

GENERAL NOTES

Reply in Rebuttal to Mr. Bergstrom's Comments. — I have read with great interest Mr. Bergstrom's "Further Thoughts on Pull-string Traps" (*Bird-Banding*, 33: xx), and am happy to have stimulated a discussion on the usages of various types of trap. I agree that different traps are best for different conditions, and intended my contribution to be a brief note promoting the use of pull-string traps in conjunction with color marking as the most effective method of studying certain seed eating birds, especially chickadees, under specific conditions.

I agree with Mr. Bergstrom that mist nets are not practical in this area in winter. I will not agree that mist nets are the most effective method of "taking old, wise chickadees," and would like to cite the following example, with figures to compare with those quoted by Mr. Bergstrom:

In November, 1961, I had a minor operation which kept me home for a week, and stained most of the local chickadees red. During December I tried an orange dye (which did not work as well.) On New Year's Day I did not rise early and had to make two trips of over an hour each to the hospital, but probably was able to spend three to four hours banding chickadees, finishing off with a few, while eating breakfast next morning. During this period I trapped 62 chickadees, shown below by season banded:

1953-54.....1	1958-59.....6
54-55.....1	59-60.....7
55-56.....2	60-61.....6
56-57.....1	61-62.....31
57-58.....1	New.....6

This table may be compared with Table I of the article on chickadees appearing elsewhere in this issue. Two weeks later I was able to pick up another nine birds, and at the end of that week-end practically all of the chickadees on my property were carrying red marks. Here, with either automatic traps or mist nets, I believe that if one caught 30 birds in the morning, and another 30 in the afternoon, the afternoon group would include approximately 15 of the same birds taken in the morning, and would still leave 15 birds unrecorded.

Mr. Bergstrom's discussion of feeding in automatic traps is valid, and in general I agree with him; however, he omits one point which to me seems important for the part-time amateur who may want to band for very short intervals of time. With automatic traps, fixed in the open position, if one looks out the window and sees an "old, wise chickadee" or other rare bird, one has to go out, set the trap, and scare the bird away. With pull-string traps, which can be left open day and night for weeks at a time, when that important bird shows up, with no other preparation, the string can be pulled, and the bird caught.

In respect to volume of birds per hour, I agree with Mr. Bergstrom; I have used a Peterson-type trap that will catch larger numbers of birds at once. The pull-string traps are of value in flocking birds, such as Redpolls and Evening Grosbeaks, where 15 or more birds can be taken at once. However, my chief point in the previous note was in selectivity; it is in this respect that I believe that pull-string traps have their greatest advantage. By combining this with a simple method of color marking, I believe that I have obtained more accurate statistics about the chickadee population at my home in Bedford, N. H., than could have been obtained in the same amount of time, either with mist nets or with any form of automatic trap with which I am familiar. — John H. Kennard, M.D., Box 150, RFD 2, Manchester, N. H.

Identification of the Juvenal Plumage of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammospiza caudacuta nelsoni*). — The interior race of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammospiza caudacuta nelsoni*) is locally a common nesting bird in the prairie sloughs of north-western Minnesota. However, to date the only description supposedly of the juvenal plumage of the prairie population is based on a young bird collected 16 miles northeast of Warren, Marshall Co., Minnesota, 22 June 1928 by T. S. Roberts, W. Kilgore and W. J. Breckenridge. The adults apparently feeding it were identified as Sharp-tailed Sparrows (Breckenridge 1930) but were not collected. Unfortunately with both Sharp-tailed and Le Conte's Sparrows (*Passerherbulus caudacutus*) feeding young in the same area, some mix-up may have occurred, and the specimen on reexamination, and comparison with known young of both species, proves to be a Le Conte's Sparrow. A stubby-tailed young of Le Conte's Sparrow was collected