GENERAL NOTES

A small Great Crested Flycatcher: a problem in identification.—On 27 August 1963 at Island Beach, Ocean County, New Jersey, Mrs. Mabel Warburton mist-netted a small *Myiarchus* flycatcher. Confident that the bird represented the first New Jersey record of one of the small *Myiarchus* species of the southwestern United States and Mexico, I prevailed upon Mrs. Warburton to let me collect it. Subsequent comparison of this specimen (now no. 159,730 in The University of Michigan Museum of Zoology collections) with a series in the American Museum of Natural History by Wesley E. Lanyon and myself showed that the bird was a very small Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*).

The bird was an immature female with a completely ossified skull and an ovary that measured 5 x 3 mm. The specimen's measurements are: bill, 13.6 mm; wing (chord), 87.0 mm; tail, 71.5 mm; tarsus, 17.5 mm; weight, 25.4 gm. Comparative measurements of 6 specimens of female Great Crested Flycatchers from Michigan in late summer are: bill, 14.9 mm. (range, 14.3 to 15.7); wing, 99.0 mm (96.0 to 104.0); tail, 87.5 mm (82.0 to 95.0); tarsus, 19.5 mm (18.5 to 20.5, 5 specimens); weight, 33.3 gm (1 specimen). At Island Beach twenty other Great Crested Flycatchers weighed from 28.0 to 42.5 gm (mean = 33.8) (B. G. Murray, Jr., and J. R. Jehl, Jr., *Bird-Banding*, **35:** 253-263, 1964). The bird was undergoing an extensive body molt when captured.

Although the Great Crested Flycatcher can be distinguished from the Ash-throated Flycatcher (*M. cinerascens*) by the characters given by A. R. Phillips *et al.* (*Bird-Banding*, **37:** 153-171, 1966), bird banders in the east confronted with an unusually small individual may refer to R. T. Peterson's *Field Guide to Western Birds* (1961), where the Ash-throated Flycatcher is described as "A medium-sized flycatcher, smaller than a kingbird, with 2 white wing-bars, *whitish* throat, *very pale yellowish belly*, and *rufous tail*" (original emphasis). The bander may also consider the Olivaceous Flycatcher (*M. tuberculifer*), "Of the same type as the Ash-throated Flycatcher, rufous-tailed and pale yellow-bellied, but considerably smaller with a grayish instead of white throat." The possibility of misidentification seems evident. Banders should be warned that size CANNOT be used as a character to distinguish the species of this difficult group of flycatchers (see also A. R. Phillips and W. E. Lanyon, *Bird-Banding*, **41:** 190-197, 1970). Because of the rarity of the smaller *Myiarchus* flycatchers in the east, banders that catch suspected *M. cinerascens* and *M. tuberculifer* are encouraged to compare their birds with museum series.

I am grateful to Wesley E. Lanyon of the American Museum of Natural History for identifying the specimen and to Robert W. Storer for allowing me to measure specimens in The University of Michigan Museum of Zoology.—Bertram G. Murray, Jr., Department of Natural Science, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 48823.

A simple method for trapping breeding adults in nesting boxes.—During our studies on the ecology of the Great Tit (*Parus major*) conventional methods sometimes appeared unsatisfactory to trap some adults feeding their young. Therefore we have developed a low cost apparatus that can easily be placed, does not frighten the bird and has proved useful in the field.

A permanent magnet with concentric poles of which the inner is surrounded by a coil is built in the lid of a nesting box. The magnet holds a hinged door of stiff iron wire in horizontal position.

When a current is sent through the coil, the permanent magnetic field decreases and the door falls, blocking the exit of the nesting box (see Fig. 1). Unlike other systems where current is disconnected, here current is only used at the moment of trapping, so that there is no danger of exhausting the battery during eventually long waiting periods.

If the attractive force is lowered as far as possible by covering the magnet with a non-magnetic layer (increasing the distance between the poles and the iron door) only about 100 ampereturns are necessary to free the door. The coil is not directly connected to the battery but over a silicon bridge rectifier located in the lid near the coil. This makes wrong connection of the battery impossible. In spite of the voltage drop of about 1, 5 V due to the rectifier, a 6 V dry battery proved to be sufficient to activate the trap door from a distance of 50 m.

