

TRIBROMOETHANOL USED TO RECAPTURE HARRIS HAWKS (*Parabuteo unicinctus*)

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I have had two occasions to recapture two captive Harris Hawks which escaped from their cage at the St. Louis Zoo. The drug employed was Tribromoethanol manufactured by Winthrop Laboratories, Special Chemicals Department, 90 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016. This drug is a non-volatile, non-barbiturate, non-addictive central nervous system depressant. It has been used previously with gulls very successfully in experiments conducted by Howard Wight of the Missouri Conservation Commission.

To recapture the Harris Hawks one (1) gram was the calculated dose. This was rubbed onto a 100 gram strip of horsemeat. The bait was placed into a position where it was accessible to the Hawk and he could obtain it without fear of recapture. After consuming the bait the effects of the drug were noticed in about 5-10 minutes. When the bird appeared rather uncoordinated and dazed it was flushed from its perch so that it would not lose consciousness and fall and injure itself. In this dazed state it would fly weakly and fail to gain altitude thereby flying to a lower perch each successive time it was disturbed until it fluttered helplessly to the ground.

After recapture the birds appeared dazed and uncoordinated and would sleep for 2-5 hours depending upon the amount of bait consumed. One actually lost consciousness and at this stage make sure they are propped on their abdomen so that they will not roll over on their back. This drug could be used successfully to capture birds of prey for banding, especially scavengers which would take baited meat and Bald Eagles which would feed on baited fish.

After immobilization they could be banded, weighed, held until the effects of the drug disappear and ultimately released in excellent condition.

This experimentation was done while the author was Curator of Birds, St. Louis Zoological Gardens, St. Louis, Missouri.