New Guinea Bird Society

We think that the following note about the New Guinea Bird Society by its President, Roy MacKay, will be of interest to our members. We have twelve members of the Association in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, and we imagine they are all members of the New Guinea Bird Society.

The need for a Society to organise the activities of the bird observers and bird banders of the Territory is being met by the recently formed New Guinea Bird Society. Besides resident observers wishing to get together to exchange notes, a request from the R.A.O.U. on the possibility of establishing a Territory Branch of that Society gave added impetus. Approximately 30 financial members—seven of these being members of the R.A.O.U.—from many parts of the Territory contribute observations and notes to the Society. A constitution has been prepared which emphasises the Society's dedication to the protection and conservation of bird life.

Monthly meetings are held where observations and notes from all members are accumulated. A catalogue of observations is being kept, partly as a record of bird nesting and behaviour, partly as a record of birds in particular areas and partly to help in the preparation of an annotated list of birds of the Port Moresby district, an area defined for the purpose of this list as encompassing the land and foreshores within a radius of approximately 40 miles. Monthly outings are held to various habitats and the bird banders help members considerably in the identification of birds by showing "birds in the hand".

A monthly newsletter is published showing the activities at monthly meetings, the results of the month's observations, the results of outings and any other item of topical interest to bird men. Several Australian bird societies receive this newsletter and in return we receive their newsletter or journal.

With the large scale bird banding and study programmes being carried out by the Americans in Japan, Phillipines, Malaysia and the Pacific Islands as well as the well developed programmes of Australia, the activities of the New Guinea Bird Society could well prove very important. The vast migration of many land birds between Australia and New Guinea and the passage of waders to and from the Northern Hemisphere provides a mass of material for investigation. However, a task of many New Guinea bird observers is to recognise the birds of the Territory and this, for a while, may take up the major part of our bird observing activities.

Band Expander Gadget

The last batches of small-size bands were supplied to me in the fully closed form on fine copper wire. This emphasised very clearly the great convenience of the previous supplies of ready opened bands strung on plastic tubing. Some banders use fine-nosed pliers which can be slipped inside a closed band on the wire, and the pliers and band expanded together in the field. Not all pliers are suitable for this method. Also some of us prefer the plastic tube to the wire, or perhaps like to expand our bands at home in readiness for that full net rush.

Fortunately my emptied plastic tubes from previous band strings were available, also my home made expander does the job nicely and quickly. The expander consists of two discs of copper, exactly like pennies, and a two inch flat-headed case nail of diameter slightly larger than the plastic tube. One disc was centrally bored to match the nail and this run through it to the head. The second disc was slightly dished before being matched over the first and the nail head. All joints were then soldered. The nail point was filed back a little to keep it clear of the table top until the nail shoulder just enters the band at one end. To expand the bands, each band is placed vertically on a flat surface (table) and the point of the "expander" is pressed into the open end. The band is then removed, reversed, and the second end expanded likewise before being slipped on to the second hand plastic tube string. The slim flat penny-sized disc fits easily into the palm and gives ample thrust area.

J. S. Robertson,
Wellington Point, Q.