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Additional Comments on Using Decoys for Winter Finch Capture

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Yunick (1988) has reported greatly improved trapping success for Pine Siskins (*Carduelis pinus*) and Common Redpolls (*C. flammea*) by using live decoys in the traps. I have been able to improve the capture rate for mist netting Pine Siskins, House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) and House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) by setting the mist net up in front of an aviary or enclosure containing members of the same species to be netted and locating a desirable food source on the opposite side of the net. (Additional Federal and State permits are required to hold protected birds for more than 24 hours.)

The mist net is set about two meters in front of the aviary; the feeder is placed about two meters from the opposite side of the net. The bird feeder attracts birds and when they finish feeding, they fly in the direction of the aviary, attracted by the captive birds. I quickly remove birds from the net and band them away from the capture area.

This technique, combining use of aviary decoys and a strategically placed feeding station, has improved the success of my mist netting and reduced the total time that I spend capturing birds.

During the summer of 1987 I used a technique similar to that of Adkisson (1975). I put a net around a tree containing the feeder with the top of the net one meter

above the feeder. Birds normally flew down from the tree to the feeder and then swooped downward when leaving the feeder and I expected them to fly into the net. However after five days of netting (beginning July 13, 1987) within a two week period, I had not captured any birds. Birds were still utilizing the feeder, but they flew upward when leaving and avoided the mist net.

During the two week period beginning July 13, 1988, 17 birds were captured using a mist net set up between an aviary and the feeder as described above. During the summer of 1988 a total of 71 birds were captured (54 House Finches, 15 House Sparrows and 2 Pine Siskins). Netting was conducted for approximately 5 hours per day for 18 days beginning June 23 and ending September 5, 1988. This technique was obviously much more successful than that used in 1987.

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