

9. Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana*. Their needle-sharp claws are very painful when stuck under a human nail.
10. Goldentailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni*. Should one consider that you look like a nice block of rotten wood, it will eventually stab right through bones and all.

Perhaps other ringers, those who go out to the nets barehanded and not clutching a portmanteau containing thin, thick or welder's gloves, selotape, masking tape and elastoplast (the former two to bind up bits of bird and the latter to bind up the ringer's hand), rubber bands of various sizes (useful for Kingfishers), quick-un-pick (for quick release of too dangerous birds), scissors, pliers, hammer and a vice-grip (all probably useful for something), might have other ideas about what bites hardest or is a trifle dangerous to handle.

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STRANGE LADY

Gustav A. Swanson

Imagine the thoughts and feelings of the helpful farmer (HF). He was driving his pickup along a lightly traveled rural road in northern Colorado when he saw a strange lady (SL) beside her car 50 feet off the road. He could see the auto tracks where it had left the road and come to rest in a hayfield. His first thoughts were: "That poor little old lady. She must have dozed off and her car left the road. She needs help." So he stopped and called to her:

H.F. Having trouble?

S.L. No, I'm OK.

H.F. Sure you don't need any help?

S.L. No, but thanks anyway.

H.F. What are you doing down there?
S.L. I'm catching a live field mouse.
H.F. Live field mouse, did you say?
S.L. Yes.
H.F. What will you be doing with a live field mouse?
S.L. I'm going to use it for bait.
H.F. Did you say bait? Bait for what?
S.L. Bait to catch a live sparrow hawk. (The AOU hadn't yet changed the name to American Kestrel).
H.F. What are you going to do with a live sparrow hawk?
S.L. I'm going to put a little aluminium ring on its leg.
H.F. What then?
S.L. I'm going to let it go.
H.F. (Helplessly) OK, kiddo. Good luck! (And then he drove off. Can you imagine his account that evening at the dinner table?)

Of course we bird watchers wouldn't be quite as puzzled because we know about bird banding, but perhaps we may be interested in knowing more about S.L. She was Allegra Collister who lived in Longmont, Colorado and adopted bird banding and Rocky Mountain National Park as special interests.

Allegra died in 1987 at 88 but will long be remembered in Colorado as a dedicated bird bander and ornithologist. In addition to her own personal banding, she was always invited by the state or university ornithologists when they were tackling large scale banding of colonial birds because she was known affectionately as "The fastest band in the west." In her 30 years of bird banding, she banded about 100 000 birds of more than a hundred species. One of her neighbours who didn't know any more about bird banding than H.F. once asked her: "Do you get paid for this?" Her answer: "No, my study of birds and sharing of knowledge with others is a labor of love."

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