

# News, Notes, Comments

## Ibañez Knot for Bird Bags

Bird bags are common and recommended storing and carrying devices for birds (especially passerines) while bird banding. Once the birds are removed from the nets, each individual is put in a separate, small cloth bag and transported to the processing site (Ralph et al. 1993, NABC 2001a, NABC 2001b).

In Santa Alejandrina Bird Banding Station, Minatitlan, Veracruz, Mexico, we realized that the "usual" simple overhand knot used to close the bird bags to prevent it from coming open may not be optimal, since it creates another knot on the string when you undo the knot. Untangling the "undesired" knot takes extra time. In sites like the Santa Alejandrina Banding Station, where up to 400 birds can be trapped in a few hours during migration, every second counts and must be used wisely for the safety of the birds. For this reason, we have adopted another easier, faster and equally safe way to secure the bag which we call the "Ibañez knot", in honor of Frank Ibañez, a French bird bander that taught it to us.

The first steps follow NABC (2001a): When putting a bird into the bag, you put your entire hand into the bag, closing it with your other hand around the neck of the bag including the lower arm and wrist of the hand that is still holding the bird inside the bag. Then gently release the bird at the bottom of the bag and slide your hand out of the bag, assuring that the bird stays in the bottom of the bag and closing the neck of the bag with your other hand when you pull out the hand that was holding the bird. Pull the drawstring of the bag shut before removing your hand from the neck of the bag to ensure it stays closed. With the bird safely at the bottom of the bag, pull the drawstring to close the bag.

Once you have reached this part, the Ibañez knot is done following the next steps (<http://youtu.be/Gu8DUiIpbdE>) (Instructions are specified for right handed banders; left handed banders should just switch instructions with the other hand):

1. With the bag closed, grasp the tip of the string with your left hand.

2. Put your index and middle fingers of the right hand "behind" the string close to the neck of the bag. Take the neck of the bag with your left hand without releasing the string.
3. Gently pull your index and middle fingers of the right hand towards the right.
4. Twist and slightly open your fingers of the right hand.
5. Introduce your thumb finger of the right hand. Now you have done a loop with the string. Take the loop to the neck of the bag.
6. Firmly but gently pull the string with the left hand.
7. Ibañez knot is done.

To undo the Ibañez knot, just pull out the loop. There will be no undesired knot remaining on the string, if you did the Ibañez knot correctly.

From now on, all processing steps should follow the North American Banding Council (2001a, 2001b) instructions.

### Literature Cited

- North American Banding Council. 2001a. The North American banders' study guide. The North American Banding Council, Point Reyes Station, CA.
- North American Banding Council. 2001b. The instructor's guide to training passerine bird banders in North America. The North American Banding Council, Point Reyes Station, CA.
- Ralph, C.J., G.R. Geupel, P. Pyle, T.E. Martin, and D.F. DeSante. 1993. Handbook of field methods for monitoring landbird. USDA Forest Service General Technical Report PSW-GTR-144. [www.fs.fed.us/psw/publicationsdocuments/psw\\_gtr144/](http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publicationsdocuments/psw_gtr144/)

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