

In Days of Yore

The following extract is taken from "THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CAGE BIRDS",
by J.M. Bechstein M.D. - 3rd edition, 1812.

BIRD CATCHING

"One of the best modes of catching is by what is called the water-trap; all kinds of birds may be caught by it, and there is always a choice. This sport is very agreeable in the hot summer days, for you have only to sit quietly under the thick shade of the foliage by the side of a running stream. A net of three, four, or six feet long, and three or four wide, according to the size of the place, must be spread over a trench made on purpose to receive the water. Some sticks of about an inch thick must be put into the trench level with the water, to which hoops are fixed to prevent the net from getting wet by falling into the water; the rest of this little canal must be covered with branches. If the place be well chosen it will be surrounded during the day with numbers of different birds. This sport may be carried on from the 24th of July till October [in Europe], from the rising to the setting of the sun.

When the water-trap can be set near a forest, in a grove of pines and firs, near quickset hedges and gardens, or in the middle of a meadow, wood or field-birds may be caught at the same time. For the sake of convenience, small cages are made which can be folded up and put into the pocket. They serve, however, for the tamest kind of birds, such as goldfinches, siskins and linnets; those which are very wild and violent, as chaffinches and larks, should be put into a small bag made of linen, the bottom of which must be lined with felt. When brought to the house the violent species must be immediately put into a dark place, and their cages covered with branches or anything else, that they may not injure themselves, or spoil their plumage. A little attention to the birds' actions in such cases will point out what is best to be done, for amongst birds of the same species there is nothing regular in this respect."

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