

February 19 .... Five inches of snow on the ground this morning. Lots of birds at the feeders, and Walter Bigger's special trap is working fine. It is a 2-cell Potter type trap with openings in the top of each cell to remove birds. This is a wonderful trap for wet or snowy weather, as one does not need to get down on the ground to remove birds. This should help eliminate a complaint known as "banders knees."

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#### DECOYS FOR MIST NETTING

By J. A. Hardman

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Catches of waders in mist nets at dusk, or all through the night on a moonlight night, can be considerably increased by setting out decoys in the water just on the upwind side of nets. The decoys serve both to bring down lower any birds flying over and to cause those birds intending to land to pitch in with the decoys and thus be intercepted by the net placed slightly downwind.

Silhouette-type decoys, made of wood or hardboard, can be used, but they are not so effective as proper stuffed decoys. The latter, however, are expensive to buy, or tedious to make and, in any case, do not stand up at all well to repeated handling in watery places. A simple and effective means of making a decoy from any dead bird which is picked up is to inject it with concentrated formaldehyde (formalin). This causes it to dry up or mummify if it is placed in a warm place for a few weeks. It does not smell and has an advantage over stuffed birds in that it is considerably more robust.

The dead bird should first be set up in a wire jig designed to keep the head, body, and legs in the required positions. The head, each muscle and the 'insides' should then all be injected with formaldehyde (about 10-20 ccs. will suffice for the whole bird). Dispensable plastic syringes can often be obtained from doctors or chemists. Wash off any solution which gets on your hands, as it can irritate. When the bird is dry and hard, remove the wire jig and tie thicker wire supports to the legs so that these project 3-6 ins. below the feet. These will serve to hold the decoy steady when set.

Similar decoys can also be used to induce birds into the catching area of clap nets.