

Sir,

I am writing for the following reasons.

1. To congratulate you on the production of Safring which is an excellent innovation. I would be particularly keen to see an article by one of the experienced ringers on techniques in raptor trapping with special reference to the Bal-chatrri technique which I am hoping to use in my study of Buteo augur in the Matapos. I can't find anybody locally who can help me.

2. I was particularly interested in your note "Forest Mist-Nets" in Foreign News. I have just returned from a trip to the Haroni-Lusitu Junction where I carried out intensive ringing in one forest patch. I was soon aware that my nets being only 12' high was going to mean that I would not trap certain canopy species. Fortunately I had two 150' climbing ropes, slings and karabiners with me so using climbing spikes I put slings round high forks about 50' in two forest trees on either side of a forest opening. Using karabiners as pulleys I threaded one rope through each and looped the mist net loops onto the trailing rope. The knot was similar to that used in 'prussicing' in mountaineering in that when you release the pressure pulling from the net it is loose and can be slid up and down the rope to the required position, but when the net is pulled tight it grips the rope and cannot move up or down.

By pulling on the one trailing rope I could move the net, correctly spaced out for "bag", up into the canopy. I put two nets on in series as Whitaker did. The result was a wall of net, adjustable from ground level to 50'. My own high net gave poor catches but this is a true reflection of the bird densities in this particular forest patch. Ploceus bicolor was the only species that I caught with the high net but not with ground nets. The ringing results in general were interesting; I get good series of Ispidina picta, Smithornis capensis, Phyllastrephus flavostriatus, P. debiles & Hypargos niveoguttatus among others. Pitta angolensis was an "unusual catch". I am intending to trap again in the same patch next year.

Yours sincerely,

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