

net hours and birds per net hour are still "correlated" with other operation recovery stations for "meaningful" information.

Aside from the time of day nets were run, there are other contributing factors which make the correlation of even two net lanes have a doubtful outcome. I speak of the personal factors which can never be known without long association with the banders in question, or a poll of their personal netting habits and idiosyncracies. You can scan a summary sheet until Doomsday and never find out how Bander X hung his nets nor of what variety they were, but what could be of more importance than the net which makes bird capture possible?

You may search the daily sheets of Bander Y and never know the exact hours of the day his nets were in operation. Though his first bird was banded at 0600 and his last at 1400, making it appear that he netted for eight hours, his total net hours for the day may show only six hours of operation, and you are left to hazard a guess as to what two hours his nets were closed and why.

You can ascertain what the weather conditions were on any past date, but the banding habits of Bander Z may never be known; be he fast or slow, skillful or clumsy, conscientious or careless; yet all these factors may change the birds per net hour statistics in an appreciable way.

The whole story has many facets. Its factors are both hidden and obvious. My conclusion is, therefore, that the practice of using mist net hours and birds per net hour as a basis of comparison between netting operations is so dependent upon outside and often unknown factors as to be meaningless.

300 W. Trenton Ave., Morrisville, Pa. 19067

SOOTY TERN AGE RECORDS

Dr. Oliver L. Austin of the Florida State Museum writes, "Our trip to the Tortugas to net adult Sooty Terns last month (April) was a great success and broke all previous records. We had fine netting weather, and in six days caught a sample of almost 8,500 birds, of which slightly more than 30% were returns from previous years! Among them were 15 birds banded before 1941, including one of uncertain age banded as an adult in 1940, and our oldest bird of known age to date, banded as a chick in 1937. All the old bands were still perfectly legible.

"On our second trip (in June) we banded 20,000 chicks, which wasn't too bad, and netted another 7,500 adults of which again 30% proved banded, and included four more of our ancient birds, all banded as chicks in 1940 and all with unmistakable brood patches."