

## Two Dutch Quail-Trapping Methods

In the September, 1965, issue of the *Australian Bird Bander*, page 46, Lloyd Nielsen asked for clues to the trapping of quail. R. R. P. van der Mark in "Siervogels als liefhebberij" (1961, Thieme & Cie, Zutphen, 112 pages), mentions on pages 58 to 60 two methods used in the Netherlands for catching males of the Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*).

The first method is to lure males into trammel-nets, either with a captive female or by imitating her calls with quail whistles. Females are reared for this purpose by placing eggs under Bantam hens. Pieces of hollow femurs of goat and turkey are used to make large and small quail whistles. A leather sac filled with horse hair is attached to one end of the bone, and wax and a cork are adjusted at the other end to obtain the correct sound. The large whistle is used when a calling male is some distance away, the small whistle when he is close.

If the whistles are blown at the correct rate males can be lured up to a few feet away. Initially the males fly towards the female calls, land near by and walk the remaining distance. The positions of the males can be determined by his answering calls.

The males that have been called in are caught in a trammel-net placed between them and the female or the trapper with his whistles. The trammel-net is 25 feet long and one foot high. It consists of a fine-mesh net sandwiched between two 2½-inch mesh nets. The net is supported by sticks about six to seven feet apart. On the end stick a white or light green flag is attached to discourage the quail from flying. The quail are caught in fine-mesh pockets formed after they have stepped through the coarse mesh. After the netter has not heard anything for a while he walks around the net to drive reluctant birds in and to inspect his catch, if any.

The second method consists of a dragnet, 24 feet long and 12 feet wide. Long ropes are attached to the corners of one side. Two men grab a rope each and drag the net towards a calling quail. The leading edge should be about a foot and a half above the ground. A third man walks immediately behind the trailing edge. The quail will flush closely in front of him, whereupon he makes a dive for it, and presses the net down around it with his arms.

The above two methods are used in the wheat fields and hay meadows of the Netherlands, formerly commercially and for sport, and now by bird-banders. In Australia, the first method can be improved by using Steve Wilson's method of setting out many nets, at the same time. Thus walking quail of both sexes plus other grassland birds may be more readily caught. Trammel-nets can be made to the above specifications from standard netting sandwiched between wader netting. Standard mist nets one to three feet high might also work.

A common method for catching gallinaceous birds in Asia is to use trained dogs to drive them into nets, and tame falcons overhead to prevent them from flying.

These Northern Hemisphere trapping methods may provide clues to the trapping of quail in Australia.

G. F. van Tets,  
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## 14th. International Ornithological Congress

The 14th International Ornithological Congress will be held from 24th to 30th July, 1966, at Oxford, England.

The Association will be represented at the Congress by The President, Mr. H. J. de S. Disney, who will give a short paper on honeyeaters. Following the Congress, Mr. Disney will visit various research centres and museums in England and America before returning to Australia in October.