



# Eastern Regional News

## Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

### President's Message

On behalf of EBBA, I attended the Western Bird Banding Association's board meeting in October 1986. We found that we are in complete agreement regarding the future of NABB. It was a good meeting and we have many good and loyal friends out there.

I would like to remind you all again that our next Annual Meeting will be held jointly with the Wilson Ornithologists' Society on May 27-31, 1987 at Utica College in Utica, N.Y. If you are interested in giving a paper (EBBA's paper session will be separate), please send all relevant information to Don Schwab, First Vice-President, EBBA, 1476 White Marsh Road, Suffolk, VA 23434.

Our By-Laws stipulate that various announcements must be made at various times. . .

**Item 1.** Ninety days before an Annual Meeting our Nominating Committee must present to all EBBA Council Members a list of persons who have accepted nomination to the various staff positions that must be filled on an annual basis.

**Item 2.** Thirty days before an Annual Meeting proposals (if any) to amend the By-Laws need to be mailed/given to the President and the Secretary of EBBA in order to be acted upon.

**Item 3.** The President needs to put out a call for reports to the members of Council 45 days before a meeting, and these reports must be received by each member of Council 14 days before a meeting.

In addition, we need to remind ourselves that in order to transact business at a meeting, eight (8) members of Council must be present, exclusive of proxy count, and only the President can invite non-voting guests to a Council meeting. Such guests (which include Committee Chairpersons, according to the By-Laws) do not count toward a quorum.

If you, the members, have any information or requests for the above-mentioned items, please communicate with me immediately. Meanwhile, let's do some good banding! Spring is a good time to start a banding study.

Fred S. Schaeffer  
President

### THE ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS (formerly NEBBA)

will hold its annual meeting May 1-3, 1987,

at the LABORATORY OF ORNITHOLOGY, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

**Housing and Saturday Program**.....At the Arnot Teaching and Research Forest

**Theme of the Meeting**.....Monitoring Bird Populations

**Featured Speakers**.....Steve and Evelyn Kress and Charles Walcott

**For Information on the MEETING**.....SCOTT SUTCLIFFE, Chairman

Local Committee AFO, Laboratory of Ornithology  
Cornell University, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850, (607) 255-4288

**For Information on the SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM**.....WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR., Chairman

Program Committee, College of Basic Studies  
Boston University, 871 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, MA 02215, (617) 353-2886

## Improving the Performance of Mist Nets

Robert P. Yunick

**I**n my experience, mist nets for songbirds need to be made of netting that is supple and limp in order to maximize their ability to capture and hold smaller species which hit with light impact. Unfortunately not all nets are made from material having this soft, relaxed quality. Some netting has a hard, springy character that gives unwanted recoil and insufficient relaxed bag to hold captives. This is particularly bothersome in finer (24- and 30-mm) mesh nets.

The undesirable springy character of the netting is usually caused by a sizing or a finish that is put on the yarn to aid in its processing and weaving. Other finishes are put on yarns to impart desirable end-use characteristics, such as the permanent press quality in certain clothing fabrics. For whatever reason they are used, these hard finishes do not improve the capturing ability of a mist net.

During my annual net-laundering campaign following my return last fall from Island Beach, New Jersey, I found that nets can be made softer by using a laundry fabric softener. I wash my nets primarily to remove accumulated salt which gives them a sticky feel that hinders the ability of the netting to move freely on the trammel lines. The washing also removes bird droppings and other dirt that collects during use.

When taking down the nets from the poles, I gather each one at arms' length into a skein and roll it into a ball starting at the netting end and working toward the end-loops. I secure the ball with a rubber band to prevent unravelling. I wash the balled nets by hand, about ten at a time, in a laundry tub using warm water with liquid laundry detergent. I do not recommend un-

folding the nets for washing as they tend to tangle and cause other problems. Only in balled form are they convenient to handle. I soak the balled nets in this water and squeeze them several times as one would squeeze a sponge. Next, I drain the wash water and repeat the process as many times as it takes to get a sustainable head of suds on the wash water, usually 2-4 times.

I follow the washing with 3 or 4 water rinses until the water either comes clean or nearly free of suds. During each rinse, I repeatedly squeeze the nets to circulate the water through them. On the last rinse, I cover the nets with water, add 80-100ml of concentrated liquid fabric softener and again squeeze them several times to distribute the softener through the balled netting. After the nets stand for several more minutes, I remove them singly, rinsing each in running water under the tap.

I allow the nets to drain for a few minutes, then unravel each one into a skein about 3 feet long and hang this over an indoor clothesline to drain and dry. Newspapers on the floor absorb the drippings. The nets dry in 24 to 48 hours depending on the relative humidity. Then I wrap each dried net into a ball, secure each one with a rubber band ready for use.

A polyester net so washed has a decided softness and relaxed feel compared to one not treated in this manner. While I have not tried this technique on nylon nets, I believe that it would probably work equally well. This relaxed netting shows a greater tendency both to respond to the light impact of a small bird and to securely envelop the captive.