

## MEXICAN BIRD TRIP

by

Richard B. Fischer

On the evening of November 24, 1948, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Coffey and I left Memphis, Tennessee for Mexico. We entered that country on the morning of November 26, and 17 days later, on the evening of December 12, reentered the United States. During that time we saw 250 species, including 120 species new to us.

We drove non-stop (except to stop for birds) until we reached Brownsville, Texas, covering the distance of 950 miles in 26 hours. A few of the birds encountered on this part of the trip deserve mention. Along the Gulf Coast -- a most fruitful area for field work -- we found a solid flock of 800 long-billed curlew on a meadow at Carancahua Bay, 3 anhingas and a sandhill crane between Lavaca and Rockport, a reddish egret and 200 redheads at Rockport.

Almost at the very moment that we entered Mexico, life birds (for me) began appearing very fast. Harris hawks and caracaras were standing in the water of the roadside ditches. We also quickly recorded glossy ibis, vermilion flycatchers, ground doves, a Mexican comorant and a fine Sennet's white-tailed hawk. Stopping for lunch at the Rio Conches, we saw our first Mexican crows. They are midway in size between the American and the fish crow and have an odd, low-pitched guttural caw, totally unlike that of the American crow.

We reached the Rio Carana, 20 miles from Aridad Victoria, at dusk and were fascinated by the evening flight of parrots--red-crowned and yellow-headed. A green kingfisher was also recorded there. At the end of my first day in Mexico, I could scarcely believe it was real and not a dream.

