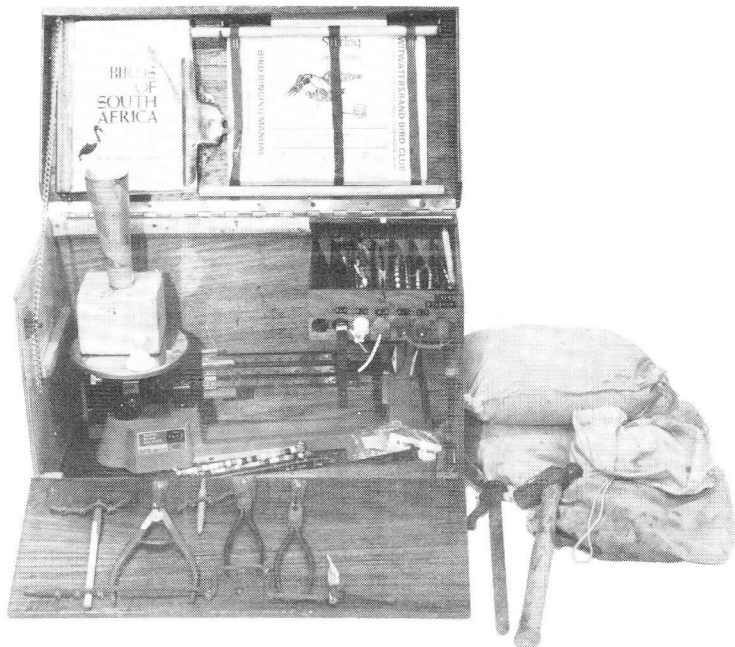


TECHNIQUES

A DESIGN FOR A RINGING BOX AND RING DISPENSER.

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When I was first introduced to bird-ringing the scope of my activities was sufficiently limited for an old linen bag containing a couple of strings of 2.3 and 3mm rings, a few holding bags, my 20ft net and a ringing note book to be adequate for my needs.



However, in recent years I have been able to intensify my activities, thereby catching a greater variety of birds. This in turn required a greater variety of ring sizes, to be easily available and also easily stored and transported.

The ringing box and ring dispenser as illustrated, have evolved from a pocketed cloth-roll similar to a car tool roll.

As can be seen from the photograph, on the right hand side of the box is a ring dispenser made by partitioning a plywood or hardboard box. The plastic tubes on which the rings are supplied, are lead through flanged feeding bottle teats (as used on the Griptight feeding bottle). The rings, especially those that are loose on the string are held back and only the ring that is required needs to be pulled through the opening in the teat. The different sizes of rings are also easily to hand. In the photograph, the lid of the ringing box

has been propped open to show its contents. The box is normally kept closed.

The box is sufficiently long to be able to take a Triple-beam balance. Unfortunately these balances have in recent months become prohibitively expensive. Pesola spring balances are much cheaper. Immediately above the balance is a removable shelf on which nets in bags can be placed. (The shelf has been removed for the photograph).

The lid of the box holds Roberts Birds of South Africa, as well as other guides to identification and ringing technique.

It is an advantage if the box is not too deep as this would make carrying difficult. The carrying handle folds flat to facilitate packing.

With the lid down and the front flap open most of the contents of the box are accessible, and the lid can then also be used as a table. The box is strong enough to sit or stand on.

The front flap holds a pen and pencil, a circlip-pliers, a small thread hook and cutter, a sidecutter and a small ringing pliers. I find the circlip-pliers very useful for opening rings that are supplied closed and also for removing rings that are going to be too tight or which have become distorted while being applied. The sidecutters are used to cut rings to size where the correct size is not available.

There is sufficient space in the floor of the box to carry a few steel tent pegs, a 2lb hammer and a selection of pieces of cord to use as guy-ropes.

A transparent plastic cone with its stand as well as a sample of the type of teat used for the ring dispenser are illustrated on the balance pan of the scale.

One disadvantage of the box is that it is too heavy to carry any distance but with a bit of ingenuity shoulder straps could be fitted.

I would like to thank Walter Lawson for the loan of his Triple-beam balance for use in the photograph.
