

AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD FOR APPLYING SHEARWATER BANDS (SIZE 16 SS)

S. G. LANE

66 Fairview Road, Moonee via Coffs Harbour, New South Wales 2450

Received: 10 November, 1997

INTRODUCTION

Although not designed for the task, the large Lambourne pliers are very good for quickly and effectively applying size 16 SS bands to shearwaters. However, the band cannot be adequately closed with the small jaw in the usual manner. The method given below has been used by me to apply these bands to well in excess of 7 000 shearwaters. The method utilises the best leverage for applying the bands and done correctly, ensures a tight join which will prevent even the finest gauge fishing line from tangling in the band.

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: Hold the right tarsus of the shearwater with the left hand, slip the band over the tarsus, holding it in position with the thumb and forefinger of the same hand.

Stage 2: Apply the large Lambourne pliers to the band using the smaller aperture (Fig. 1) and apply pressure to the band until the butt ends almost meet. (The band should be closed enough to prevent it falling off the tarsus; **AVOID** attempting a tight join at this stage as an overlap may occur.)

Stage 3: Rotate the band on the tarsus so that it is positioned as shown in Figure 2. Then apply pressure with the pliers. This will give a close joint, but still wide enough for fishing line to become caught.

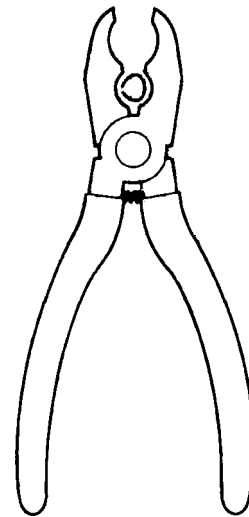


Figure 2

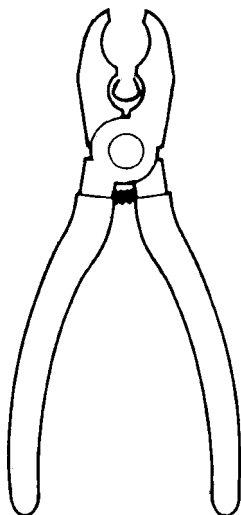


Figure 1.

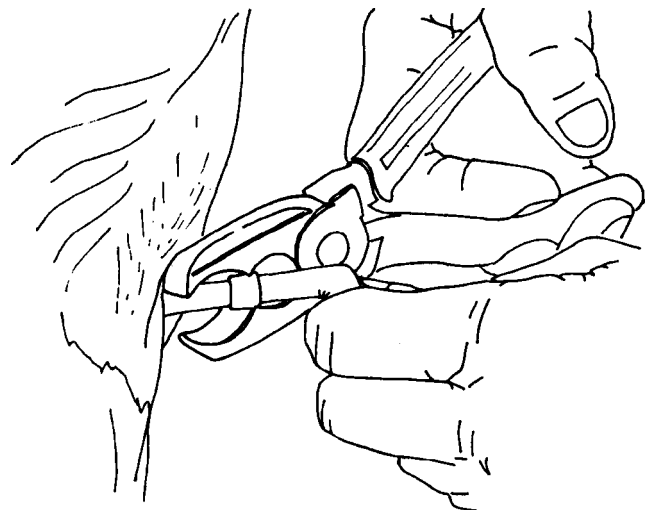


Figure 3. *The shearwater is being held by an assistant.*

Stage 4: Apply the pliers to the now almost-closed band as shown in Figure 3. Note that the inner jaw of

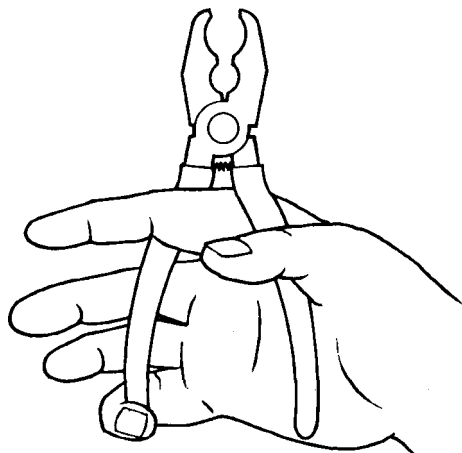


Figure 4. *The forefinger between the handles of the pliers.*

the pliers is angled over the join in the band, while the other jaw is against the back of the band. Then apply pressure firmly but steadily to slightly flatten the band, using the forefinger between the handles of the pliers (Fig. 4). This provides a 'steadier' for control of the pressure being applied. (It is a good practice to use the forefinger in this manner when applying bands at any time, as it helps to prevent overlapping the band.)

Note: Left-handed banders can adapt the method accordingly, but bands preferably should be applied to the right tarsus; this helps avoid the possibility of a band on the left tarsus being overlooked when recapturing birds in burrows. Figure 3 shows the bird being held by an assistant.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Perry de Rebeira who was the author of Figures 1, 2 and 4 and Isabel Hallam who was the author of Figure 3.