

Following is a summary of the observations that I made during the five year period:

1. Courting and the reestablishment of the pair bond is completed as well as all repairs to the nest by the middle of February.
2. The nest (about 24 inches across and 18 inches deep with a bowl or central cavity of 12 or 14 inches) is constructed almost entirely of sticks with a diameter of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch or less and from 8 to 18 inches in length. It is usually lined with deer hair and frequently has some type of cloth material.
3. The complete clutch of eggs (3-5) is laid by the end of February.
4. Incubation takes about 21 days.
5. The young are fledged in approximately 4 weeks, and the nest is always vacated by the first week of May.
6. The young are fed almost entirely by regurgitation. (At least I have never observed them eating on their own.)

I feel certain that none of this is new material but merely adds support to what is already known. However, I do think that the fact that these birds successfully managed to raise young in such a highly populated area of Pennsylvania is significant. I know from talking to other people that this was an active nest site as far back as 1956 and possibly as far back as 1900. Even though this nest site will probably not be used again, I feel certain that this pair will remain in the same general area of South Mountain. Hopefully, they will select a site that is more secure from man's intrusion.

--861 Carlwynne Manor, Carlisle, Pa. 17013

#### BANDING PLIERS

These  $6\frac{1}{2}$ " long nose pliers have holes bored in the jaws to fit standard band sizes, so as to make it quite easy to get a perfect fit. This avoids the danger of lapped bands, which may injure the leg if not corrected, and which are troublesome to remove even with good tools. There is a split pin on the top of the plier, which enables the user to open a band evenly with one operation. A spring on the side of the plier provides tension to keep the opened band in the plier while handling the bird. While new banders may welcome such pliers to increase their confidence in attaching the band, many experienced banders have shown interest in the pliers in order to handle birds more rapidly at peak times.

Pliers for band sizes 0, 1, 1B & 1A	\$7.50
Pliers for band sizes 2 & 3	\$7.50
Pliers for band sizes 3A	\$6.50

These prices include postage within the U. S. Orders should be sent to:

Mr. Roger N. MacDonald  
850 Main Street  
Lynnfield, Massachusetts 01940

#### REPEATING STRING TRAP

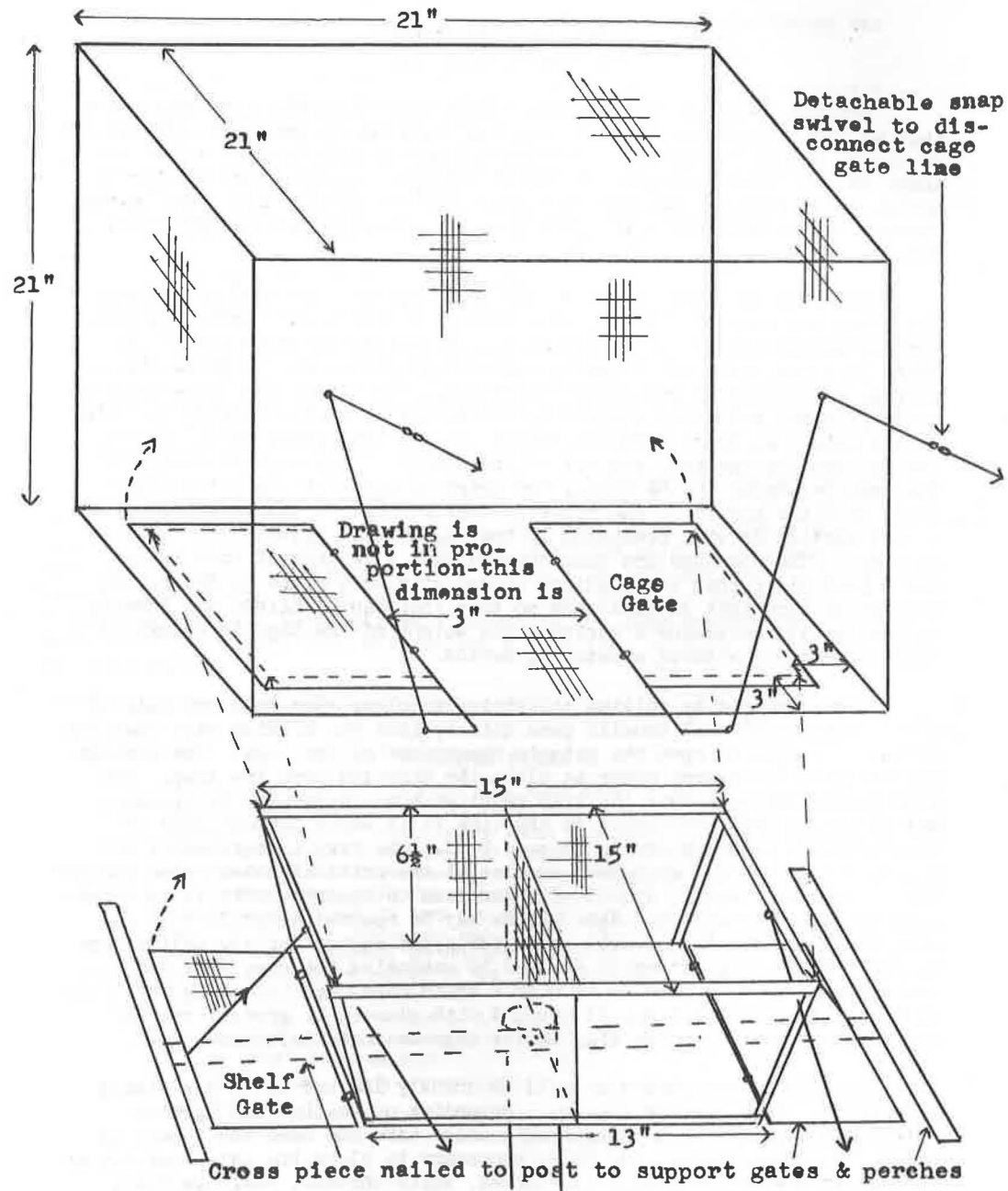
By Fred S. Hill, Jr.

