

AN IMPROVED DRYING FORM FOR BIRD STUDY SKINS

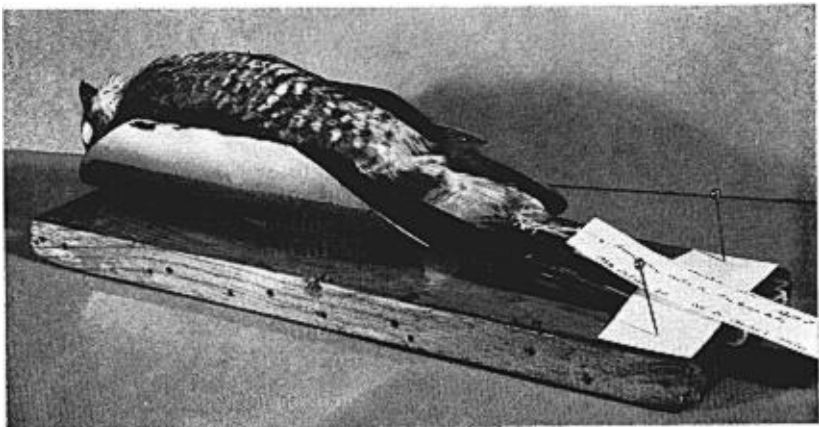
BY MERRILL WOOD

While perfect study skins can be produced by careful wrapping with cotton or cheesecloth, or by the use of a cardboard drying form (Anderson, 1932), experiments were carried out to find an easily made form which might be better for student use in that it could be mastered quicker. The aluminum forms of Dr. John B. Hurley, Yakima, Washington, are excellent, except that tails cannot be pinned and occasionally when used by the inexperienced they roll and dump the specimen.

An improved device is found in a metal half-cylinder attached to a wooden base. The aluminum or stainless steel part was made by bending a 26-gauge metal sheet over a pipe of suitable diameter, then the edges were trimmed for better shape and smoothed for safety. This form was then nailed to a wooden base which provides a sturdy non-tipping holder that allows the tail to extend over the wooden base where it may be slightly spread and held with pins. The stuffed bird is placed on its back in the metal part which produces a well-rounded back to the specimen. The open top and ends of this metal part allow quick and easy adjustment of the wings and feathers of the underparts of the bird. The speed of drying in the metal form has been satisfactory.

SIZES FOR DRYING FORMS (MEASUREMENTS IN INCHES)

Form size	Wood base size	Sheet metal size before rolled	Metal form size after rolled	Outside diameter of pipe rolled over
1	4.0 x 1.0	2.0 x 1.5	2.0 x 0.5	0.5
2	4.5 x 1.5	3.0 x 1.75	3.0 x 1.0	0.9
3	5.5 x 1.75	3.5 x 2.5	3.5 x 1.25	1.1
4	6.5 x 2.0	4.0 x 3.0	4.0 x 1.5	1.3
5	8.0 x 2.25	5.0 x 3.75	5.0 x 2.0	1.6
6	10.0 x 3.25	6.0 x 4.5	6.0 x 2.25	1.9
7	12.0 x 4.0	8.0 x 8.0	8.0 x 3.5	2.4
8	14.0 x 4.75	8.5 x 8.5	8.5 x 4.5	4.25



The sizes of forms are used for birds like the following: 1 Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 2 House Wren, 3 Yellow Warbler, 4 House Sparrow, 5 Common Starling, 6 Common Grackle, 7 Rock Dove, and 8 Ruffed Grouse.

LITERATURE CITED

ANDERSON, R. M. 1932. Methods of Collecting and Preserving Vertebrate Animals. Bulletin 69. National Museum of Canada.

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DISEASES AND INJURIES OF JAMAICAN BIRDS

BY CHARLES H. BLAKE

From August 1955 to May 1956 as holder of a Fulbright fellowship in Jamaica I was able to handle about 860 birds of forty-odd species at various places on the island. It is not surprising that some evidences of disease, deformity or injury were found. Unfortunately it was not feasible to make a special investigation of the pathology of these examples.

Streamer-tail (*Trochilus p. polytmus*). An immature male had the mandible blunt and deflected at the tip. More than 70 examples of this species were handled.

Loggerhead flycatcher (*Tyrannus caudifasciatus jamaicensis*). Two out of three handled at Woodstock (Westmoreland)¹ showed more or less swelling of the bases of the toes. Six others banded elsewhere were normal.

Northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos orpheus*). One of two banded at Woodstock had the bases of the left toes swollen. Eight banded elsewhere were normal. This swelling of the toes was only seen at Woodstock, unless the male redstart noted later at Hermitage Dam showed the same affection. I rather doubt that this swelling is an earlier stage of what is described below as "scaly leg." No examples of the latter were seen at Woodstock.

White-chinned thrush (*Turdus aurantius*). Four of the seven banded at St. Michael's Seminary, Manning's Hill (St. Andrew), showed swelling of the toes or tarsi with strong distortion of the scales. No indication of exudation was noted. In appearance the condition resembles "scaly leg" (cnemidocoptiasis) in the red-winged blackbird. I am adopting the term for the condition seen in the West Indies without proof of identity. It was not found on 10 white-chinned thrushes banded elsewhere but did occur on two birds of other species banded at the Seminary.

Bananaquit (*Coereba f. flaveola*). One out of four banded in Prof. Parry's garden, Mona (St. Andrew), had a swelling at the chin about

¹Parish names in parentheses.