

## TECHNIQUES

This section will carry articles on catching techniques and ringing equipment.

### CATCHING CUCKOOS AND OWLS WITH THE HELP OF A TAPE-RECORDER

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A few years ago I started to record birds on a tape recorder. Then I found that when I played the recording back, the bird became attracted and came closer to answer the call.

On 24th December, 1969 I heard a cuckoo call. I took my parabolic reflector (20cm. diameter) and recorded his call. I played the call back and the cuckoo answered. I recorded the call again to get more of it on tape. Later on I played it over and over again while I sat under a tree watching the bird. I saw he was getting more and more mad, calling for a mate. He came towards me and the tape-recorder and dived at us. So I thought of putting up a mist-net to try to catch the cuckoo. Once the net was up I played the recording over and over again. Ten minutes later I had caught my first cuckoo. So I ringed, measured, weighed and released it.

I now only play the recording when I hear a cuckoo call in the vicinity and it usually only takes a few minutes before it answers my recording. Some birds take longer to catch than others. I have so far only caught four cuckoos this way but I hope to catch many more. I have also decoyed some Pearl-spotted Owlets Glaucidium perlatum using the same method. I did not know there were any owlets in the vicinity when I played the call. I have already caught more owlets than cuckoos this way.

### TAPE RECORDERS AND WADERS IN GERMANY

In a recent letter to Mr. H. Pfister, Michael Speckman of Münster, W. Germany told of using tapes of Greenshank and Dusky Redshank to call waders to mist-nets after dark. On one occasion, one net and a tape recorder set-up caught 146 Snipe in one evening. In general ringers improved their catches by about 90% using the calls of various species. It seems that experimentation with this technique in S.A. might well prove very fruitful.