

ADVANCED NETTING SESSION - EBBA WORKSHOP
By Ronald J. French

Leaders of the Advanced Netting Discussion Group at the annual meeting in East Stroudsburg, Pa., were Mrs. Mabel Warburton, Ray P. Margerum, Dr. E. Wayne Marshall, and Charles Neel. "Making the Most of Your Nets" was the first topic taken up, after introductory remarks by Mabel Warburton, and the discussion was led by Dr. Marshall.

DR. WAYNE MARSHALL Dr. Marshall first discussed the important factors to be taken into consideration when selecting netting sites. He suggested that the following are important if you wish to catch the maximum number of birds in a particular place:

1. Select flight paths.
2. Feeding areas.
3. Roosting areas.
4. Nesting areas.

Sun and light are also of importance to the netter. Nets should be in the shade with a dark background, in a protected area out of the wind.

If you have water and especially a stream on your property, or where you are banding, nets placed near these areas are usually successful. If you do not have natural water, you may try putting out a trough of water or a hose hanging from a tree dripping into a pan or bird bath (these are especially effective for warblers.)

Another important asset is good feeding areas. Among the natural foods, pokeberry and elderberry bushes are most liked by certain species. You can put grain out on the ground near nets or put up nets around your feeding station at home where birds are most likely to congregate.

Sometimes if you catch birds of certain species in your nets, it may be wise to let them linger in the net for awhile. They often will attract others with their call of alarm. This is especially effective with swallows.

A problem which most netters have encountered when they band in residential areas is having their nets destroyed by children and dogs. This also happens in areas where there are deer and the nets are left open at night. It is advised to put up nets in areas where it is likely that you will encounter these problems.

Don't forget to prepare your net lanes carefully before erecting nets. Nets get tangled very easily on weeds and tree limbs and sometimes the nets are torn badly before you notice the problem, or you have to tear them yourself in order to free the nets. Your nets should never be

too far apart, making it impossible for you to check them readily. Also, never erect nets where there is a problem in getting to and from them.

Dr. Marshall further suggested an interesting idea for those who band in the same areas frequently. Select two trees which are about one net length apart and put nails in these trees. They can then be used year after year without bothering with poles.

Another big problem which netters encounter is predation. Some predators include hawks, weasels, skunks, and some even say squirrels. Also rabbits have been known to bite nets. Cats are a major problem to some netters in residential areas.

Although the Fish and Wildlife Service insists that signs be posted by the bander where he is banding, they sometimes prove to be a problem by attracting those who do not understand and are sometimes hostile to the banding operation, and this sometimes causes destruction of nets by those who disapprove or are ignorant of the scientific value of netting.

CHARLES NEEL Mr. Neel first discussed his unique concrete portable pole holders (which he described in the January-February 1963 issue of EBBA News). He then showed the group a fixed net set with glue and described the advantages of rolling the furled net and using a clothes pin to hold it in the middle with pipe cleaners wrapped around the net at various intervals. Another member of the group came forth and showed how he furled his nets by rolling the furled net between the palms of his two hands and then using only a clothes pin in the center to keep the net furled. This method proved most effective and when the clothes pin was removed, the net partially unfurled itself.

An experienced netter knows never to net in the rain and if you are caught by a sudden downpour it is good to bring the netted birds indoors and dry them out before releasing them. Mr. Neel's wife, Chip Neel, has even used a portable hair dryer for this purpose when the emergency demanded it. Birds drown very easily and a netter should be careful to get caught birds out of the nets as soon as possible if they are caught in a downpour. Best of all is not to leave the nets unfurled when there is danger of rain.

Mr. Neel further stressed Dr. Marshall's points as described above.

MABEL WARBURTON Mrs. Warburton closed the discussion with a very interesting display of the various types of nets which are available for certain purposes, and other articles of use to the netter.

This part of the session was devoted to allowing everyone the opportunity to examine the display of nets and other equipment and to ask questions of the session leaders that might help them with their special and particular problems.

The articles on display at this Advanced Netting Session included:

A "Special" Canyon Net, 20' x 100', loaned by Don Bleitz
6-Shelf Net, 9' high

Green Nets and Sand-colored Nets

Nets with Fixed Web:

Tied by hand

Set with Cement

Set with split shot

Manufactured with fixed web

A British manufactured net

Net poles of various types:

Made with 3-piece copper tubing

Made with $\frac{1}{2}$ " steel electrical conduit

Chuck Neel's "Portable Net Holes"

RD 1, Doylestown, Pa.

IDENTIFICATION (for the new bander) SESSION - EBBA WORKSHOP

By Ralph K. Bell

The room was crowded, indicating an interest (and need) for identification instruction. The session was ably led by James Baird, assisted by Dr. Charles Blake and the writer.

The first question was how to tell a Black-capped Chickadee from a Carolina. The wing length of the Black-cap ranged from 60-67mm and the tail from 59-65mm. For the Carolina the wing-length varied from 56-64mm and the tail from 48-56mm on the average, but there still could be deviations from this in areas where there is interbreeding. There was a demonstration on how to measure the wing and tail.

The eye color of immature Towhees is not red and the imm. male is much darker than the imm. female. . . .The underwing of the imm male Rose-breasted Grosbeak is pink, while the underwing of the imm. female is yellowish. . . .The Dickcissel has sharp tail feathers while the House Sparrow has round tips. . . .The Scarlet Tanager bill is relatively short, while the bill of the Summer Tanager is longer.

Dr. Blake explained the molt sequence and drew a diagram on the blackboard. First the newly hatched bird has down and no feathers. This is followed by a succession of molts as follows: post natal, juvenile, post juvenile (body feathers), 1st winter, pre-nuptial (some feathers), 1st nuptial, and finally the post-nuptial (all feathers).

By this time the allotted time was up, but by the interest shown there is a need for this type of question-answer session.

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