

GENERAL NOTES

Capturing and Marking Spectacled Eiders in Alaska.—During a nesting study of the Spectacled Eider (*Somateria fischeri*) on the Clarence Rhode National Wildlife Range in western Alaska various techniques were used to capture young and adults (Dau, 1974). As many ducklings as possible were captured by hand or with a small dip net before or shortly after leaving the nest and marked in the web of the foot with fingerling fish tags following the technique of Grice and Rogers (1965). Banding activities were begun as soon as the young attained sufficient size to hold colored and standard monel bands. Young eiders were banded from the last week of July through the second week of September at which time most of them had fledged. Although young birds could occasionally be captured with large dip nets, a nylon gill net similar to that described by Lensink (1957) was found to be far superior. The gill net was of 3-inch mesh and was 1.2 meters high and 9 meters long. Light-weight aluminum poles were attached to each end of the net in such a way that, when forced into the pond bottom, the net would be held erect. With the net in a stationary position, one person could occasionally drive a brood into the net. A more successful technique involved having a person at each end of the net and then maneuvering through the pond. The irregularly shaped, shallow ponds characteristic of the area often allowed cornering the birds in restricted areas. Seldom would young or adult eiders go to land, but when this occurred, the young could usually be captured by hand. Young birds could usually be induced to dive or attempt to fly towards the net and thus become entangled. The net served a dual function as either a submerged gill net or an above-water mist net. Adult females would not swim or dive into the net but by keeping the surface of the net directly on the surface of the pond, where it was not visible to the bird, they could be induced to take flight towards the net and by raising it at the last moment they could also be mist-netted.

A total of 143 Spectacled Eider ducklings captured during this study were marked in the web of the foot with fingerling fish tags (Grice and Rogers, 1965). Six adult females and 64 young sufficiently large to hold bands were marked with both colored and standard monel bands. In addition, adult females were marked with numbered nasal saddles similar to those described by Sugden and Poston (1968) but with the modifications of Doty and Greenwood (1974).

Of the 64 young Spectacled Eiders captured 18 had been previously web-tagged during this study. These recaptures and sightings of color-marked young and adults show that Spectacled Eider broods are reared to fledging within 2.4 kilometers of their nest site. Rearing takes place on shallow freshwater or brackish ponds characteristic of the outer Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

Spectacled Eiders return in low numbers as yearlings, so the resighting of only one was not considered unusual. However, of the six adult females marked in 1972, at least three returned and nested successfully in 1973. One female nested within 30 m of her previous year's nest. The exact 1972 nest location of the other two females was unknown. The study area was not investigated in 1974; however, in 1975 two nasal-saddled females, one with a brood of ducklings, were encountered. No banding was done in 1975, so information on the homing of young to their natal area is to date incomplete.

LITERATURE CITED

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