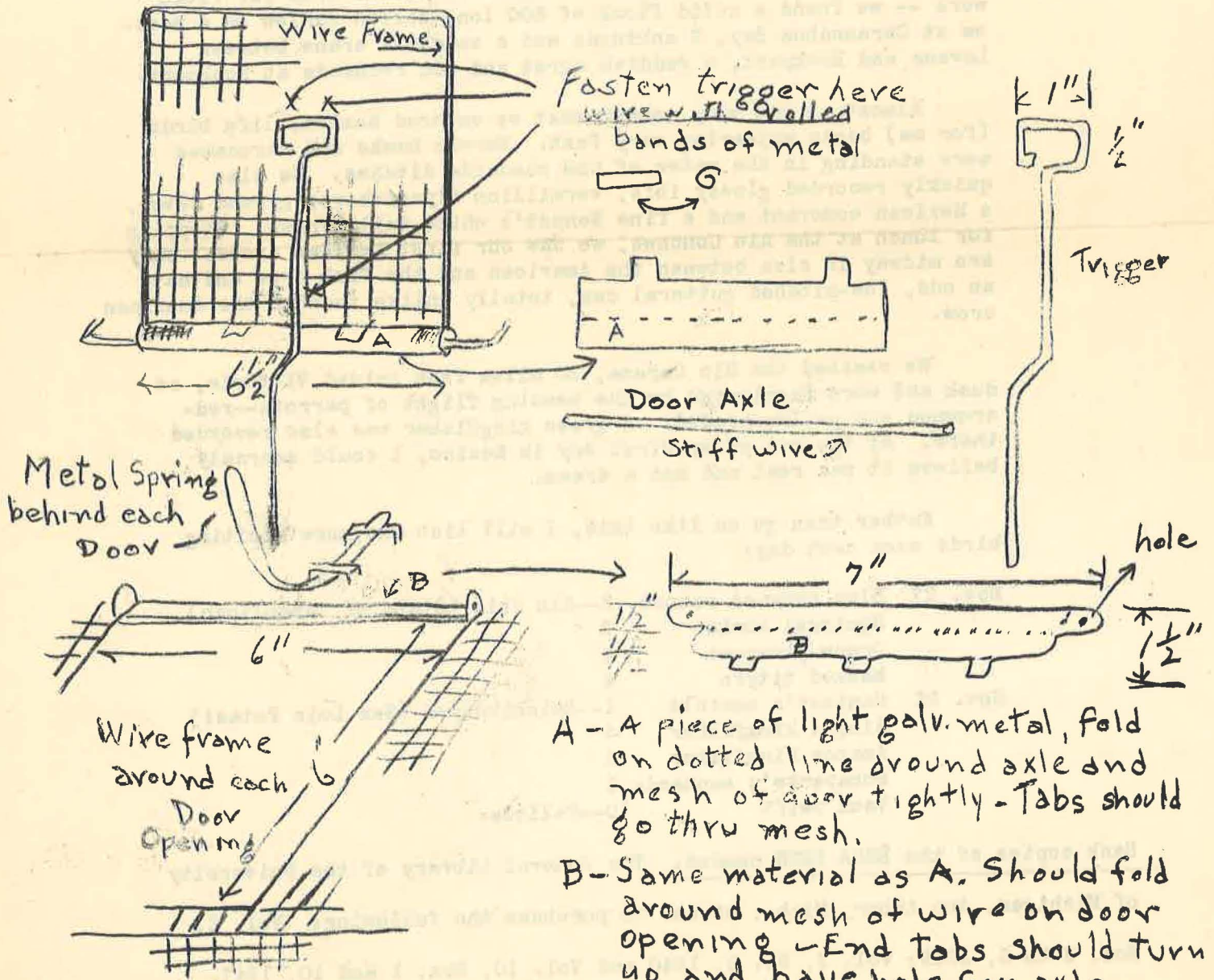
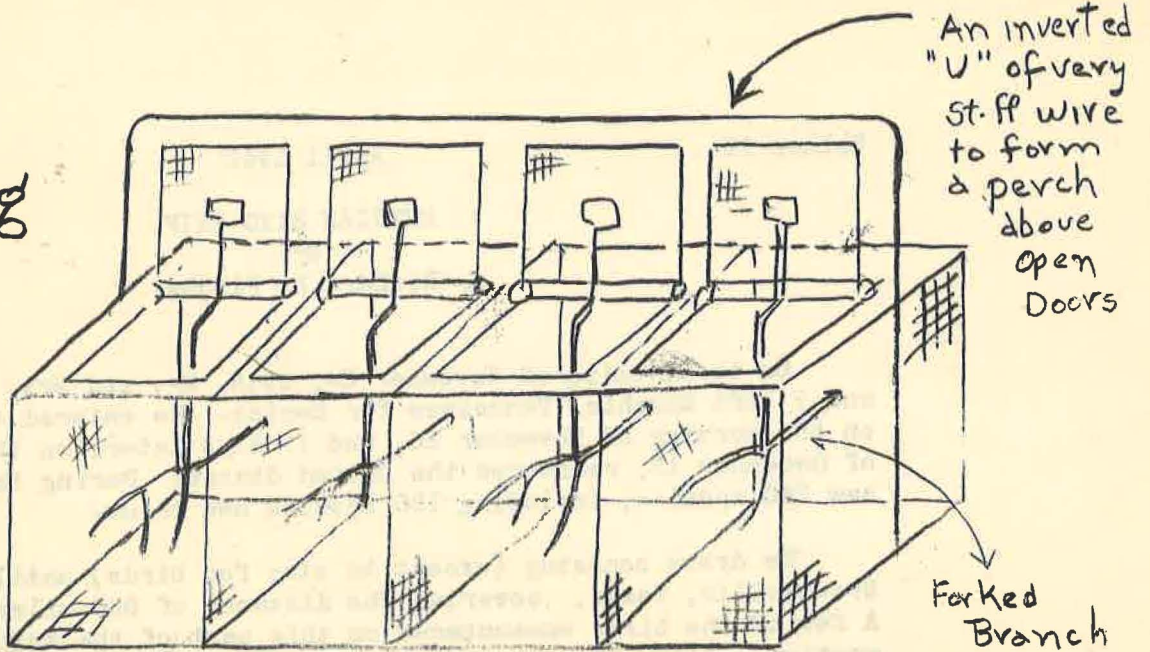
Rather than go on like this, I will list the more exciting birds seen each day:

Nov. 27	Blue crowned motmot,	2--Rio Frio (State of Tamaulipac)
	Squirrel cuckoo	2
	Green paraquet	8
	Masked tityra	4
Nov. 28	Caninet's emerald	1--Huichihuayan (San Luis Patasi)
	Ringed kingfisher	4
	Amazon kingfisher	2
	Bonaparte's euphemia	1
	Vaux swift	10--Palitla

Back copies of the EBBA NEWS needed. The General Library of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich., wishes to purchase the following: Vol. 2, Nos. 3 to 5, 1939; Vol. 3, No. 3, 1940 and Vol. 10, Nos. 1 and 10, 1947.

