

be fully functional. The Downy Woodpecker has been recaptured only once since its toe was released. At that time, six months later, the claw on that toe was still nearly twice the length of the corresponding claw on the other foot, indicating that the claw was experiencing less wear, perhaps resulting from decreased use or weakness of the toe.

In 17 years of banding at these nature centers, a total of 429 Downy and 91 Hairy woodpeckers have been banded, and we have recorded 842 recaptures of Downy and 171 of Hairy woodpeckers. While the incidence of toes being caught in bands is very low, we have modified our banding procedures for Hairy Woodpeckers to further minimize its occurrence. The Bird Banding Laboratory approves sizes 1A and 2 bands for Hairy Woodpeckers. Because 1A bands are too tight for some Hairy Woodpeckers, and because bands on woodpeckers often experience extreme wear leading to illegible numbers, we had routinely been using size 2 bands on all Hairy Woodpeckers. However, since the 2000 incidents, we have been sizing all Hairy Woodpeckers with a leg gauge and selecting the smallest band size that slides easily on the leg, ensuring a fit that reduces the likelihood of their toes getting caught in the band. Since adopting this practice, we have seen no additional problems with Hairy Woodpeckers. Only size 1B bands are approved by the Bird Banding Laboratory for use on Downy Woodpeckers, so using another size is not an option for this species.

The problem of toes being caught in bands may occur in other species as well, but it seems more likely to occur in woodpeckers, which have relatively short tarsi, potentially allowing bands to slip more easily onto a claw or toe during their vertical hopping movements up and down tree trunks. The fleshy pads on the toes may then prevent the band from sliding off. Ill-fitting bands could be detrimental especially to woodpeckers, because losing the use of a rear toe will weaken a bird's grip on tree trunks and decrease its ability to secure food items. We recommend that all recaptured woodpeckers be checked carefully for this problem.

Jeanine M. Refsnider

Conservation Biology Program, 100 Ecology
Univ. of Minnesota
1987 Upper Buford Circle
St. Paul, MN 55108
refsnij@umn.edu

Ron L. Refsnider

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
1 Federal Drive
BHW Federal Building
Ft. Snelling, MN 55111

Siah St. Clair

Springbrook Nature Center
100 85th Avenue
Fridley, MN 55432

Errata

In the bottom right hand corner of "Turkey Vulture Marking History," NABB 30:59, one line was inadvertently omitted. Please substitute "440" for "450 or 460" and add: "of them near Hampton. Coles then banded additional vultures at".

In the second line of page 60, substitute "all" for "most".