

*This color-banded Kentucky Warbler was mist netted in Union County during nesting bird research done by Dr. Scott Robinson and a team of researchers in southern Illinois. Bird banding is becoming more and more a part of the scientific process in the state and the nation. Photo by Todd Fink.*



MAPS has narrow objectives and strict reporting standards to compare nationwide the migratory patterns of North American passerines. At the Chicagoland Bird Observatory, monitoring is done on passerine migration in second growth deciduous forest. With 200 meters of nets, the DeCourceys and their volunteers are not in the most productive area in terms of the number of birds netted and banded, but they have been able to clearly document trends in migratory populations as well as breeding birds.

More banding research at the Chicagoland Bird Observatory may help explain why the nets in this particular part of the DuPage County Forest Preserve have only caught one Brown-headed Cowbird in four years, despite rampant parasitism by cowbirds throughout the rest of the county.

An unfortunate phenomenon the observatory's nets have revealed is the probable eating of netted birds by the area's burgeoning deer popu-

lation. The DeCourceys have found an Ovenbird, a catbird, and an Indigo Bunting in the nets which showed signs of having been eaten by deer. Saliva samples from the bodies are being analyzed for confirmation. The DeCourceys' research may corroborate data from Scotland on bird eating by nutritionally stressed deer there and may have implications for deer management in a county suffering from severe deer overpopulation.

Meanwhile, Dr. Scott Robinson, director of the Wildlife Division of the Illinois Natural History Survey is using bird banding during the breeding season to census bird populations more accurately than ever before. He is also attempting to answer specific questions about the dispersal of young birds in a given area after fledging. His research in the Shawnee National Forest is documenting with frightening clarity the affects of forest fragmentation on breeding woodland birds, with serious implications for future land conservation in the state, especially regarding logging prac-

tices (See *Meadowlark*: Vol. 2, No. 1).

Natural history survey researchers collectively band several thousand birds during the breeding season from early May to early August. Mist nets are set up in virgin, clear-cut, second-growth, and selectively logged forest areas. Birds are fitted with both standard aluminum leg bands and a unique combination of colored leg bands to enable field observers to track bird movement without recapture.

Through mist netting the researchers are seeing far more breeding birds than had previously been recorded by song census. "When you rely on bird song to census an area, you can really over-census the non-mated birds in an area, who are singing their heads off to attract a mate," said Robinson. "The breeding birds are much too busy raising young to sing," he said. "Mist netting and banding shows a more accurate picture of how many birds are really using an area and documents the movements