# Four Cell Top-Opening Trap

Approx Scale  
1" = 8"



- A - A piece of light galv. metal, fold on dotted line around axle and mesh of door tightly - Tabs should go thru mesh.
- B - Same material as A. Should fold around mesh of wire on door opening - End tabs should turn up and have hole for axle.

This trap is good for Jays, Grackles, Catbirds, Thrashers, Towhees, etc set 3 ft off ground.

G. Gill

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE APPOINTED

The President of the Eastern Bird Banding Association has appointed a nominating committee to nominate officers and three councillors whose terms expire at our annual meeting April 23rd, 1949. The members of the nominating committee are as follows:

John A. Gillespie                      William Pepper, Chairman  
LeRoy Wilcox                              James Bond                      John T. Nichols

### THE HOUR HAS COME

This is the last issue of the NEWS that your present editor will turn out. On April 30th, I am resigning and turning the job over to a highly capable man, Raymond T. Fuller of Winterton, N. Y. After much thought I have come to the decision that it is best both for the NEWS and my own personal interests to step down from the post. The heavy demands of my profession as well as the desire to devote all spare time possible to bird painting and writing have prompted this action.

I wish to thank those contributors whose fine articles made the NEWS what it was, to those who gave me constant encouragement and to all members for being patient with a publication that never seemed to arrive on schedule. I feel that I gained much during the 16 months I edited the NEWS; new friends, new experiences, and a clearer insight into the field of banding. Because of this, I do not plan to desert the NEWS entirely; I will contribute some articles from time to time.

Your new editor, Raymond T. Fuller, needs no introduction for he is well known not only as a bander but as a successful writer as well. He is the author of a number of books on natural history, including the recent Nature Quests and Quizzes, many magazine articles and a bander for many years. The NEWS could not be in better hands.

Mr. Fuller desires the cooperation of all members and subscribers in sending him-often-such items as trap improvements, baits findings, proposals for new projects, and kindred suggestions and reports of general interest.

R. L. SMITH.

Straws in the wind: From the way it looks here, there seems to be some mingled reaction concerning the publication of Mr. Bowdish's fine station report for 1948 in the March issue. Your editor printed it for the very reason that he knew it would stir up some members. For many months he has asked members to submit interesting station reports for publication. But he received only 2 (the second will be published later). Such reports are regular features of the other two banding association publications. They also have a place in EBBA NEWS. Perhaps the report published in March will prompt you to send in a report of your banding work. For the NEWS does need a few contributions to make a full issue every month.

New Bird Bulletins: The Pennsylvania Game Commission has published 2 new bulletins. One, PENNSYLVANIA BIRDLIFE, is a revision of an older edition of the publication of the same name. This booklet was entirely rewritten by E.B.B.A. member Hal H. Harrison, and illustrated with 100 of his photographs as well as 6 color plates by Jacob Bates Abbot. The other is an excellent little discussion on the predatory birds of Pennsylvania entitled PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS OF PREY. Including many photographs and drawings by J.B. Abbot, charts on bird diets based on stomach analyses made of thousands of hawks and owls by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, this booklet is factual and unbiased. Cost of the former is 50¢ each or 40¢ in lots of 20 or more; the latter is 25¢ each or 15¢ in lots of 20 or more, and can be obtained from The Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Mexican Bird Trip

