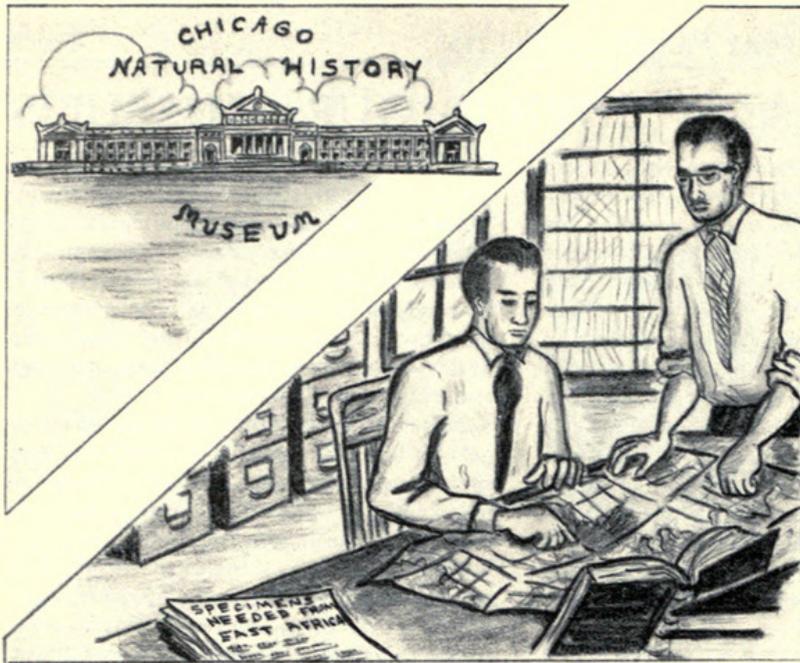


EXPEDITIONS

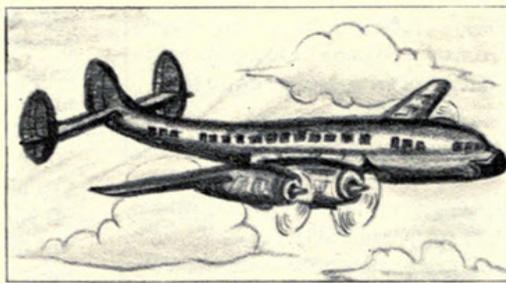
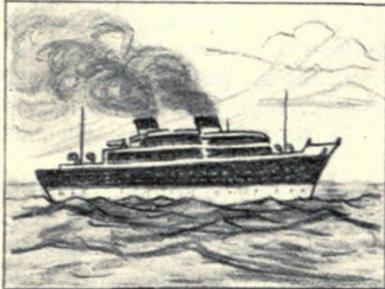
BY AUSTIN L. RAND, WITH

The bird specimens in museums are the guarantees of authenticity that stand back of the books written about birds. Chicago Natural History Museum's bird collection of some 240,000 specimens is one of the important bird collections in the world.

A series of expeditions is the best way of building up a collection. We may get some specimens through exchange, purchase, or

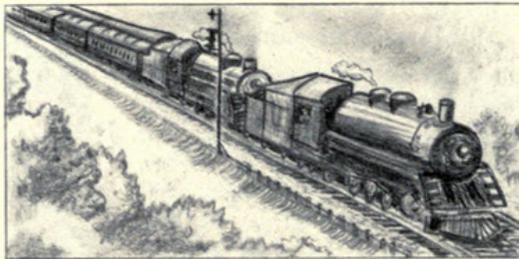


← Start of the expedition. In the offices of the Division of Birds the area to be visited is decided on, plans are made, and equipment is ordered and gathered. Expedition personnel is carefully selected. Preferably we send professional naturalists or men who have trained themselves for such a position. They must be practical enough to arrange for food and water, shelter, and transportation where such things are scarce; they must be hunters enough to collect the animals and preparators enough to make them into proper specimens and get them dry, packed, and safely shipped home; they must be biologists enough to know what are desirable specimens and what records and notes are of value; they must be diplomats enough to deal with foreign officials and native potentates, often in foreign languages; and they must be managers enough to handle museum funds and direct expedition workers. Only key men are sent on expeditions. Local persons are recruited on the spot, as carriers, camp help, and hunters. They know the country and its problems. Their rate of pay is low, and they don't need transportation. They form a link between the expedition and the country.



Travel to the field of operation may be by:

- ship
- airplane
- train

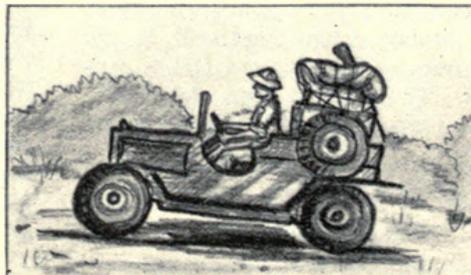


The jungle is the laboratory where the birds are sought and observations made in the humid tropics.

