

"TETHERED" MIST NETS

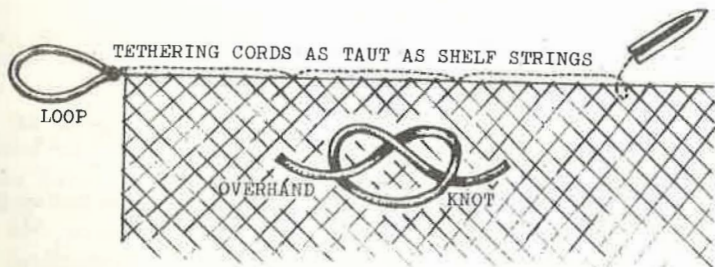
By Robert Spencer

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As every ringer knows, mist netting is greatly influenced by weather conditions, in particular by wind direction and strength. Even a light wind will blow all the slack to one end unless the net is aligned carefully at right angles to the path of the wind.

For some time now we have been working in conjunction with our net manufacturers to devise a wind-proof net, and it now seems possible that we have at last achieved the desired break through. The manufacturers produced two prototype nets in which the netting is attached, in one case to both the top and the bottom shelf strings, in the other, to the top (or bottom, depending which way the net is erected) only. These two sample nets, and others which ringers have adapted after learning about the modification, have proved very promising.

For example, it is possible to erect them parallel to the wind instead of at right angles to the wind, the slack remaining evenly distributed along the entire length of the net. Set thus, parallel to the wind, the nets have proved effective in force 5 and 6 winds. They can also be used on steep slopes, and are excellent for "flicking" swifts.



A sixty foot net manufactured in this way, would probably be about 6/- or 7/- dearer (85¢ or \$1.00) than a conventional net. Before we decide whether such an additional expense is justified, we are anxious to test the system as widely as possible and so are describing the modifications here in case ringers care to adapt any of the nets they hold in stock. The method of tethering is to run a second cord between the loops, attaching it to the first cord at intervals of about 6 or 7 inches. The attaching can be done by means of a single or a double overhand knot. Provided that this string is exactly the same length as the shelf string to which it is intermittently knotted, it does not matter if the overhand knots slide along the shelf string when the net is not erected.

It is, of course, essential to see that the slack is evenly distributed along the entire length of the net before commencing operations. The method we have employed in doing our conversions involves stretching a net tightly between two points at such a height that it is convenient to work with the top string. The cord - in our case the standard (i.e. not the heavy) shelf cord - was wound on a netting needle. Once the end of the cord has been tied securely to a loop, it is a simple job to secure this line to the main shelf string at intervals of about 7 inches, thus ensuring that no mesh can slide more than an inch or two.

Done in this way, there will be about 6 or 7 free-sliding meshes between knots. The illustration may make the details plain. So far as we can see at present, a net tethered at the top only is equally as effective as a net tethered at the top and bottom, but further experience is required.

(Editor's note: We intend to adapt some of our nets as explained in the foregoing article. We hope that other EBBA members will also test this net tethering idea and let us know the results. If it works, it will certainly be a boon to all banders who use nets. We shall hope to publish some findings in the next issue.)



SHALL WE STOP BANDING EVENING GROSBEAKS
IN ORDER TO SAVE THEIR LIVES?

By G. Hapgood Parks

Many banders of Evening Grosbeaks have learned that some of their birds have been shot (or "killed", or "found dead") in one or another of the Canadian Provinces. Many of these shootings have taken place in the western part of Quebec's Gaspé. Mrs. Parks and I visited this region last spring and it was our good fortune, while we were there, to come into possession of an interesting accumulation of data regarding the local situation.

The story is far too complicated to discuss here, but we are able to report that, bad as it still is, the condition in that region is showing definite improvement. This improvement is indicated by the number of bands recovered and reported annually by the inhabitants of that vicinity. Our data reveal the following numbers of bands reported during each of the past four years:

<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>
88+*	104+*	64	27

*The maximum known number in an uncertain total is indicated for 1959 and 1960.