	Colima warbler	2--Palitla
	Aztec thrush	15--Tinan (Hidalgo)
	Bell's warbler	1--same
Nov. 29:	Strickland's woodpecker	2--State of Mexico 20 miles from
	Tufted flycatcher	4 Mexico City
	Brown-backed solitaire	1
	Red warbler	6
	Olive warbler	3
Nov. 30:	Magpie jay	3--57 miles south of Puebla City, Puebla
	Painted redstart	1--40 miles north of Oaxaca
Dec. 1:	Mexican Black Hawk	1--Between Oaxaca City and Tehuantepec
	Ladder-backed woodpecker	1
	Plumbeous gnatcatcher	4
	White-fronted parrot	15
Dec. 2:	Man-o-War bird	5--Salina Cruz (on the Pacific)
	Wood Ibis	2--Between Tehuantepec & San Salvador
Dec. 3:	Today was more of a sight-seeing tour. We spent some time at the fascinating Aztec ruins at Mitla (near Oaxaca) and passed through much interesting country--botanically--which harbored very few birds.	
Dec. 4:	Much of the morning was spent at the ruins of Monte Alban, Oaxaca	
Dec. 5:	Cactus Wren	6--near Puebla (State of Puebla)
	Phainopepla	2
	Pigmy owl	1--near Orizaba (State of Vera Cruz)
	Nightingale thrush	1--near Cardoba
Dec. 6:	Brown pelican	400--near City of Vera Cruz
	Burrowing owl	1
	White-fronted goose	15
	Everglade kite	35--feeding in meadow near Vera Cruz
	Aplomado falcon	1
	Long-billed curlew	100
	Yellow-crowned night heron	60
	Jacana	15--between Vera Cruz and Alvarado
	Black-collared hawk	1
	Black-necked stilt	3
	Blue-backed tanager	4
Dec. 7:	Pitlayumi warbler	1--near Vera Cruz
Dec. 8:	Vaux swift	75--near Tezhuittan (State of Puebla)
	Green woodpecker	2
	Blue mockingbird	1
	Blue-hooded euphonia	8
	Black-headed siskin	10
	Black-headed oriole	8
	Laughing falcon	1--near Nautla (State of Vera Cruz)
	Mangrove swallow	3
	Zone-tailed hawk	1
Dec. 10:	Took a Christmas census around Tamazunchale. We worked separately a good deal of the time and recorded 70 species. At least 87 species went unidentified. Better birds were: Striped-throated wood hewer-2; Oleaginous woodpecker-1; Brasher's warbler-4; Abbot's tanager-7; Olive sparrow-3; laughing falcon-1; and several spotted-breasted wrens.	
Dec. 11:	Drove from CN-1 just north of Tamazunchale west to Xilitla through the thickest jungle one could imagine outside of central Africa. A gigantic woodhewer, as large as a flicker was seen plus 2 white-winged tanagers. Most of the time was spent photographing the amazing plant life.	
Dec. 12:	At Linares we saw 5 starlings, the first we had seen in Mexico.	

This was the last day in Mexico and my last "life" bird was a pyrrhulaxia somewhere north of Monterrey. We left Laredo at 8 P.M. and drove steadily, reaching Memphis 24 hours later.

The people in Mexico are most friendly, but very poor. A farmer, and the majority are farmers, works all day for 3 pesos, about 45 cents. They live in pathetic one-room bamboo huts without windows or floor. Sanitary conveniences are totally lacking most everywhere. Generally speaking water is very scarce and must be carried great distances. How they keep so clean, for they and their clothes are clean, is a mystery to me.

Travelling in Mexico is very inexpensive. We seldom paid more than \$1.50 apiece even for the best room. Food, too, was reasonable--the largest dinner we attempted to eat cost about 75¢ and we could not eat all of it. Some day I would like to return to that hotel with a better appetite!

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#### COMMON TERN TWICE CATCHES A FALLING FISH

By  
Harold B. Wood

We were watching the common terns feeding in the receding breakers on the beach at Beach Haven, New Jersey. One tern was seen to catch in its bill a shiner minnow and start flying westward with its prey. It flew close enough for us to distinctly see the silvery stripe of the minnow, perhaps 20 feet away, and flying about 15 feet above the sand. The fish fell from the tern's bill; the bird dived and caught it before it had fallen perhaps 5 feet. The fish wriggled loose again and the bird again dived down and caught the fish the second time and began to fly away. Thereon the fish immediately escaped the third time, all within a distance short enough for us to see all that occurred. The tern seemed to look down at the falling minnow, which was now about 5 feet above the sand. The tern evidently judged that it could not recover its prey without striking against the sand, as we believed it would, but continued its flight, fishless, landward to its nestlings.

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#### AN EXPERIMENT WITH PAINT ON BIRD TRAPS

by  
Merrill Wood

Black paint appears to improve the efficiency of a trap, not because it matches the background but because it increases the visibility of the bait inside the trap. During 1948 five identical chardonneret traps with inside water baths for bait, were placed along the edge of a wood in State College, Pa. These traps, kept on the ground which was covered with brown oak leaves, were placed 10 feet apart and were rotated to remove the factor of location. The paint used on the trap and the percent of the total birds taken were: black--40%; green--28%; brown--12%; white--8%; and unpainted (weathered grey)--12%. This is a contribution from the Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station Project 1099.

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