To prepare a specimen, the bird is skinned along breast and a



Once on location, in the field as we call it, travel may be more primitive: by carriers—by pack train—by canoe—or even by jeep.

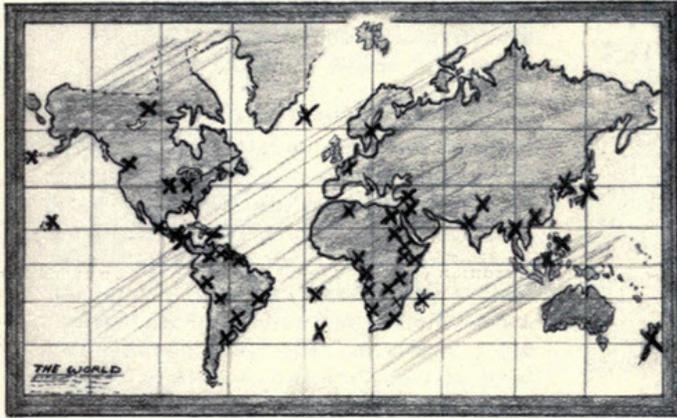


A collector's camp in the field. The wise museum man carries a table for he can work better in comfort; the native helper is working on a box.

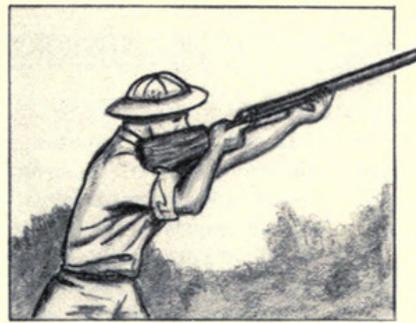
HOW TO GET BIRDS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUTH ANDRIS

Even a gift, but nothing takes the place of an expedition with trained museum personnel. Not only does it bring back a good representation of the bird life but also a knowledge of the country and the local conditions affecting bird habits and habitats. This aids greatly in understanding the problems that arise later in writing about the birds.



Our interests span the world. The X's mark areas from which Chicago Natural History Museum bird division has received bird specimens in the last seven years.



The collector shoots most of his specimens, using small shot so as not to damage the plumage.



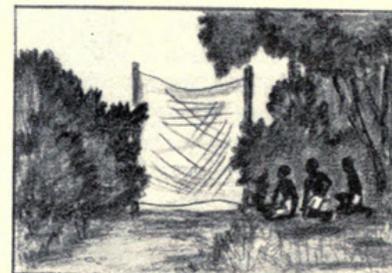
by setting snares

But native help is invaluable for getting many small, rare or shy birds:

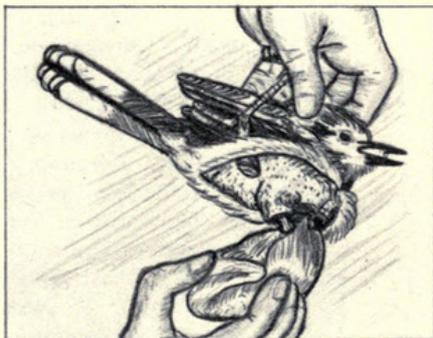


← by shooting with a many-pointed arrow

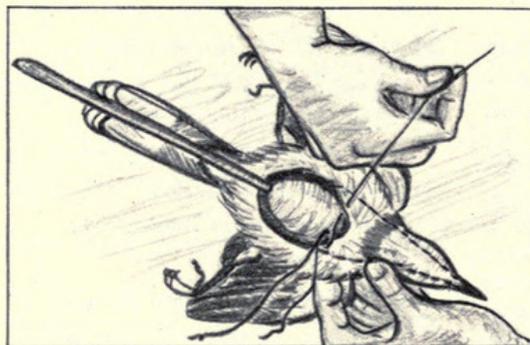
and by rigging bird nets



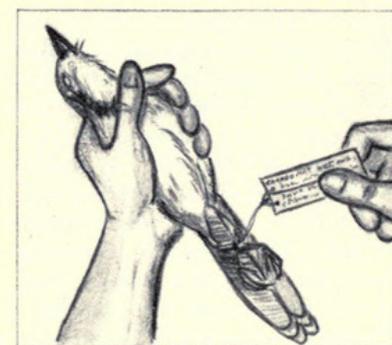
The skin is opened and the body is removed.



The body is removed. Skull, wings, and leg bones are cleaned and preservative applied.



An artificial body of tow, cotton, or other material is inserted.



The finished specimen looks like a bird, lying on its back, with legs crossed and labeled with date and place of capture.



chair, and a hornbill.

The collector finishing a parrot specimen. His tools are few: scissors, scalpel, and forceps. Note catalogue and labels at hand.



The dry specimens are packed into a wooden box for shipment and, on the coast, may be taken out to a waiting schooner by dinghy to start the first leg of the journey back to the Museum.



Rand, Austin Loomer. 1955. "Expeditions to Get Birds." *Bulletin* 26(10), 6–7.

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