

BIRD BANDING DEPARTMENT

Under the Direction of Wm. I. Lyon, Waukegan, Ill.

TRAPPING THE TREE CLIMBING BIRDS

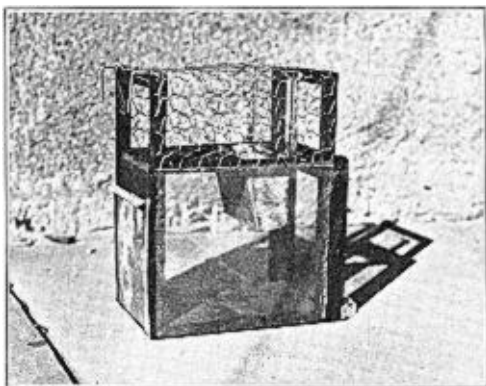
There is a way to trap everything if you can only solve the problem. The tree climbers were a real puzzle, as the moment they met an obstruction in going up a tree they would fly, but the way to success is perseverance, so a crude trap was constructed, then we carefully watched the effect and studied the cause. It was discovered that if the obstruction was placed slanting the birds would climb up but keep a little dis-



tance away from the collar or guiding piece of wire netting on the tree. The *illustration* gives you the impression that the collar is nearly horizontal, but that is because the photo was taken from above the trap. The later traps are built with a greater slant to the collar, on a tree that is eighteen inches in diameter. The starting point on the opposite side of the tree is about three feet lower than the upper end of the funnel. As the bird comes into the apex of the funnel, there is an apron that covers the outer side so the only way they can fly, is downward. When they are in the upper compartment, they usually go to the top, and on one side there is an opening into the receiving box, shown in the *second illustration*, and the only obstruction is a clear glass which looks like a

chance for escape and they fly against the glass and slide down the shute into the lower compartment of the receiving box. Some are wise enough to get up the shute, but by opening or closing the bottom of the shute, according to the size of the bird, you can regulate their chances. The bottom of the receiving box has a round piece of wood for a grip so the box can be handled with one hand. Notice the upper part has hooks, so all one has to do is to raise up the box till the hooks are clear and it is ready to come to the ground so it is convenient to get your bird.

The higher you can place the trap on the trunk of the tree the more space you will have for the climbers to get below the trap, but you have to provide some means for climbing; we found some old telegraph pole steps very convenient.



Our first traps were built solid on the tree and took much odd time to construct, but a request to purchase some caused much figuring and rebuilding, and we have a man at present who will make them at \$12.00. We have no desire to start a trap factory and we are glad to have you copy our traps for Bird Banding, but for those who do not have the convenience, we have arranged to have local people construct them.

Another trap that has been successful is the "Top Entrance Trap" that works on a balance principle, so when the bird hops on the floor of a small entrance it tilts downward and the only escape is into the lower compartment. As soon as the bird leaves the balance the weight rights the entrance and is ready for the next bird. We have used this trap successfully in bushes up off the ground.

The making of the guard wires at the funnel entrance seems to be the most tedious and annoying to many. We have found a gutter strainer, that can be obtained at a hardware store, can be cut and made to help out in the work; then by taking half or three-quarter inch hardware cloth that is galvanized after made, you can put it over a flame, blow torch or gas stove, and melt it off four or five strands and leave the ends free. A

strip treated in this way around the funnel entrance gives very desirable guard wires. Just try it.—W. I. L.

We need more information and volunteers in our Gull and Tern Banding Campaign. Have you contributed your share of information? Or can you suggest some that can? Have you tried to find a volunteer Bird Bander in your district?

BIRD BANDING — ARE BIRDS FRIGHTENED OR INJURED?

BY S. PRENTISS BALDWIN

Writing to my friends I may be pardoned if I introduce a few lines of autobiography, as it may match that of many others who enjoy birds.

My father, when I was about six years o'd, taught me an interest in birds and wild flowers. He would take me walking in the fields and woods, then in the evening, at home, he would put down on the floor, for me to play with, that fine old book of Birds, published by New York State in 1845, with its many accurate figures of birds, all beautifully hand colored. Every day of my life I have felt gratitude to that father who was wise enough to put the love of nature into me.

Later I collected birds, learned taxidermy, and made skins of them, but more and more my heart grew tender toward them until I could no longer collect, because I could not bring myself to kill them.

Perhaps that alone is answer to the question whether birds are hurt by trapping and banding, when I add that I have now for ten years or more been actively trapping and banding birds every year, and have handled, I know not how many, but at least some thirty or forty thousand birds from my traps.

But to continue the Autobiography: after years in business in the city I bought a farm, and wife and I lived on the farm each summer; and how we did enjoy the outdoor life.

One feature of the life on the farm disturbed our comfort; just as we were most enjoying the peace and beauty of nature, a bird would cry out in pain, caught by some bird enemy; today perhaps the House Sparrows break up the home life of our Bluebirds; tomorrow it is the home of our Robins destroyed by the red squirrels; constantly tragedy comes to our birds, until this sort of thing worked on my nerves, and I determined to end it.

This was ten years ago, and the change came in the life of the birds on my farm, because I became a bird bander and, finding it so interesting, I have systematically trapped and banded birds on the farm ever since then. Within the last two years several well known ornithologists have visited my farm, and each one has remarked what an extraordinary number and variety of birds I have on the place, and how tame they are. Two of these ornithologists, men of exceptional train-