

## Recent Literature

### BANDING and RECOVERY REPORTS

**Bird Report: 1968.** Lord Medway and D. R. Wells. 1970. *Malayan Nature Journal*, 23:47-77.

The report summarizes ornithological activities in Malaysia and Singapore during 1968. Some 25,900 birds of 321 species were banded. Increased efforts were made to band night-flying migrants in Pahang. Distant recoveries of banded birds are tabulated; these are mostly Night Herons (17 recoveries from within Malaya, one from Thailand) and Barn Swallows (7 recoveries, with movements between Malaya and Korea, Laos, Thailand, Japan and U.S.S.R.). A census of five species of egrets and a heron occupying a roost in reed beds in Selangor was carried out in the winter of 1968-69. A systematic list summarizes significant data for some 140 species. An important feature of the summary is an addendum of Recent Literature covering the Malayan region.

### ANALYTICAL STUDIES

**Banding, Paint-marking and Subsequent Movements of Barn and Cliff Swallows.** David E. Samuel. 1970. *Bird-Banding*, 41:97-102.

Adult swallows were captured by normal mist netting and by manually-operated mist nets which closed off a barn after entry of the birds. Nestlings were also banded. Two contradictory statements appear on p. 98: (a) "286 Barn Swallow nestlings . . . were banded" and (b) "Barn Swallows were not banded because the nestlings would not remain in the nest after being replaced".

Coloured bands are unsuitable for swallows because they cannot be seen on either flying or perching birds. Marking the outer five rectrices with Airplane Dope allowed some marked birds to be seen up to 600 ft with the unaided eye or to about 1000 ft with binoculars. The wing marks lasted 45-75 days according to the text on p. 100, but only 30-60 days according to the summary on p. 102. Resightings of marked birds are discussed, but the arguments against desertion or movement caused by the marking are singularly unconvincing.

**Age and Sex Distribution in Indigo Buntings.** David W. Johnston. 1970. *Bird-Banding*, 41:113-118.

Several published studies have indicated that male Indigo Buntings outnumber females, but one study (*Bird-Banding*, 40:133-139) indicated approximately equal numbers. The present paper tabulates the numbers of each sex from all available sources, and obtains the significant ratio of 1.46 males per female. There is some evidence of separate migration according to sex, and (less conclusively) by age.

**Pattern and Timing of Skull Pneumatization in the Ruby-crowned Kinglet.** Robert C. Leberman. 1970. *Bird-Banding*, 41:121-124.

Two common and basically different patterns of ossification were observed from over 1,000 Kinglets examined. Each pattern is described and illustrated by a series of six sketches. There is no apparent correlation between skull type and sex and/or size. It is postulated that variations in skull type may be due to slight genetic differences.

### TECHNIQUES

**A Hoop-net Trap for Passerine Birds.** Kenneth H. Larsen. 1970. *Bird-Banding*, 41:92-96.

Construction of a very portable top entrance trap of cloth netting is described and illustrated. The trap consists essentially of netting hung between two hoops which are held apart and in place by four lengths of metal conduit. The trap is approximately six feet high and seven feet in diameter. Entry is via a long slot in a plywood slat hung from the top of the trap. The banded enters the trap via a six ft zip fastener sewn down one side of the trap. By careful choice of location, bait and width of entrance slot, it was almost possible to limit the catch to the desired species. Up to 15 traps were operated, and approximately 10,000 house finches were captured during three summers.

**A Technique for Capturing Petrels and Shearwaters at Sea.** Douglas E. Gill, William J. L. Sladen, and Charles E. Huntington. 1970. *Bird-Banding*, 41:111-113.

The hand thrown net is a highly efficient method of catching albatrosses at sea (*Emu*, 59:73-82). A similar technique has been adapted to catch and band storm petrels and shearwaters off New Brunswick, Canada. In three years, 250 birds of four species were banded, including 110 Greater Shearwaters and 117 Wilson's Petrels.

**A New Method of Capturing Nocturnal Alcids.** O. John Ralph and Fred C. Sibley. 1970. *Bird-Banding*, 41:124-127.

To estimate the breeding population of Cassin's Auklet on the Farallon Islands, off California, U.S.A., by the "Lincoln Index", it was necessary to capture large numbers of the birds at random. This was achieved by erecting a large fishing net, 60 ft long by 20 ft wide, parallel to the shore line and across the flight line of the birds. Birds on the morning take-off flight hit the net and tumble into a pocket made by curling up the end of the net to form a basement about three feet wide and two feet deep.

**On Bank Swallow Banding.** Robert P. Yunick. 1970. *EBBA News*, 33:85-96.

In North America, Bank Swallows nest in holes evacuated from perpendicular banks. Most birds were caught in mist nets set in front of the nesting sites, and the erection and setting of nets in the differing situations encountered in various colonies are discussed. Birds can be netted in the evening as they enter the nests, or in the morning as they leave. Characters used in ageing and sexing birds are detailed.

**Migration Trapping of Hawks (and Owls) at Cape May, N.J.—Third Year.** William S. Clark. 1970. *EBBA News*, 33:181-189.

The unusual method of trapping hawks by attracting them to the trapping area (bowl traps and mist nets) by a pigeon harnessed in a leather jacket has been previously summarized (*Aust. Bird Bander*, 7:70). The present paper details activities over a six week period in September-November 1969 when 210 hawks and 4 owls were trapped and banded.

