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PEER REVIEW

The following is a copy of a letter from Ian Rowley to Evan Kennedy, who wrote to us about the problems he is having with colour bands and Shore Plovers in New Zealand. The letter is reprinted here with permission from Ian, as it may assist other banders also.

Dear Euan,

I read your letter to the editor of Corella (22, 94) with interest and horror. I have been colour-banding birds for forty years and never in my worst nightmares dreamt of such a happening as has befallen your Shore Plovers.

Not that it will be much help with such a difficult bird, but for the record: During the 1960s, I (and assistants) manufactured our own Darvic bands from flat sheets of 1 mm thick commercially available materials (from ICIANZ as it was). They (ICI) provided us with a solvent/sealant named TENSOL 50; I have no idea what it was — probably nasty, but we are all still alive!

We formed 10 mm strips into circular bands with a one half overlap, to give us 8 or 9 mm internal diameter bands for White-winged Choughs *Corcoras melanorhamphos* (ABBBS size 9) or Australian Ravens *Corvus coronoides* (ABBBS size 10). We would have colour-banded more than

100 individuals of each species during the 1960s (Rowley 1973, CSIRO Wildlife Research 18, 1–23; Rowley 1978, *Ibis* 120, 178–97).

To our knowledge, we never had any problems with bands coming unstuck or wearing unduly over four or five years (but see Rowley 1966, *Aust. Bird Bander* 4, 47–9 for story with metal bands).

I was amazed that your recent solvent took 15 minutes to dry, but then I realized that the Chathams are probably even colder than Canberra mid-winter! Our bands used to take about five minutes to dry. We used to clip them shut with artery forceps while they dried; only one bird was released with forceps still in place — but could not fly far, fortunately, as they were expensive!

I doubt if this ancient history is of any value to you, but may be of interest since I have never published details of the technique anywhere. We followed Coulson's 1963 Bird Study 10, 109–111 paper.

Good luck,
With best wishes,
Ian Rowley.

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