

HOW TO CATCH BIRDS FOR BANDING

By Constance R. Katholi

If traps and nets fail to do the job of bringing birds to banders, there is one infallible source of supply, especially in spring, and that is: small boys. They seem to have a natural propensity for finding baby birds - which just happened to fall out of the nest as they were passing by, or for locating wren nests on garage shelves, etc.

Another case is that of the swift which happened down (instead of up) the chimney; it ended up in a shoe box, wrapped tenderly in a towel, transported uninjured by a small boy to the bander's house...(who was delighted to get her hands on this species).

Still another case concerns a Wood Thrush which apparently struck a window at dawn and was discovered in an incapacitated condition by the paper boy on his early rounds. This boy carefully deposited the bird in a cage on the bander's porch beside the newspaper. On the stoop there was a cryptic message spelled out artistically (and orientally) in twigs, reading simply, "Broken wing". This, incidentally, turned out not to be true. The bird was simply stunned and after the enforced rest took off smartly upon release.

There are other methods which may be employed such as wielding butterfly nets over fledgling Cardinals or Towhees, or simply "hand-catching" young birds from the bushes - as a fellow bander did last spring with Blue-winged Warblers just out of the nest, whose insistent food calls attracted her attention. In closing, mention should be made of the Pine Siskin who obligingly sat eating sunflower seeds greedily in the far corner of an untripped trap with his back turned, while the bander came quietly out of the house to close the door behind him!

"Where there is a will (and all banders have it) - any and all ways are acceptable."

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