After 6 years of bird banding I have arrived at the firm conclusion that my eyes are not as good as they once were (fault remedied with bifocal glasses), and at the strong belief that I have a trap that should be an asset to most home stations. Although the trap was developed independently, I now realize that the gate principle was published by Mrs. Harvey Shreve, Jr. in an article describing a window feeder trap in EBBA NEWS, Vol. 26, No. 2.

The trap consists of a two ended feeding shelf mounted on a post. The sides are covered with wire attached to a frame, and there is a wire divider across the middle of the shelf. Hinged across each end of the shelf is a wire gate which can be closed from bottom to top by pulling a string, and opened by releasing the string. The top of the frame over the shelf is open, but it is covered by the bottom of a wire holding cage that should extend at least 3 inches beyond the ends and sides of the frame. Two rectangular openings are cut in the bottom of the cage so that when the cage is placed on the frame, the exterior sides of the holes align flush with the inside of the frame at ends and sides. There should be a 3 inch section of wire remaining in the cage bottom between the two openings. The openings are each covered by a wire gate, 1 inch longer and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wider than the opening, hinged with wire rings to the 3 inch section of wire that divides them so that they can be raised and lowered by pulling and releasing a string. The weight of the cage is enough to hold it in place without a latching device.

Birds trapped by pulling the string to close them into one side of the feeding shelf will usually pass quickly into the holding cage when the string is pulled to open the gate in the bottom of the cage. The strings are released in reverse order to close the cage and open the trap. The main disadvantage is that the trap requires human attention to operate, but it can be left unattended at any time it is empty without fear of inadvertently trapping and injuring a bird. The trap is constantly set and cannot be tripped by common species at the critical moment when another bird is about to enter, and it will continue to operate until it is necessary to empty the holding cage. Birds may be removed directly from the cage though an opening covered with overlapped rubber, or the entire cage can be removed in a matter of seconds by unhooking the cage gate strings, removing the cage, replacing it with a spare cage, and attaching the lines. In bad weather the cage may be covered with plastic to protect the captives, and a small feeding tray in the cage seems to calm them.

Experience and judgement will be quickly learned as to the timing required to close the shelf gates, depending on weather and species. Titmice, chickadees, and nuthatches usually take one seed and depart to return in a few minutes, and it is necessary to close the gates quickly as soon as they enter. Cardinals, towhees, white-throats, song sparrows,



carolina wrens, blue jays, and occasionally mourning doves will stay on a shelf for longer periods, but are quite sensitive to movement, and the gate must be closed quickly. Winter finches are wary on clear pretty days, but just prior to inclement weather they may be almost oblivious to the moving gates. At times pine siskins will completely ignore the gates no matter how they are jiggled, and continue to eat on the shelf while others are trapped and passed into the cage.

The trap I have in operation at the present is the original pilot model built from scrap materials. The shelf is  $3/4$  inch board and the frame is  $3/4$  inch strips. The sides of the trap and the four gates are  $1/2$  inch hardware cloth, and the cage is  $1 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  inch wire. The lines are 10 pound test monofilament fishing line, and should be as short and direct as possible. Direction of the lines can be changed by passing them through screw eye rings. Vibrations due to friction of the lines against contact points can be eliminated by rubbing bar soap on the lines. A 2 ounce fishing sinker attached to the end of each line will hold it taut to avoid tangling.

--2750 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27104

CAN A YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER CONTINUE TO WEAR HY PLUMAGE INTO EARLY MAY?

By M.J. Wolcott

At Bradley's Marsh, Ontario, banding station this spring we banded six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (*Sphyrapicus varius varius*). Of these, two were definitely females - white throat, scattered red on the crown, large black patch on breast, surrounded by yellowish white on the abdomen. One was definitely a male - crown, chin, and throat red, bordered with black; upperparts black with white spotting, sides of head and abdomen striped black and white; breast yellowish white with large black patch; tail black with two central feathers barred. The other three birds resembled HY birds.

These three No. 110-140332 - banded on April 27 - wingchord 125mm  
 No. 110-140361 - April 28 - wingchord 125mm  
 No. 110-140383 - May 4 - wingchord 122mm

had upperparts with the black and white pattern muted by a mottled brown; the wings and tail were the usual black and white pattern of sapsuckers; the sides of the head were striped black and white, but the black was shaded with dusky brown; there was no sign of red on the crown. The throat was dull white; the chest patch was dusky brown, not black; underparts were yellowish white. The bill was bluish-black and legs and feet dull gray. The actions of the birds and the texture of the feathers made us doubt that these are fledgling birds. It is possible for sapsuckers to nest in this region, but April 27 seems early for HY birds to be ranging freely.