**Ageing by Skull Ossification.** Anon. 1970. *EBBA News*, 33:191-192.

A brief and helpful summary of the method, with emphasis on the difficulties. "Some species or individuals have fat deposits on the skull".

**Catching Meadow Pipits with a Tape Recorder.** B. J. Speck. 1970. *Ringers' Bulletin*, 3(7):10-11.

Easy! Decoy them to a clap net area with a tape recorder. Normally a station in Holland would catch 30-40 each autumn. Now, with the one clap net, they catch 2,000 in 70 days.

**Dazzle Netting for Waders on the Wash.** R. Berry. 1970. *Ringers' Bulletin*, 3(7):13-15.

The method is effective where large numbers of waders roost on beaches at spring tides. Techniques are discussed. Best haul was 88 birds in one night. In three years some 620 waders of 11 species have been caught.

**Marking Methods for House Sparrows.** Charles A. North. 1969. *The Ring*, 60:238-242. (Reprinted from "International Studies on Sparrows", vol. 3(1), 1969).

The use of conspicuous markers, in addition to the normal numbered aluminium leg-band, is most advantageous in field studies of some species of birds. The present paper discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the various types of markers which can be used for House Sparrows. Two types of neck collars can be used: the "neck band" consists of a strip of coloured plastic fastened around the bird's neck by a rivet, while the "neck tie" is a collar of plastic lacing fastened around the neck with a small staple. The "neck tag" is a strip of light-weight plastic fastened to the skin on the back of the neck with a safety pin. Plastic "wing tags" are fastened around the humerus and held in place by a rivet. Colour bands, either alone or with numbered aluminium bands, are perhaps the most common method of marking individual birds for visual recognition at a distance. "Leg tags" of coloured plastic are attached to the tarsus by metal leg bands, or plastic adhesive tape may be wound loosely around the bare tarsus. Feathers may be coloured by dyeing or painting; and coloured feathers may be glued into cut-off bases of feathers in the wing or tail. The author notes "Any marking technique may cause an increase in the mortality rate. If only half of the banded birds are marked (i.e. every other bird), additional mortality caused by marking may be determined through band return data." Surely this last over-simplifies the problem of determining mortality rates. Conspicuously marked birds are much more likely to be deliberately shot etc. to investigate the marking; dead birds are far more likely to be examined (and the normal leg band discovered and returned) if conspicuously marked. It would be extremely difficult to eliminate this bias in comparing mortality rates between marked and unmarked birds unless the student restricts himself to his own retrap data.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

**Some Limitations of Killing Red-wings as a Method for Controlling Corn Damage.** Harold E. Burtt and Maurice L. Glitz. 1970. *EBBA News*, 33:130-134.

Red-winged Blackbirds can cause extensive damage to field and sweet corn in U.S.A. This study indicates that large scale killing of the birds will be ineffective if the population is not stable i.e. if other transient birds are available as replacements from adjacent areas. Control of more stable species, e.g. grackles, is more successful, as replacement occurs less quickly.

**Consecutive Nesting of Female Tree Swallows at Long Point, Ontario.** Michael S. W. Bradstreet. 1969. *Ontario Bird Banding*, 5:68-71.

Female Tree Swallows were banded in nesting boxes at Long Point, Ontario, Canada and birds returning to breed in later years were recaptured. Many females nested consecutively, one bird being captured in four successive seasons. It is concluded that birds which nested successfully were more liable to return in the following year than were birds which did not nest successfully, but there were exceptions. It is suggested that successful breeding birds are more likely to return to exploit an environment known to promote successful breeding, while unsuccessful breeders tend to move elsewhere.

**A Problem in Banding Penguins.** M. J. F. Jarvis. 1970. *Ostrich*, 41:120-121.

Measurements were made of the flippers (near the body) of a small sample of Jackass Penguins in South Africa. Average cross-sectional measurement of non-moulting birds was 10 x 21 mm, while average cross-sectional measurement of moulting birds was 16 x 25 mm. The maximum recorded measurement of a moulting bird was 27 x 30 mm, which is about twice that of the average non-moulting birds. The South African banding scheme has the problem of designing a band "that allows for the increased dimensions of moulting birds but is not so large that it injures the bird through being too loose during non-moult periods, thus causing chafing".

**Mortality of Ringed Yellow-billed Duck.** W. R. Siegfried. 1970. *Ostrich*, 41:136-137.

From 257 recoveries, a mean adult mortality rate of 46.3 per cent was obtained for South African birds.

## Obituary

Frank Jones of Tyers, Victoria, died on 23 August after a severe illness. He joined the Bird Banders' Association in 1964, changing his status to full membership the following year with the issue of his banding permit.

Living alone in a caravan in the bush selecting timber for milling, he had ample opportunity to pursue his banding project on the relationship of honeyeater's to the flowering of nectar-bearing plants. He was also an excellent photographer with a large collection of bird photographs.

He was Vice President of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists' Club and taught members to know and appreciate the birds of their district.

Many Victorian banders will miss Frank who always came to campouts arranged anywhere in Victoria or in the South Australian mallee. He was a wonderful bushman: as long as Frank was around, there was always a sense of comfortable security, and his four-wheel drive vehicle took many of us into places which otherwise would have been beyond our reach.

The Association extends its sympathy to Frank's relatives. P.R.