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## Bander First Aid

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# News, Notes, Comments

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## Bander First Aid

Banders inevitably sustain scratches and cuts to the hands, and raptor banders occasionally have to deal with more serious lacerations. Experience has taught me that a first-aid kit is an essential part of my field equipment. Below are some of the items I include. Any brand names mentioned are for example only and not an endorsement of such; and personal medical advice should be sought before using any of the substances suggested.

My kit consists of three major components: 1) disinfectant, 2) cleansing pads, and 3) wound dressing.

**Disinfectant** - I prefer 91% isopropyl alcohol (not the 70% variety sold as "rubbing alcohol"). It is colorless, evaporates leaving no residue, is an effective bactericide and inexpensive (32 oz for \$2.99). Hand sanitizer gels (62% ethyl alcohol) are popular and effective, but expensive (4 oz for \$1.99). I avoid hydrogen peroxide because of its short shelf life.

For my kit I put some isopropyl alcohol in a 4-oz (113 g) screw cap plastic bottle. The rest of the quart I use at home or in my travel kit for routine hand sanitation. At the end of a day of banding, I wash my hands well with soap and water, then pour some alcohol into my cupped hand and spread it over both hands to disinfect them regardless whether I have any cuts on my skin.

I also carry a 4-oz bottle of Betadine for more severe cuts. It is an aqueous solution of 7.5% Povidone-iodine (hence is deeply red-brown in color and can leave stains) and a surfactant, such that it can be used with water as a disinfecting hand soap. It is commonly used in hospitals because of its anti-viral as well as anti-bacterial qualities. It is sold generically in chain drug stores as Povidone and 8 oz at 10% concentration costs \$9.99.

**Cleansing Pads** - I carry several pieces of kitchen paper toweling which, when torn to an appropriate size and soaked with isopropyl alcohol, is an effective, inexpensive means of cleansing a

bleeding wound. I also include several 2 x 2" and 3 x 3" sterile gauze pads for this same purpose, as well as to dress a wound. Chain stores sell so-called "non-stick" pads (\$1.49 for 10, 1.5 x 2" at about the same cost per pad as gauze (\$3.49 for 25, 2 x 2").

**Wound Dressing** - Chain stores have a wide array of adhesive bandages in all sorts of sizes and shapes and type of tape (plastic, cloth, clear, etc.). A box of 30-40 of assorted sizes can range from \$2.49 to \$3.99, depending on type and brand. Since only a dozen or less are needed in a kit, borrow from your medicine cabinet, based on your personal experience and skin sensitivity.

For more serious wounds, I carry the gauze pads mentioned above and a roll of 1/2" x 5 yd waterproof adhesive tape (\$1.99 to \$3.49, depending on brand) and a roll of 1" x 5 yd tape (\$2.49). Include an inexpensive pair of scissors if you feel the need, otherwise I rely on a pocket knife to cut tape.

**Container** - This kit is contained in a plastic flip-top box measuring about 7.5 x 4.5 x 5" of the sort that Pampers or Huggies came in. Failing access to one of those used boxes, drug and other stores that sell plasticware carry one of about that size for \$0.99.

**Miscellaneous** - While it is not essential for disinfecting wounds, I also carry in the kit several doses of analgesic in a very small plastic container to deal with pain. Personal preference and tolerance dictates whether one chooses aspirin, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or some other type. The value of including it in my kit was especially evident one day as I posed for photographs with a Red-tailed Hawk in one hand and a Rough-leg in the other (both caught simultaneously on the same trap drop, thus the photo-op), when the Rough-leg wiggled one toe free from my grip and sunk a talon into the back of my hand. The skin wound was superficial but the tendon it pierced beneath the skin became inflamed and painful within minutes even after disinfecting it. Some ibuprofen kept me going the rest of the day.

Finally, for anyone wanting a more complete, professionally assembled first-aid kit, Johnson & Johnson sells (as possibly other manufacturers do as well) a kit of 170 items for \$19.99. In addition to treating cuts and scrapes, it contains an anti-biotic, cooling gel for burns; anti-itch medication;

analgesic; and an anti-diarrheal. It comes in a lightweight, compact plastic case measuring about 3 x 7 x 10".

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## Recent Literature

### BANDING HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHIES

**In memorium John Baxter Miles 1942-2006.** J. Iron. 2007. *OFO News* 25(2):20-21. 9 Lichen Place, Toronto, ON M3A 1X3 (Brief biography of prolific bander of birds at several Ontario localities, who founded the Selkirk Banding Station of the Haldimand Bird Observatory and held several executive positions on the boards of the Long Point Bird Observatory, Ontario Bird Banding Association, and two naturalist clubs.) MKM

### BANDING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

**Four-legged friend or foe? Dog walking displaces native birds from natural areas.** P. B. Banks and J. V. Bryant. 2007. *Biology Letters* (Resource ecologists often ban dogs from natural habitats, fearing a negative impact on the native wildlife by dogs. This results in public outcries from dog lovers, who feel that their access to public lands is restricted. Little evidence was available to support this strategy. Recently, researchers compared the number and diversity of birds in woodlands before and shortly after dogs were walked on trails through the habitat. They found that dog walking led to a 35% reduction in abundance, both in areas where dog walking is common and where dog walking is prohibited.) WHS

### IDENTIFICATION, MOLTS. PLUMAGES, WEIGHTS AND MEASUREMENTS

**Identifying the Common Black-headed Gull.** K. Kaufman. 1993. *Amer. Birds* 47:1156-1159. Box 130, Rocky Ridge, OH 43458 (The colors and shape of the hoods differ between Black-headed and Bonaparte's gulls, as do overall size, overall shape [stockiness], lengths of head and neck in relation to overall body, underwing pattern and

extent of gray on the neck in Basic plumage. Age differences of some features in both species are also mentioned.) MKM

**The perplexing Christmas falcon.** D. Dekker. 2001. *Edmonton Nat.* 29(1):11-13. 3899-112A St. NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 1K4 (Detailed description with sketch and photos of Gyrfalcon with dark, Peregrine-like head in Edmonton.) MKM

**The confusing large falcons.** D. Dekker. 2001. *Edmonton Nat.* 29(1):22-23. 3899-112A St. NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 1K4 (Brief review of identification features of Peregrine and Prairie falcons, Gyrfalcon and Northern Goshawks, emphasizing details that can mislead even experienced observers.) MKM

**Cooper's Hawk or Sharp-shinned Hawk?** V. Berardi. 2003. *Hawk Migration Studies* 28(2):19-24. 6032 Golfview Dr., Gurnee, IL 60031 (Illustrated summary and discussion of body shape, tail, wing, head and flight features that help distinguish these two *Accipiters*.) MKM

**Sex determination in Booted Eagles (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) using molecular procedures and discriminant function analysis.** J. Balbontín, M. Ferrier and E. Cassado. 2001. *J. Raptor Res.* 35:20-23, Estación Biológica de Doñana (CSIC) Avda. Maria Luisa s/n, Pabellón del Per, 41013, Sevilla, Spain (A discriminant function based on forearm length and body mass of 100 young and 42 adults measured between 1996 and 1998 was found to predict age of eagles in southwestern Spain with close to 100% accuracy, while another discriminant function based on bill, forearm, tail and tarsal lengths in the same population predicted sex with 98.8% accuracy. Tables summarize these measurements and wing lengths by age and gender.) MKM