

Its first section, on handling birds, sets high standards for the protection of the bird, in holding it, extracting it from traps or nets, and in keeping it temporarily while other birds are being handled. "Generally speaking, tired migrants or breeding adults should not be detained more than a few minutes, and about ten minutes should be the limit for even a fit bird in mid-winter when foraging time is short. Birds taken at dusk or at night, however, are better "roosted" in a box and released early in the morning. . ."

The section on identification and examination should be particularly helpful. I note with pleasure that the Scientific Advisory Committee of the B.T.O. advocates use of a wing measurement with the wing itself flattened but *without* straightening the primaries. This should produce results comparable with museum skins, since the latter have shrunk slightly. This approach has been advocated here by C. H. Blake (among others), compared to flattening the wing completely as is generally done with museum skins.

The section includes the following warning: "Moult, abrasion, individual variation . . . or loss of a feather may cause a measurement to be false or misleading. Always check an unexpected result by making the complementary measurement on the other side of the bird. In general, measurements should be treated with some caution and regarded as only one factor among others (such as plumage characters) in making a judgement." When a bander first gains some experience with measurements, he may tend to consider the measurement the one certain fact about the bird, overriding plumage characters for a different species or genus (or even family).

The authors take pains to point out that "in Europe the convention is to number the primaries 1-10 from the outermost to the innermost; in America the opposite is sometimes done." The latter approach makes the count simpler when the last (10th) primary is absent or minute; it should be used on all papers or notes intended for publication in *Bird-Banding*.

The guide concludes with data sheets for the sexing and ageing of several dozen species. Data from *The Handbook of British Birds* (Witherby, et al.) were found to be inexact in some cases, especially as to molt, and field use of this guide is expected to refine and extend the methods of distinction described here. The sheet for the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) was based on Brina Kessel's paper in *Bird-Banding* (22: 16-23), January, 1951.—E. Alexander Bergstrom.

## NOTES AND NEWS

We regret the unusual delay in publication of this and the two preceding issues. The reasons are largely temporary, so that the 1961 issues should be more nearly on time. We intend to set an earlier editorial deadline for each issue, to help achieve this.

We are anxious to obtain copies of three back issues which are entirely out of stock: January, 1944; July, 1946; and July, 1958. If any reader has a copy he can spare, Mrs. Downs would be grateful for it (as a gift, or, if preferred, for a payment of \$1.00 per copy by the NEBBA). She receives many inquiries for back issues, especially from libraries, and makes an effort to maintain sizeable stocks.

Mrs. Downs also has for sale the ten-year index to *Bird-Banding* for the years 1941 through 1950. Prices: to present members or subscribers, \$3.00 paperbound or \$4.50 in hard covers; to others, \$4.00 paperbound or \$5.50 in hard covers. Copies are postpaid within the U.S. or Canada. We feel this volume will be a handy desk reference to ornithological literature of the decade, and thus should be very useful even to those who don't have the *Bird-Banding* volumes for those years, nor easy access to the volumes.

Starting with this issue, a note following each paper will indicate the date it was received (in case of any major revisions, the date shown will be that for the revised manuscript). Traditionally, *Bird-Banding* has not shown such dates, on the ground that their chief value in other ornithological journals has been for papers on systematics, to establish priority of names. However, in

recent years the average time from receipt of a paper to publication has increased somewhat, despite longer issues, and it seems to be desirable to show when the manuscript was completed. Also, the longer issues have enabled us to handle longer individual papers, and thus papers vary more in length; we therefore have more instances in which papers are not published in the order received, because of the need to arrive at a desired issue length.

The five sizes of mist nets now stocked by NEBBA will handle a wide variety of birds, from most hummingbirds up to the larger shorebirds (curlew or godwits) or small hawks. While they differ in overall size and mesh size, they are of the same high quality, with the greatest number of meshes (counting vertically) in any nets we have seen (for example, type A—12-meter, 4-shelf—has about 150 meshes). For details, inquire of Mr. E. A. Bergstrom, 37 Old Brook Road, West Hartford 17, Conn.