GENERAL NOTES

Further notes on the color of Mockingbird eyes.—Kenneth W. Prescott (*Bird-Banding,* **43:** 219-220, 1972) reviewed the literature on the progression of color of Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) eyes from the dark gray of the juvenile to the "bright yellow color which is characteristic of an adult mockingbird." On the basis of his bird retaken after two and a half years still with a white iris, he suggests that iris color alone may not be a reliable age indicator.

In the light of 439 Mockingbirds and 53 Returns handled at my station at Homestead, Florida since October 1966, I consider his bird with a white iris to be abnormal, but agree that once a bird is past its juvenal coloration of dark gray or olive iris, a bander cannot safely age it by eye color. My notes over six winters read: "yellow-green, orange-green, orange-brown, dirty yellow, dirty orange, clear yellow, clear orange." These "dirty" colors apply equally to fall birds with incompletely ossified skulls and to birds retaken after two or three years. The color remains consistent and appears to be an individual characteristic. Of the Returns on which I kept color notes, 16 birds had yellow or orange eyes, 15 had dirty yellow or dirty orange or yellow-green irises. One of the latter was taken 17 times between December 1966 and January 1970, with unchanged eye color.

A gray-eyed bird in May showed a clear orange iris by September. On the other hand, one olive-eyed bird in April had not changed in October, and an olive-eyed bird in January (not an HY bird!) was still olive-eyed in April. These may have been abnormalities. Neither has returned.

Therefore I feel that iris color cannot be considered a method of aging Mockingbirds except in juveniles. "Skulling" is possible on some immature birds, but in south Florida where Mockingbirds can hatch as early as February and March, many HY birds could have completely ossified skulls by fall.—Erma J. Fisk, *17101 SW 284 Street, Homestead, Florida 33030.* Received 30 November 1972, accepted 13 December 1972.

An inexpensive apparatus for recording data from radar Plan Position Indicator displays.—Sixteen mm and even 35 mm film are usually used to record data from the PPI displays of radars. In most cases this is not necessary because the resolution of most film is so much greater than that of the cathode ray tube used in the PPI display. Since 1969 we have successfully used 8 mm film for recording radar data. Total cost of film and processing is less than one-half that of 16 mm film. The system uses readily available Tri-X or Ektachrome Super 8 mm film which can be processed at any standard commercial laboratory in a matter of days.

The data recording system consists of a modified super 8 mm camera and an intervalometer which actuates the camera once with every revolution of the radar display (Fig. 1).

The camera (the "Gerol-Williams modified Honeywell-Elmo") is available with closeup lenses and power cables for about $200 from Honeywell Photo Inc. (Service Department, Attn. Bob Gerol, 24-30 Skillman Avenue, Long Island City New York 11101). It is modified so that the shutter is normally open and closes only when the film is advanced.

Commercial intervalometers are available for photographic use, but they usually cost more than $250; those that we tested are unreliable. We do not recommend the use of an intervalometer which uses a solenoid to actuate the cable release of the camera. Solenoids tend to be unreliable and their rapid action has often damaged the shutter release mechanisms of the cameras we use. The mechanical intervalometer shown in Figure 1 is gentle in its action, reliable, and inexpensive to construct. The heart of the unit is a 1/20 horsepower variable speed motor (we use Bodine #116), and a solid state SCR motor control unit (available from many electronic stores for about $10). The motor drives a wheel with four adjustable cams. The cams in turn actuate a cable release by means of a lever arm. The cable release then engages the single frame shutter release of the camera. The speed range of the system is determined by setting either one, two, or four cams on the rotating wheel. Fine control is exercised by means of the motor control. Further details on the construction of the intervalometer can be obtained from the authors.

To record radar data, the radar and camera systems are set at approximately the same speed so that the camera exposes one frame of film for every revolution of the radar. Exact synchrony is not needed if a small illuminated pocket watch