

## A WEEK OF SPRING BANDING

By Chip and Chuck Neel

(Reprinted from the newsletter of the Jamestown, N.Y. Audubon Society where it was titled "Through the President's Window". We are grateful to the Neel's for sending it to us. -Ed.)

Migration or banding, taken separately, is always exciting but when the two are combined, the excitement is greatly magnified.

Archie and Doris Richardson joined us here at Misty Meadows to spend the past week (May 12-17, 1969) in a banding operation... The suspense of what might be found in the nets or traps the next time rounds are made; the joy of finding a species that you have not seen this spring, or better yet, a species never banded here before; the frustration of untangling a chickadee that has spent every second of the fifteen minutes he's been in the net getting very intricately entwined; the jubilation of having a tiny flycatcher that you're positive has expired, come alive in your hand after he's out of the net (they're great ones for "playing possum"); the dismay of having the wind blow open a door of the gathering cage and letting escape the only Myrtle Warbler you've caught so far, or the Brown Creeper who hangs on the screen of the gathering cage until you're sure there is no bird in there, then while you grope for him, he creeps out under your hand and is gone; then the great excitement of going to the nets and knowing you've caught a very rare bird, and a "lifer" for everyone here. It all really happened!

Though Chuck has to leave for work at 2 pm., we all spent the mornings involved in the operation. Nets were opened and six and were usually open until after eight in the evening. There were eleven nets used in various locations down along the lane, including a special one rigged on two poles and suspended between two trees, with the bottom trammel about eight feet above the ground. By means of ropes, it was lowered to remove birds, then raised again. This was the only net left open during the night, for deer couldn't get to it; but then nothing else got in at night either, except June bugs. Nets were checked at least every 45 minutes and oftener during the warmer hours of the day.

A total of 221 birds of 50 different species was banded during the period between Monday morning and Saturday evening. Nets were closed on Monday afternoon for four hours because of heavy rain. The largest number of species banded in one day was 47. Bluejays lead the list in numbers of one species, a total of 32. Several warbler species were represented by one of each, and a Hummingbird was released without a band. Two species were banded that were new for Misty Meadows, a Great Crested Flycatcher and a Bay-breasted Warbler.

Fourteen birds already banded, of nine species, were caught; two of

them had been banded by someone else, the other twelve had been banded here in previous years. The oldest of these was a Veery, banded on July 8, 1962.

But the highlight of the week for all of us came mid-morning on May 15, when a Lawrence's Warbler was caught. (This is the rare recessive hybrid resulting from interbreeding of the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers.) It was carefully removed from the net, clutched securely in a hand and carried back to the banding room. There it was banded, lovingly examined and exclaimed over, then photographed and released. This bird is so rare that probably none of us will ever see one again. We feel very privileged to have handled this bird!

Star Rt., Box 187, Sheffield, Penna. 16347



NEW BOOK ON AGE & SEX DETERMINATION "A Bird Bander's Guide to Determination of Age and Sex of Selected Species" by Merrill Wood, Associate Professor of Zoology, Penna. State University, is expected to be available to the public on September 2, 1969, after four years of preparation. This spirally-bound book of 181 pages is a technical set of keys on birds commonly handled by banders in the northeastern United States. Copies are \$3.00 plus 18¢ Penna. sales tax, postpaid, and can be obtained by writing to Box 6000, University Park, Penna. 16802. Checks should be made payable to the Pennsylvania State University. (We understand that this book is being sold at cost, and that Professor Wood will not receive royalties from its sale. -Ed.)

