

on the left tarsus, considering it immaterial whether the old ring was removed or not. However, on retrapping a bird thus treated three weeks later the upper edge of the aluminium band was found to have been pounded flat and spread out into a rather sharp edge on each side through contact with the harder monel above. Also, electrolytic corrosion had already commenced to attack the edges of the aluminium. This was an unexpected and disturbing discovery though I believe that the ample clearance and free movement on the tarsus together with the soft nature of the metal would make leg damage extremely unlikely. Obviously, however, the old bands should be removed. Incidentally, no such sharp edges develop when two aluminium bands are used together on exulans.

Breeding island recoveries to date have largely established one of the principal objects of the programme - where does the N.S.W. winter population come from. Returns from South Georgia, Marion Island and Kerguelen together with the wide variation in physical size, indicate that breeding populations from all the albatross islands are probably represented. Answers yet to come include longevity records, routes travelled, degree of dependence on west wind drift and a host of others. Banders should also make the most of their opportunities to record facets of individual behaviour, interspecific relationships and family associations to name but a few.

Postscript to Malabar, 1963. An account of the albatross banding season at Malabar for 1963, to the end of August, has already appeared in our September issue.

The final outing for the season at Malabar on 14.9.63 yielded a further 15 Wandering Albatrosses banded and two retrapped. One of these 140-02103, had been banded at Bellambi in 1958, and the other, 140-26215, at Malabar four weeks earlier (9.8.63).

A USEFUL HOLDING BAG

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Numerous types of holding bags or cages have been used for banding purposes. Many of these are suitable for their original purpose but are not necessarily the best answer for mobile mist-netting operations.

The following detail is intended to assist banders to construct a useful holding "bag" (Fig.1). The design is not

entirely my own but is basically along the lines of one suggested to me by Steve Wilson.

Material: (approximate dimensions)

1. 25" x 27" fibre-glass fly screening or fibre glass netting.
2. 24" x 24" light material, preferably nylon.

Sewing: For the most durable method of sewing the gauze, use a strong thread and a short, knotted hand stitch. This avoids any cutting of the gauze which will occur with a machine stitch.

Construction: Cut the netting (or screening) into two pieces 10" x 10" and one piece 15" x 25" using a 7½" diameter cake tin as a frame, form the larger piece around the tin in the shape of a cylinder and sew the overlap of about 1". It is advisable to partly sew the overlap forming the cylinder, at each end and also enough in the centre to hold the shape during construction of the bag.

Place a 10" x 10" piece centrally over the end containing the tin and using the tin as a base, sew around the end of the cylinder (1). Cut off the surplus leaving a 1" overlap all round. This is then turned down, tucked and sewn round the cylinder (2). Move the tin to the other end, and repeat the process. Undo the stitching in the centre of the cylinder overlap and remove the tin. Stitch along each side of the overlap from end to end (3). Cut out a circle of about 5" diameter in one end piece (4) for fitting the sleeve (5).

The sleeve construction is simple and can be done on a sewing machine. Hem two opposite sides, then double over the other edges to form the sleeve and stitch. See that the inside of the sleeve is free from any loose edges of material because fraying of such edges could catch in birds feet and feathers.

Fit one end of the sleeve into the 5" diameter circle (4) and sew into position.

The finished article provides a holding bag with the following advantages :

- a. Very light,
- b. Maximum ventilation,

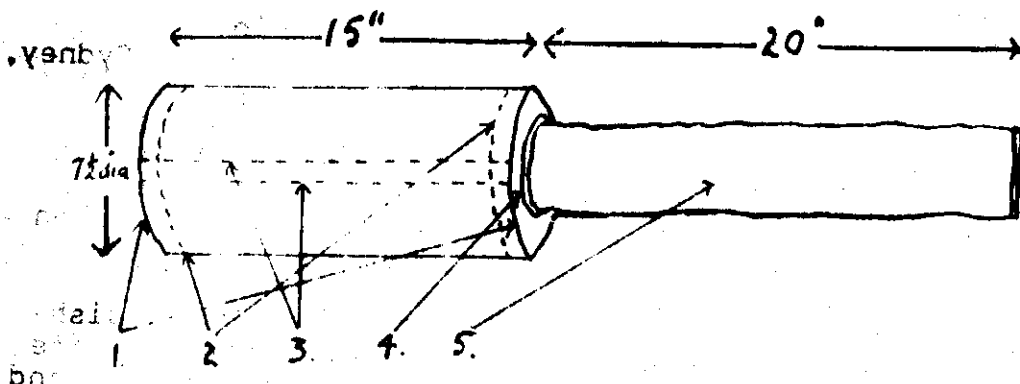


Fig. 1.

- c. Takes up very little space and is not unduly affected by crushing (during packing in vehicles),
- d. Has good capacity for small birds,
- e. The long sleeve can be pushed into the belt, or held under the arm against the body while removing birds from net,
- f. The sleeve can be knotted to prevent birds escaping while waiting to be banded.

The fly screening is the better material for small birds with narrow bills as they cannot rub their bills or cereas by pushing the beak through the cage. However, the material does not stand up to hard wear, forming holes readily if "creased". The more open mesh fibre-glass netting is a good durable material and this rubbing can be prevented by covering (see Note 2.)

General Notes: (Common to all types of holding cages):

1. Keep birds of various sizes separate as larger birds may injure smaller ones if caged together (I use three or four holding cages for general use.)
2. A dark cloth placed over the bag or cage will prevent birds fluttering while waiting to be banded.

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