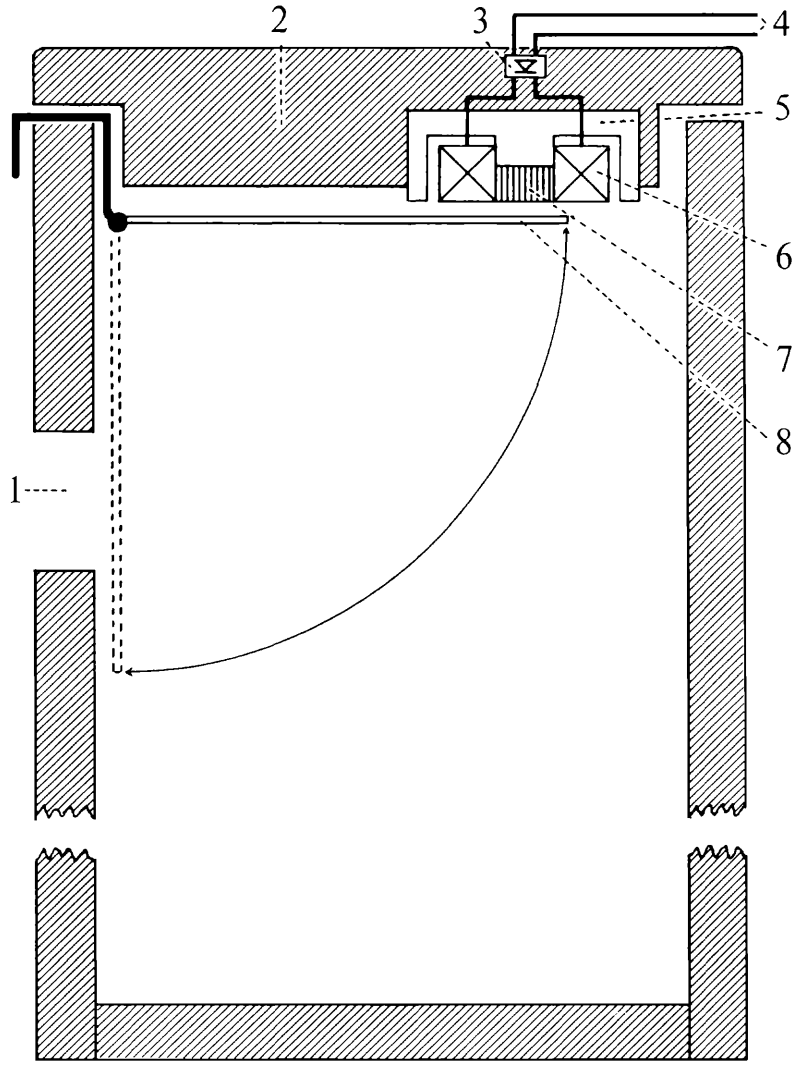

Fig. 1. Cross section through nesting box with modified lid (see text)

1. entrance-hole
2. lid
3. silicon bridge rectifier
4. wire connection to 6 V battery
5. yoke
6. coil
7. permanent magnet
8. hinged door

When a bird has to be caught the lid of its nesting box is replaced by the modified one. After the bird has entered its nest the coil is powered at a distance. Some of our nesting boxes have hinged lids. They simply were opened and covered with the trap lid. Tits did not seem frightened by this modification in the surroundings of their nest.—André A. Dhondt (1) & E. J. Van Outryve (2).

(1) Laboratory of Ecology (Prof. Dr. J. Hublé)

(2) Laboratory of Animal Physiology (Prof. Dr. G. Van Grembergen) Ghent State University, Ledeganckstraat 35, 9000-Ghent (Belgium).

Increase of fall Traill's Flycatchers in southern Florida.—Until October 21, 1967, when I took a Traill's Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) at my banding station one mile north of Homestead, Florida, this species had been considered to be absent as a transient in peninsular Florida (*Bird-Banding*, January 1970, **41** (1): 40). In fall of 1968 John C. Ogden collected one 13 miles southwest of Homestead, in Everglades National Park. In 1969 I banded, and released from my station, three more (two adult, one HY).

In 1970, between September 24-October 19, I netted 27 *traillii*. Four were taken September 24, the last three October 14, 16, 19. Aged by wingbar color, two were unknown, 14 adult, 11 HY. Four HY had incomplete ossification. Wing measurements ranged from 64-72; weights from 119-149; fat content from 0-3, two birds having 3 (on a scale of 3). Two birds repeated, one the following day, one three days following. Each bird was examined for ossification, emargination of 6th primary, comparative lengths of 5th to 10th primary, 6th to 10th, 6th to wingtip; for length of tarsus, tail and wing tip; for mouth color, length and width of bill from nostril. Occasional corroborations were made by Dr. Wm. B. Robertson, Jr., and by John C. Ogden. One bird taken dead is in the reference collection of Everglades National Park.—Erma J. Fisk, 17101 SW 284th St., Homestead, Fla., 33030.

An automatic trap for use on bird nesting boxes.—During the 1930s I made relatively extensive use of traps for capturing birds in nesting boxes and in this program developed and tested several types of automatic traps. One of these was much like the one described by Dehaven and Guarino (*Bird-Banding* **40**: 48-50).

Another trap which I later developed proved more simple to construct and trouble free to operate. This consisted only of a vertical shutter made of sheet metal and a release treadle made of wire, with the two attached to a square of plywood (Fig. 1). This removable unit was attached to the inside of nesting boxes with the large hole through the plywood matching the entrance hole in the front of the nesting boxes. Attachment was made with two small screws given several turns into the wood of the front of the boxes. Four small holes were drilled through the detachable plywood square to increase the chance that there would always be two holes which would miss possible knots in the wood of the fronts of the boxes.

The shutter turned up and down on a bolt inserted through its one end and through the plywood square so that it closed the hole through the plywood square and the entrance hole of the box when in the down position. The bolt was first inserted through the plywood and made firm by tightening a nut against the plywood. This nut also served to hold the shutter about one-eighth inch from the plywood. A second nut was backed off from the shutter against a third or jam nut. Thus the shutter was loosely held on the bolt, and it always dropped freely when released from its upper position.

The vertical arm of the treadle was long enough that the birds were well inside of the box before perching on the horizontal arm which tripped the shutter. The vertical arm engaged the shutter near its point of attachment, and the slight weight of the shutter was thus accentuated by lever action, helping to hold the treadle in the set position. Sensitivity of the shutter release was adjusted by appropriate bending of the in-turned wire at the upper end of the treadle or of the flange at the bottom of the shutter.

Sometimes the shutters and shutter release wires were attached directly to the inside of the fronts of the nesting boxes without using the plywood squares. When it was desired to allow the birds to nest in the boxes, a small screw was placed in the fronts of the boxes beneath the shutter so that the shutter was held