

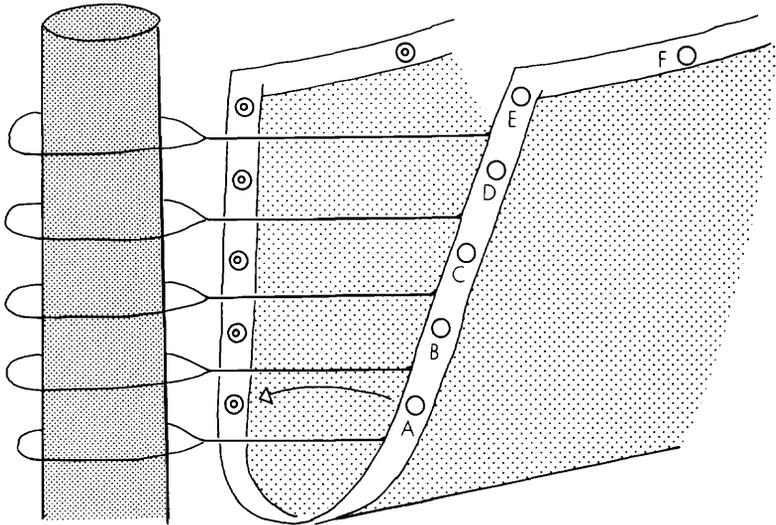
## GENERAL NOTES

**A device for handling mist nets in the dark.**—Since 1963 we have been studying various activities and vocalizations of the Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) and the Whip-poor-will (*C. vociferus*) in Kansas during the breeding season. As a part of this study we have attempted to band as many birds as possible. We have been most successful in catching males when we used a mist net and attracted the birds by playing recordings of their own songs. Regularly we drove along gravel roads, which wind through the study area, until we heard a singing male. Leaving our car some distance away, we would set up the mist net, generally across the road (which is little used at night), place a loudspeaker under the net, and then withdraw with our play-back recorder to some nearby, suitable cover. Some evenings we went through this somewhat tiresome procedure five or six times.

The most critical part of the process is getting the net in place rapidly (before the bird moves on to another song post) and quietly. Although there generally was some moonlight on the nights we worked, we tried to set the net up in shadowed areas, often where there were many shrubs and projecting branches and twigs from nearby trees. Thus we often found the net tangled on these or tangled on itself as a result of having been taken down and put up hastily in the dark. Frequently a flashlight had to be turned on, and the bird was frightened away. On some occasions the net was so snarled that work had to be suspended for the night.

Finally we solved the problem in a way which might be of use to others working under similar conditions. We made a cover for the net which stayed on it at all times except when both poles (which, incidentally, were sprayed with black paint) were in place and the net was lowered. The cover (Figure 1) is dark and of very light weight chiffon. It is important that the material used be light weight, because it must for a short period of time be supported by the net on the

Figure 1. The net cover is shown fitting around the net ties. A through F are snaps.



poles. When finished the cover is the same length as the net and is 11 inches wide (for a five-shelf net). The edges of the material have to be folded several times to make them thick enough for sewing, and the four sides are bound with twill binding tape on both ends. On both ends, on the binding, are snaps which fit above each tie. Snaps are also placed about every 20 inches along the length of the cover. When taking the net down, we first closed snaps A through E, in that order, on one end, all ties except the top one, which is fixed to the pole, being slid upwards. Then we proceeded up the length of the net, closing the snaps, F etc., above the net until we reached the other end. There the snaps were also closed around the ties. One pole was then pulled out and the net was wound on it as the worker walked toward the second pole. After the winding was done, the two poles were tied together around the net with a broad piece of cloth (a man's handkerchief can be used). All of this takes only about five minutes. Setting up the net involves the reverse of the process and is extremely rapid—it can be done by two people in less than one minute.

An additional advantage of using the cover is that one can tie the poles, with the net on them, to the luggage racks of a car and travel for miles at a moderate speed without any damage to the nets.—Marion Anne Jenkinson and Robert M. Mengel, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66044.

**An Interesting Recovery of a Banded Evening Grosbeak During the 1968-69 Winter Incursion Into East Texas.**—The range of the Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona vespertina*) does not usually extend into southeastern United States (American Ornithologists' Union, *Checklist of North American Birds*, fifth edition); however, winter incursions of the eastern race (*H. v. vespertina*) have been irregularly reported south to some of the southern border states. The winter incursions from 1955 to 1961 have been summarized by Shaub and Shaub (*Jack-Pine Warbler*, 35:128-139, 1957) and Shaub (*Bird-Banding*, 34: 1-22, 1963). During these years, the southernmost penetrations were Gadsden and Birmingham, Alabama and Oxford, Mississippi. *Audubon Field Notes* has periodically listed more recent sightings for Louisiana (e.g., 1963-64).

In Texas, there are only scattered records for the Evening Grosbeak in the western half of the state all of which are probably of the subspecies *H. v. brooksi* (A.O.U. Checklist). Wolfe (*Check-list of the birds of Texas*, Intelligencer Printing Lancaster, p. 74, 1956) considers it a rare transient in west Texas. Except for two sightings near the upper coast (see *Audubon Field Notes*, 30(3): p. 309, 1959) there are no known records for the Evening Grosbeak in east Texas prior to this time.

Beginning about January 1, 1969, there was an extensive incursion of Evening Grosbeaks into eastern Texas. We know of reports from several scattered localities (i.e., Lufkin, Conroe, Houston, and Hallettsville). In the Huntsville area (Walker County) flocks ranging from a few birds to near 100 were observed periodically from January 3, until May 2. One male bird collected on May 1 was extremely fat and apparently ready to migrate from the area.

About April 1, Evening Grosbeaks (up to 20 at one time) began to visit our feeder, each day consuming large quantities of sunflower seeds. During these visits, a banded female (66-181659) was observed and subsequently caught with a Japanese mist net on April 11. The bird was banded by Mrs. William H. Babcock on February 21, 1966, one mile northwest of Gordonsville, Virginia—some 1100 airline miles northeast of Huntsville. Since the bird was first banded in Virginia, it is apparently of the subspecies *H. v. vespertina* which breeds in eastern Canada and northeastern United States. Evidently this race is continuing to sporadically extend its winter range south and west; however, the reasons for the extensiveness and magnitude of this latest incursion, which is the first into Texas, are obscure. Perhaps continued observations by northern investigators on the breeding success and food supply of the Evening Grosbeak during the previous years will eventually provide an answer.

We are indebted to Mrs. Babcock for allowing us to report this band information.—Ralph R. Moldenhauer, Department of Biology, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas 77340, and Kelly B. Bryan, 812 Navarro, Mart, Texas 76664.