Lake, N. Y.

An all-around trap useful for all birds from Flickers to sparrows. Safe, easily transported, and may work with shore birds.



To make it get a piece of $\frac{1}{2}$ " mesh galvanized hardware cloth, 18 inches wide and 28 inches long. Bend this as the measurements show to form the sides and top. Remember that the selvage end will be the front of the trap. The trap door hinges on this selvage and if such is not available then it would be advisable to reinforce this open end with a piece of #12 gauge wire. Carry this reinforcing wire across the bottom of the trap keeping it four inches from the front as shown.

The back is a piece of the same hardware cloth 8 x 12 inches and bound securely in place with #18 copper wire. A gathering cage door is hinged at the bottom in one corner. It swings inward on two wire rings. The opening is 5 x 5 inches and the door itself is $\frac{1}{2}$ " wider. It is held closed by a bend in the outside handle wire which hooks on the trap as shown.

The front door is cut 1" wider than the trap so that $\frac{1}{2}$ " projects beyond each side to prevent it from swinging into the trap. The upper edge is again the selvage edge and the wire ring hinges go through both selvage edges. This door should be so cut that when it is closed it does not quite touch the ground in front of the trap.

The trigger consists of a hinged piece, A, wired permanently to the side of the trap. The part, B, should be made from a piece of #12 wire. At the top is a hook to catch the very end of the cross bar, C. Piece B extends down to within approximately 1" of the ground in order to catch the trip thread which comes through the side of the trap. A and B should be so inter-related that there is a minimum of sideways play lengthwise of the trap. The line of B should be approximately 5" back from the front of the trap. The trigger bar, C, should be free to move from a horizontal to a vertical position and should have a minimum of play because its exact length in relation to the position of B, when the trap is set, affects the smooth working of the release mechanism.

The trip thread itself is a dark colored linen thread and is located $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from the ground. This height seems equally suitable for almost all birds and it runs parallel to the front of the trap. At the side opposite to the trigger device, the thread passes through a mesh of the side and has a small hook on the end so that it can be moved to different squares to take up slack and give the proper relationship between B and C so that a slight displacement of the thread from its normal taut position will release the trigger bar, C.

The front door is closed by means of two rubber bands. These are usually fastened about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the distance from the top of the door and are provided with small wire hooks to engage in the sides of the trap. It has been found that if these are hooked near the top of the side of the trap, the same tension is secured when the trap is closed, yet when the door is open there is less strain on the trigger bar C, by the wire loop attached to the door and C slides out of the hook of B more easily. Rubber bands $\frac{1}{8}$ x 3" are recommended.

The trap is usually painted a dark green color, preferably with some paint which does not leave a permanent odor, such as duco.

TRAPPING HINTS

By Richard B. Fischer, Flushing, N. Y.

Guest writer for this month's page.

To trap Nuthatches: I select a good size tree, one which birds like, such as an elm, and fasten a suet holder to the tree about 6 feet from the ground. After the birds become accustomed to feeding at the suet rack, I move it down a couple of feet and set a potter trap at the base of the tree about a foot from it and with the opening facing the tree. I bait this trap with sunflower seed, cracked corn and bread. Before long the Nuthatches spy the trap and venture down for an inspection. Once they discover that there is food for them inside it is only a matter of minutes before they venture in and are caught.

To trap Swallows: I have banded quite a number of adult swallows, and this is how I do it. I locate nests with eggs or young and then, in the morning, set a ladder up against the barn so that I can climb right up to the nests. By late afternoon the swallows have lost all suspicion of the ladders and go to roost in their nest just as always. The ladders must be erected early in order to give the birds sufficient time to lose their fear of them. When it is really dark, I climb up to the nests and with the aid of a small flashlight remove the pairs from their nests. I say pairs, because both birds roost together at night. I band one pair at a time so as to make sure that each pair returns to its own nest.

To band Flickers, Downys, or any hole-nesting bird, even owls: Make a trip door out of a piece of bark, or a light piece of wood. This door is anywhere from 6 to 8 inches in length and is made in the shape of a figure "9", the loop of course, being solid. A small hole is drilled where the loop joins on to the tail of the figure. A small eyelet or staple is driven into the end of this flag-shaped piece of wood to which is later attached a long string. Once the nesting hole or roosting place of a bird is found, the idea is to attach this door by a screw through the drilled hole and kept from binding by a washer in such a manner so that the door will move over the hole and completely cover it and can be easily moved away again by a touch on the tail of the door. When the door is in place fasten it so that it cannot be closed by accident and let the bird become accustomed to it for a day or so. Then when all is ready attach the long spring to the eyelet or staple mentioned above. Carry this string down beneath a limb or in some manner to give a direct downward pull on the string when it is pulled. This string should be carried on for some distance to a spot already chosen where the bander can keep the hole in sight, yet be hidden. The rest is a matter of watching and waiting. When the bird is caught use a small wire gathering cage over the hole. Such can be easily made out of a 10 inch piece of hardware cloth. While this is a time-taking method such is true of any method of catching the "hard-to-get" birds, otherwise they would not be hard to catch.

Almost every canary cage has a door which is snapped and held shut by a small spring. These springs can be easily removed and are fine for a chardon-noret trap.

By rubbing the bars of a potter trap, on which the doors slide, with suet, the effectiveness of the trap is not only greatly increased, but the bars are prevented from rusting as well.