

News, Notes, Comments

ERRATUM

Please note that in *NABB*, Vol. 35(1):27, Lucinda M. Rowe and Jared D. Wolfe's manuscript, "Using Alulas and the Carpal Covert to Assess Age in Some Formative and First Alternative Plumaged Western Passerines," captions for figures 4 and 5 should be switched.

The editors apologize for this editing error.

HOLDERS for Weighing Birds

You have probably had this experience. You are in a store looking for something you need to make some piece of banding equipment and the required item was never intended for the use you have in mind. You might not know exactly what you are looking for or what it is called. Inevitably, a store clerk tries to be helpful and asks, "What do you want to use it for?" You hesitate wondering how to reply without adding to the confusion. This happened to me several times as I sought the perfect vessel to hold birds for weighing. My criteria for the ideal holding vessel were relatively simple: (1) birds could not escape from it, (2) it would be easy to use, (3) it would be

durable, (3) it would gently restrain the bird from struggling, (4) it would be easy to clean, and (5) it could be constructed out of cheap and widely available materials. Years ago, I found a solution that satisfied all of these needs. If you do not like your current weighing solution, you might try this one. Many others have copied these weighing cups and liked them.

The holders are simple cups made from PVC tubing and capped on one end. They stand upright on a scale with the open end up. The caps (known as "PVC caps" or "PVC end caps") are commercially available to fit various diameters of PVC tubing. The cap is not glued to the tube, but simply held in place by friction. It is necessary to have various cup sizes to accommodate various birds, but four fit most of the passerine and near passerine species typically mist-netted. The four sizes I use have inside diameters of 1 1/8" (kinglets, gnatcatchers, small warblers), 1 3/8" (most warblers, small sparrows, goldfinches, siskins), 1 5/8" (thrushes, large sparrows, buntings), and 2" (cuckoos, cardinals, blackbirds) (Fig. 1). Many species fit well in more than one size.

A flat-ended cap is necessary for the cup to stand upright on the scale. In the past, such caps were common, but currently most of the available caps have rounded ends. These can still be made to work

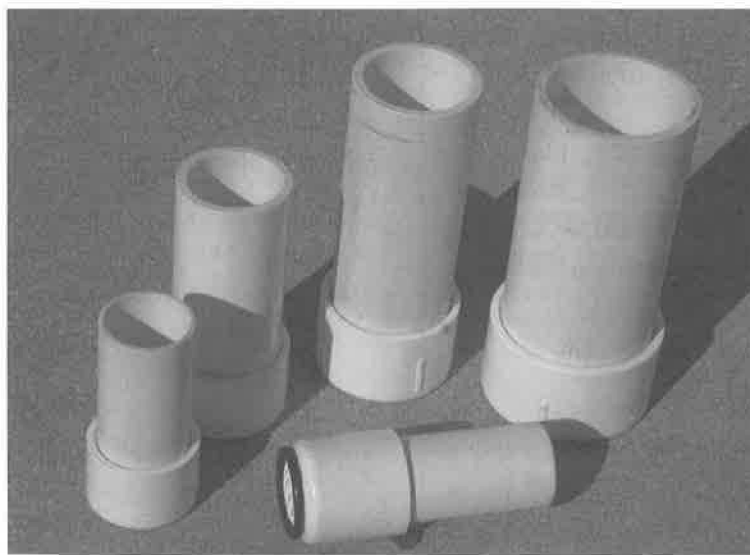


Fig. 1. PVC cups for measuring the mass of birds. The cup in front shows an O-ring glued to the cap.