

GENERAL NOTES

Reapplying bands.—The last sentence in Professor Shaub's article on removing overlapped bands (*Bird-Banding* 24: 12, 1953) seems to call for a comment. The aluminum used for bands does not stand up under cold work, that is, it breaks when repeatedly bent at the same place without annealing. When the band is opened to place on the bird most of the bending is along a narrow zone opposite the free ends. This zone is bent a second time in closing the band. If the band is removed, reformed, opened and reapplied, at least two more bends are given the same narrow zone. By this time comparatively little wear or corrosion may cause the band to fall into two pieces. The band should not be reformed in the open position because when again closed the free ends will be directed slightly inward.

An actual test was made on a 1A band of the 50-series. Each opening and closing may be called a cycle. At the third cycle the lessened resistance to opening and closing could be felt but there was no visible change. After the sixth cycle notching of the edges of the band at the ends of the bending zone could be seen. The first visible cracking occurred in the eleventh cycle and at the end of the next cycle a crack extended more than half the height of the band. I would not recommend reusing a removed band.—Charles H. Blake, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

Notes on the Rough-winged Swallow.—Working well toward the northern edge of the range of the Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis serripennis*, I have not been able to band many. My experience may be worth describing because the species is not apparently entirely amenable to the methods of the Bank Swallow banders.

My pairs of Rough-wings use partly dug, abandoned holes of the Belted Kingfisher in a bank of fine sand. This bank contains enough sizable stones and roots so that the Kingfishers can rarely dig straight holes deep enough to suit them. The latter species has actually bred there but once in some ten years.

In 1947 the swallows used a hole about 20 inches deep but since then have used a hole a few feet further north which is about 28 inches deep. I have never been able to take a male but have taken the female each year from 1947 to 1952 except 1950. Each time she has been a new, unbanded bird. Some peculiarities of behavior led me to believe that the same male was present from 1947 to 1949.

The nest material, which seems to be used year after year, is a slightly concave pad of straw, rootlets, and plant fibres.

The methods which I have used to secure females and young are simple, almost primitive, but seem generally satisfactory. The females have been caught by holding a wire mesh gathering cage about 12 inches long against the mouth of the burrow and then disturbing the bird with a flashlight beam. Only once have I had to stir her up by reaching a hand into the burrow, but she may refuse to emerge for some few minutes. The female is less likely to fly out when the burrow is approached if the attempt is made in the evening about an hour before dark. The bander must be prepared for a surprise when his first female comes out. She comes with a rush that carries her clear to the end of the gathering cage since she leaves the mouth of the burrow on the dead run.

The young should be left undisturbed until they are well feathered out and able to walk. They may then be brought out one at a time by inserting the hand palm down and caging the nestling between the fingers. If the hand is withdrawn slowly the young one will walk to the mouth of the burrow where it is readily secured. All are removed before banding is begun. As each is banded it is placed just inside the burrow mouth and prodded gently. It will walk to the nest on its own or even run if old enough.

I have not succeeded yet in capturing any adult males. Observations after dark suggest that the male does not roost in the burrow even after the eggs have hatched and that his visits to feed the young are very brief. My nest holes are badly sited for a quick jump to plug them.

What observations I have been able to make indicate that the fledglings do not return to the burrow after they have once flown from it.