LETTER TO THE EDITOR

21 June 1972

Sir:

Comments to the recent paper by K. W. Duncan (*Bird-Banding*, **42:** 279-287, 1971). Aside from the fact that tables 1 and 2 are incomplete (e.g., n = 3, r = 3), there are two points that need clarification. First, no distinction is made between the two legs, thus giving less than the total number of possibilities. For example, if we take n = 2 and r = 1, then we get four variations for each leg (alu, color 1; color 1, alu; alu, color 2; color 2, alu). To this total of eight possibilities we can add the cases of one band per leg (i.e., alu. left, color 1 or 2 right, and vice versa). Thus, we end up with a total of 12 band combinations instead of the four listed in table 1. It is clear from the example given on page 282 that n and r do not include the aluminum band, thus the identity of the number 12 for n = 2 and r = 2 is purely coincidental.

A second comment concerns the problem of reading combinations of several identical bands in sequence. As long as all birds get the same total number of bands, there are more possibilities that can be useful. For example, RED RED BLUE ALU is usable as long as we exclude RED BLUE BLUE ALU. In addition, since in such a case one would probably have two bands per leg, the combination RED BLUE BLUE ALU become also usable.

It would thus be very helpful if the fact that the bands can be distributed differently among the two legs could be incorporated into the program. From my experience it seems that the best way to use colorbands is to keep the total number of bands per bird constant. Then, any losses become immediately apparent.

Yours sincerely,

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