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BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY  
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BIRD BANDING NOTES.

No. 2.

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The reception accorded by our collaborators to the first issue of "Bird Banding Notes" has been a source of gratification, and we wish to thank both those who have expressed their commendation and those who have offered suggestions.

As these Notes are issued solely for distribution among bird banding collaborators they are therefore the official means of bird banding communication and every station operator should bear this fact in mind when conducting experiments for the advancement of the work. The Biological Survey will be glad to include in the Notes the results of operations that would seem to be of value in promoting the general efficiency of the project. As the work progresses, many interesting returns will be received, and it is the plan to give this information to collaborators through this medium. Other information also will be included, since letters and schedules frequently contain interesting accounts of the habits of some particular bird, the description of a trap of new design, or the use of a new bait. All this is of value and should be passed along to other operators, for it must be remembered that bird banding work is growing and is dependent upon the active and continued interest of a large number of cooperators, both with the Biological Survey and with each other.

The shortage of bands has probably been felt by every active operator and it has been a matter of great regret that we could not fill the large orders needed during the height of the spring migration. This is, however, just one of the items indicative of the growth of the work, for while hand-made bands were secured in sufficient quantity in 1920 and 1921, the great increase in the number of collaborators during the past six months has made it obvious that our source of supply for bands must be a firm equipped with the machinery to make quantity production possible. Arrangements have now been made to this end and we believe that an adequate supply of all sizes will be available in the near future. In the meantime, it is suggested that baiting or feeding be continued so that some birds will become accustomed to the traps and thus serve as decoys for others when banding operations are resumed.

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NOTE.-"Bird Banding Notes" is not a publication in any sense of the word, being issued merely for the information of our collaborators, not for general distribution. However, anyone using in a published paper any of the information contained in this circular will be expected to give full credit to the person named and to the Biological Survey.

Seven Don'ts.

During the past few weeks several matters have been brought up that affect more or less directly the bird banding system. Believing that our collaborators desire to be informed on these subjects we are listing them in the following "Don'ts":

1. Don't forget to write your name and address on order cards and schedules. Several orders for bands have been received that could not be filled for lack of this information.
2. Don't change bands the records of which have been filed with the Biological Survey. Read the third paragraph on the back of the schedules, where this subject is thoroughly covered.
3. Don't issue your bands to anyone else. It is important that we know to whom every number has been issued so that if a return should be reported for which the original record is not in the files, we may know to whom to write for the information. There is also much clerical labor involved in making these changes.
4. Don't use recorded bands a second time. If you recover a dead "return" of one of your own birds, either preserve the band as a part of the record or destroy it.
5. Don't neglect to send in your record each month. Schedules and return envelopes requiring no postage will be furnished by the Biological Survey and it is for the best interest of the work that the files be at all times as nearly up to date as possible.
6. Don't attempt to close bands with the unaided fingers. Use pointed pliers. This is particularly important on small birds requiring bands of sizes 1, 1a, 2, and 3.
7. Don't band English sparrows. At some future time we may undertake a special investigation of this species by applying the banding method, but at present, bands are too valuable to consider such a plan.

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As noted by Mr. Baldwin in Bird Banding Notes No. 1, some birds, notably the grosbeaks, and other large-billed finches, will frequently crush the band so tightly that injury to the foot may result. His method for overcoming this has been to use a band large enough to pass twice around the tarsus, and while this has proved sufficient to prevent the crushing it has the disadvantage that a portion of the number or legend may be covered. We are therefore glad to announce a more satisfactory method that has been used by Mr. George H. Priest, of Brockton,

Massachusetts, in banding evening grosbeaks. Mr. Priest's method consists of placing an inner band or sleeve around the tarsus of the bird, with the regular numbered band over it. We have tested this method and believe that it will prove a most satisfactory solution to this problem. The blank inner bands should be cut from sheet aluminum of a gauge similar to that of the bands (about 24 gauge). They should be about the size of the No. 1a bands but only half the width. On blanks of this size the No. 3 band will fit smoothly projecting about a fourth of its width on each side of the sleeve, and if this portion is compressed slightly with the pointed pliers, the two bands will be securely locked together.

The desirability of further experiments with different baits has been demonstrated at the station of Mr. S. E. Perkins III, of Indianapolis, Indiana. Mr. Perkins reports that during the last week of April a pair of cardinals were repeatedly seen around his traps, but would not enter. On May 1, corn bread was tried for bait and before nightfall bands numbered 16360 and 16361 were being worn by the birds that yielded to the temptation afforded by our national bread.

An interesting letter from Mr. William I. Lyon, of Waukegan, Illinois, directs attention to the fact that all collaborators may not be able to hold a bird in the manner described in the first issue of Bird Banding Notes. Mr. Lyon argues that that method is all right for long slender fingers, but that it is impracticable for the short, stout hand. He inclosed a photograph, from which we reproduce a sketch, showing his favorite manner of holding a bird. As shown in the sketch, the bird is retained against the palm of the hand by passing the index finger across the throat, and by the hold of the thumb and second finger on the bird's foot or on the band. The other leg is not held. The weight of the bird is supported by the third and fourth fingers, passed across the lower breast and belly.



A recent letter from Mr. R. E. Horsey, who is operating several substations at Highland Park, Rochester, N. Y., contains the interesting information that two of his drop traps are placed over bird baths, the edges of which are baited with bread. Some operators make a point to keep fresh drinking water in or near their traps during the summer months, but we believe this is the first time a bath has been used as "bait." It seems to work, however, as Mr. Horsey's report bears ample evidence.

Some collaborators are experiencing a little difficulty in attaching the adjustable bands. On page 16 of Department Circular No. 170, the proper method is shown in two steps. These bands are made of heavy metal and provided with a locking device, designed for use on waterfowl and other large birds, and it is essential that both parts of the double bend in the body of the band be secured with the locking nibs. It takes more time but is worth while. In attaching these bands to waterfowl, 150 would be considered an excellent day's work, while 100 a day would probably be about all one man would care to average over an extended period.

#### Returns.

Foremost among the returns of the past few weeks may be mentioned Robin No. 33519 of the A. B. B. A. series. This bird, banded as a fledgling on July 8, 1917, at Wilmington, Delaware, by Dr. Lewis Rumford, was found dead in the yard of Mr. Thomas F. Bayard, at Wilmington, on May 14, 1922. Mr. Bayard's residence is only about a quarter of a mile from the place where Dr. Rumford banded the little fellow almost five years before.

Among waterfowl, the return of a buffle-head is of peculiar interest. On April 6, 1922, Mr. Verdi Burtch, of Branchport, N. Y., banded a female of this species that had been caught on a "set line" the night before. Eleven days later, on April 17, Mr. Ralph White found the same bird entangled in a herring net in Georgian Bay, near Collingwood, Ontario. Unfortunately, the little duck was dead, other wise it might have shown further evidence of its liking for fishing paraphernalia.