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July 24, 1963

Dear Pete,

I received my nets early this month. Thanks for sending in the order, I used your old net at Park Rapids + succeeded in banding some birds near our cabin - Yellow Warblers + Kingbirds, mostly, but also Warbling Vireos, Baltimore Oriole, Downy Woodpecker, Chickadee, White breasted Nuthatch, Flicker + Robin. Almost had a Pileated, but I don't know what I could have done with him. Do you want your net back?

Since I've had my own nets I've been working a soil bank field near Decorah. I found Henslow's Sparrows there + I've been able to band 1. Another was dead in the morning when I got to him - predator had worked on his throat + lungs. Do you have much trouble with this? The dead one showed yellow downy feathers over each eye. Is this yellow area a secondary male sex characteristic of some species?

There are also Short-billed Marsh Wrens in the field. I've had help from two others in driving the Wrens + Henslow's to the net, but both species, when driven, have either gone directly through the net or gotten out with a brief struggle even though I was right there on top of them. I will try again to get them just by leaving my nets up all week, but

I'm surprised that they get out. The nets were loose when the birds escaped. Of course in an open field they billow much of the time. Do you have any suggestions how I can capture the Wrens + Sparrows?

There are at least 2 more Kenlow's singing, so they may still be nesting. Is it a good idea to use nets among breeding birds?

Of course I have banded Eastern Meadowlarks, Dickcissels, ~~Chickadee~~ Goldfinch, Barn Swallow + Vesper Sparrow in the soil bank field.

Yesterday I banded Cliff Swallows at a colony on the river near Decorah + got 56 of them. I guess there are about 100 gourds in the colony + better than 350 birds in the area, so I got a rather small percentage, though I think a respectable percentage. The more birds banded the better, of course, but what is considered the minimum effective percentage?

I've had my share of problems with the nets + getting organized, but I sure enjoy it! Jo + Jonathan + June Ann are fine. We will soon be moving to Minneapolis. I will be there this weekend apartment hunting, which is no fun. Hope you + your wife have had a good summer.
Sincerely, Fred