

## BAND DISCOMFORT ON RUFIOUS TREECREEPER *Climacteris rufa*

ALLAN M. ROSE

C/- Department of Conservation and Land Management, Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre, Bentley, WA 6983

Received 15 July, 1996

Metal or colour bands applied to a birds tarsus must be of the correct diameter so as to allow sufficient movement of the band up and down the tarsus, but not able to slip over the feet. The Australian Bird Bander's Manual (compiled by Kim W. Lowe) states 'The ideal band is one which is not so loose as to slip down and bind the toes and not so tight as to constrict the leg'.

For ground foraging birds the tarsus is upright and bands placed around the tarsus are at the bottom of the tarsus (Fig. 1), unable to slip off over the toes. With birds that use tree trunks, the leg is bent in a V shape, with the intertarsal joint the lowest point (Fig. 2). The endemic Australian treecreepers are good examples of this. As treecreepers ascend tree trunks, the leg is bent at the intertarsal joint with this joint lower than the foot, as mentioned above. Metal or colour bands placed around the tarsus will now slip down to the intertarsal joint.

Band discomfort was noticed on colour banded Rufous Treecreepers in *Eucalyptus wandoo* woodland, Stirling Range National Park, Western Australia. Several Rufous Treecreepers while ascending tree trunks, were seen to stop and peck at the band before continuing up the tree trunk. Discomfort was noted when the leg was bent fully bringing the tarsus and tibia close together. In this position bands are forced down to the intertarsal joint by gravity and squeezed onto the leg as the leg is closed, causing what appeared to be occasional discomfort to some birds. The birds' sex was not recorded. No tarsus scale wear or sores were noted on recaptured birds.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Perry de Rebeira for providing the drawings.

### REFERENCES

Lowe, K. W. (1989). 'The Australian Bird Bander's Manual' (Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, Canberra.)

Figure 1. *Rufous Treecreeper* on ground with metal band at lower end of tarsus.

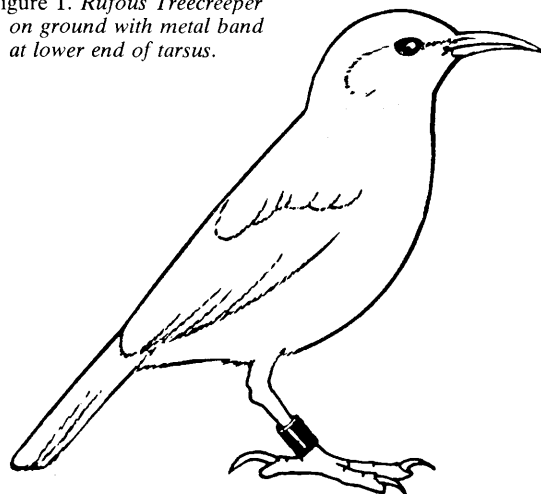


Figure 2. Metal band at intertarsal joint as *Rufous Treecreeper* ascends tree.

