

cages suspended at the nest site from a pulley in order to facilitate periodic examination in a study of postfledging growth. The cages (12 x 12 x 18 inches) had wooden ends and 1-inch wire mesh sides, top, and bottom. A clear acetate top provided protection from rain, and the wire bottom allowed feces to fall through. Perches were placed inside the cage and the nests were wedged into a corner. A perch on the outside of the wire allowed the parents to feed the young. Experience indicated that a tray suspended beneath the cage to collect pellets and modification of one corner to surround the nest on two sides with wire mesh and allow parents better access to the nest would have been desirable.

Young from three nests were placed in cages at age Day 15 and measured daily or every other day until age Day 25-30. In two of the nests the young gained weight at about the same rate as wild fledglings. The young in the third nest declined gradually, and they were about 5-7 g lighter than normal when released at age Day 25.

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A reusable cassette holder for small bands.—The problems of organizing and using small size (X, 0, 1, 1B, and 1A) butt-end aluminum bands in the field are familiar to most banders. Avoiding band mix-ups and losses are special problems when working over water, in mud, or at low light levels. The most suitable band holders are those that can be organized and loaded at home or in the laboratory for efficient use in the field. Various devices for holding, opening, and organizing larger bird bands have been presented by Addy (Guide to Waterfowl Banding, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service: 164 p., 1956). An ideal reusable carrier and organizer for small bands is the cassette container used to market oral contraceptive tablets. One such container is the Dialpak 63 Tablet Dispenser manufactured by Ortho Pharmaceutical Corporation (Fig. 1). The Dialpak Tablet Dispenser is patented for its specific purpose and cannot be obtained commercially; however, it is generally available from contraceptive users as a recycled byproduct.

Each dialpak cassette measures 75 mm on a side by 12 mm deep. The cassette contains 21 chambers 7 mm in diameter and 7 mm deep, any 20 of which are covered at one time. The chambers hold a sequence of 20 size X, 0, 1, 1B, or 1A bands that may be spread in preparation for banding before going to the field. It is convenient to label the 1st and 11th chambers for rapid reference. The clear plastic cassette cover rotates only in a clockwise direction making it impossible to use bands out of sequence or to mix bands once they are properly placed in the container. Because bands can only be released from the cassette one at a time, spills are avoided. The cassette with bands is buoyant, a particularly important feature when banding over water.

The numerical sequence and size of bands in the cassette are recorded with a pen and India ink on a piece of masking tape which is attached to the back of the dialpak. Record-keeping is eased by packing a full string of 100 bands into five cassettes with appropriate sequence numbers. Four or five cassettes of bands fit comfortably into a shirt or blouse pocket. The cassette may be worn around the neck on a nylon cord while the banding operation is in progress.

This is an especially effective method of keeping bands and records in good order if master permittees provide bands to subpermittees, either in small groups (20) or in full strings of 100 as recommended by the BBM (North American Bird Banding Manual, 1972). Size X bands used only for special hummingbird



FIGURE 1. Reusable cassette holder for small butt-end aluminum bands.

projects and issued as flat sheets of thin aluminum can be placed in cassettes after being cut, trimmed, smoothed and shaped.—DAVID J. ROSLIEN, *Department of Biology, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa 52101*. Received 11 July 1974, accepted 28 July 1974.

A note on familial longevity in Eastern Bluebirds.—Passerine adults usually do not remain paired for more than one nesting season, and the bond between adults and young normally does not persist after the latter attain independence. The Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*), however, appears atypical in its familial attachments. Nice ("Studies in the life history of the Song Sparrow, I", 1937) stated that bluebird families may remain together until late fall, and Thomas (*Wilson Bull.*, 58: 143-183, 1946) noted several cases of bluebird mates remaining paired for two successive nesting seasons.