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Northern Orioles and Blueberries

J. A. Manter

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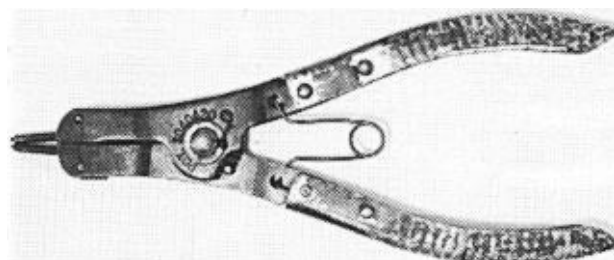
External snap ring pliers for band removal

Robert W. Loftin

Every bird bander has to deal with the problem of lapped bands sooner or later. No matter how careful one tries to be, one is going to lap a band once in a while. The problem is not so acute for banders who work mostly on small passerines, since smaller bands are seldom lapped. Since I band almost nothing but terns and skimmers, I have to deal with the problem more frequently.

Most banders use an ordinary pair of long-nose pliers which they run up between the tarsus and the band and then spread the band by opening the pliers. This operation is difficult and the danger of injury to the bird is great. It is almost impossible to carry out without the assistance of another person to hold the bird.

I have found that the use of a tool called the external snap-ring plier greatly simplifies the operation. These pliers, which are designed for spreading retaining rings, hose clamps and the like, are stocked by all the better auto parts houses. They are designed to **open** when they are squeezed, making it possible to hold the bird in one hand and manipulate the pliers with the other. The bands come off almost like magic, and there is much less chance of injuring the bird.



The better models come with a series of interchangeable tips which can be modified for small bands and replaced if broken. There are several different brands available. I have used K-D brand, Model 446, very successfully to remove size three and larger bands from terns without any modification. On bands smaller than this the pliers and the tips must be filed down.

The price for this tool is about \$7.00 and well worth it in time and trouble saved and in a lower incidence of injuries to the birds. Be certain to obtain **external** snap-ring pliers rather than internal; the later close when squeezed and are no better than ordinary long-nosed pliers for the purpose.

University of North Florida, Box 17074, Jacksonville, Florida 32216.

Northern Orioles and blueberries

J.A. Manter

The Northern (Baltimore) Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) is a common summer resident in the northeast, but usually is caught and banded in small numbers. During 13 years, up to and including 1975, the banding group of the Natchaug Ornithological Society of Storrs, Conn. under the master permit of Mrs. John Lof banded 22,011 birds comprising 97 species in the town of Mansfield. Of this total number, only 39 Northern Orioles were banded and I banded only 4.

My neighbor, Vinton White, is a good gardener with both wild and cultivated Highbush Blueberries. Six of his large bushes were enclosed by netting held by a wooden framework to protect his berries from birds. Even with this secure protective netting some birds were successful in finding

some means of entrance to enjoy their favorite fruit. Mr. White knew of my banding activities and so he caught and brought some of the birds to me for banding. Several species found their way through the netting but the majority were Northern Orioles. During July and August of 1976 he caught by hand, under the netting, 50 orioles which I banded and released. Most of these were HY individuals. A few made repeat visits through the netting, so great was their fondness for blueberries.

I was surprised to learn that there were so many breeding orioles in the vicinity and was pleased to have this unusual opportunity of banding so many orioles in such a short time.

122 Gurleyville Road, R.R. 3, Storrs, CT 06268