

## GENERAL NOTES

**Toe-banding of Common Loon Chicks.** The potential value of bird-banding has been limited for many species due to the impossibility of banding young with adult size bands and difficulty in capturing adults. This has been a problem with Common Loons (*Gavia immer*) because the size 8 bands used on adults slip off the small feet of immatures younger than 6 weeks. By that time they are nearly as difficult to capture as adults, and the night-lighting method I have used requires a disproportionate amount of time for its low success rate (for example, 90 hours for two birds during the summer of 1971). On the other hand, loon chicks three days old or less are easily captured by hand or with a small net. I have found success marking them by a method other than conventional leg-banding.

A slit is made in the webbing with a pointed, sterilized scalpel on the proximal side of the fourth toe. A 3A band is placed through the webbing and around the toe (Fig. 1). The band size was determined to be sufficiently large for adults by fitting it to toes of fresh adult specimens, yet it is held on chicks by the webbing so it is suitable for them too. Chicks re-captured after two weeks showed no ill effects. The webbing healed quickly and there was no impediment to the juvenile's swimming ability or success through fledging and up to fall migration.

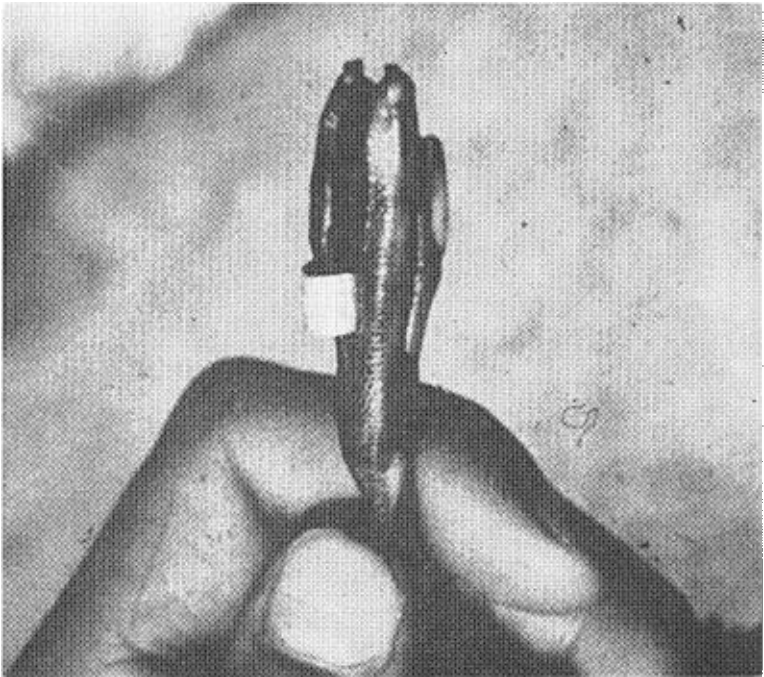


FIGURE 1. Fish and Wildlife Service band on toe of Common Loon chick.

Loons do not walk, except for the shuffle they use to get on or off the nest during the incubation period. A band that encountered continued friction with a hard surface would undoubtedly wear, and in addition could damage walking birds' feet. This method is recommended for non-walking aquatic birds, and may be useful for grebes, frigatebirds, and other species for which traditional banding methods have proved unsuccessful.

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