CARE OF EQUIPMENT

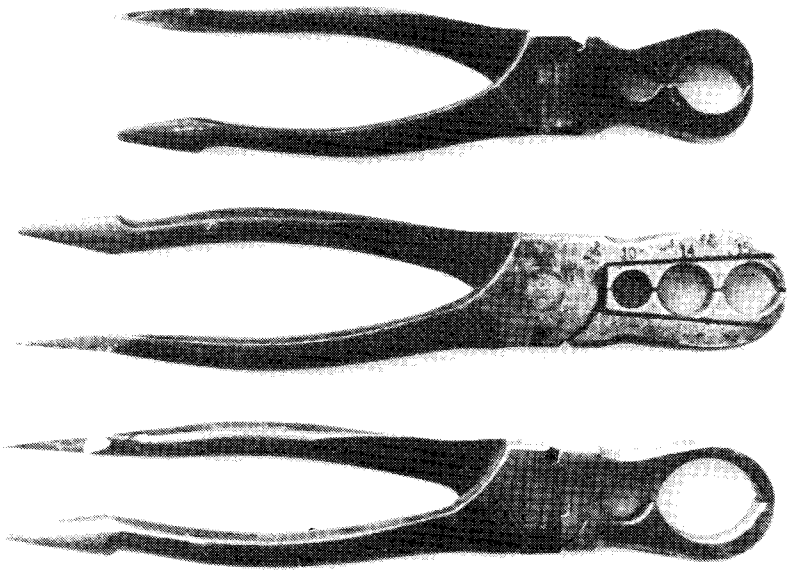
E.F. von Maltitz

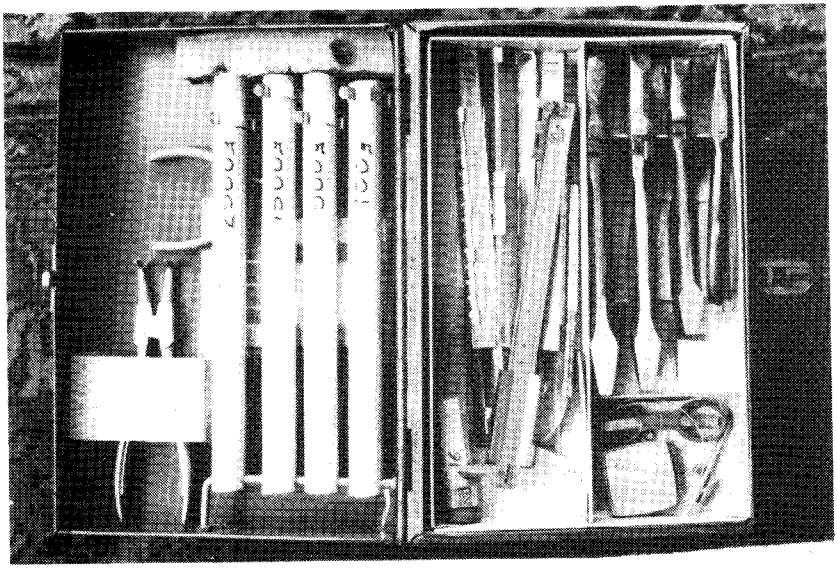
Special ringing pliers

I think that all raptor ringers, who have to use circular rings (as distinct from the biased ellipse used on water birds), will agree that the use of a single pair of pliers for sizes from 8 to 26 mm leaves something to be desired.

It is comparatively easy to make special tools for specific ring sizes using what are generally known as 'gas pliers' which are available in a number of different sizes, and the increased efficiency certainly makes the effort worthwhile.

The photograph below shows three pairs of pliers which have been modified in different ways. The one with three holes was filed away to the black line, a single piece of steel silver-soldered to both jaws (it could equally be fixed with epoxy resin),





drilled 10, 14 and 15 mm for 8, 11,5 and 12,5 mm rings, and then sawed apart and filed smooth. A bit of extra filing does no harm as the jaws must not touch when the ring is fully closed.

The smaller pliers were filed oversize to enable a ring of the correct internal diameter to be soldered in for the 16 mm size, the smaller half-inch hole being drilled before the jaws were cut apart. The hole for the 26 mm ring in the larger pliers was filed and then ground to size, but the final truing can be done equally well by wrapping emery cloth around a broom-stick or something similar. Finally, the relative ring sizes are stamped, engraved or painted on the flattened tang of the handle.

Storage of spring balances

If one uses a small tool-box to hold ringing equipment, the problem of holding spring balances so that they are easily accessible and identifiable, while still being fully protected, is easily solved.

Lengths of 15 - 20 mm rigid plastic tubing (the diameter should be big enough to take the body of the balance but too small to admit the support ring) are cut about 3 cm longer than the longest balance. Holes are drilled near one end to enable them to be slipped over a rod of 3-6 mm diameter which acts as a hinge. The rod is mounted in the lid of the tool-box and the tubes slipped onto it with 1 cm spacers (washers or short lengths of tubing) to provide finger space for handling. The free ends of the tubes are held in 'Terry' clips, staggered so that they do not interfere with each other when a tube is lifted, and a piece of plastic foam glued into the lid just clear of the open ends of the tubes keeps the balances in place.

We first used clear tubing so that the balances could be identified by colour, but consider it more convenient to use opaque tubes with the range written on with waterproof ink.

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STALKING AND ENTICING GUINEAFOWL IN A GAME RESERVE

J. van Niekerk

In a project on the ecology of Crowned Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*) in the Krugersdorp Game Reserve, some attention was given to the trapping and marking of guineafowl. Fifteen successive days of intensive trapping were conducted between March and April 1982, and an additional 15 days between June and July 1982.

Fig. 1 overleaf illustates the shape and dimensions of a guineafowl walk-in trap which was used. Three of these traps were used simultaneously in an area of approximately two square kilometres visited daily by 200-250 guineafowl. Crushed mixed grain was used for bait. During trapping all possible data connected with improving future trapping were collected.