

Literature Cited

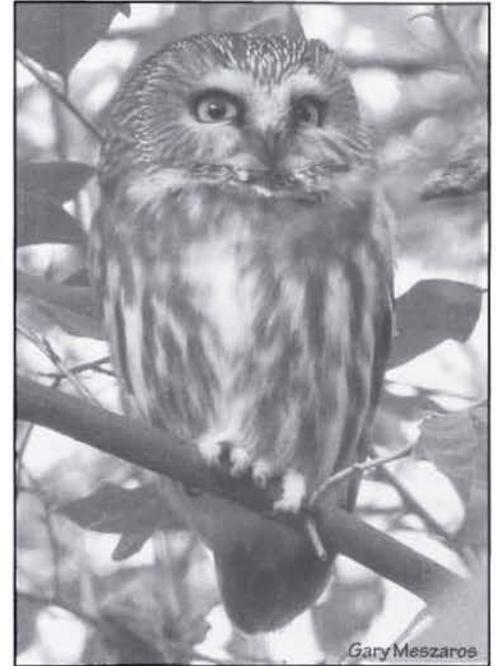
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Short Note: Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Project in Ross County

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The migration of northern saw-whet owls in Ohio is virtually unknown. In a pilot project to determine the feasibility of a banding study, nets and audio lures were set up on six nights in November of 2003 at Buzzard's Roost Nature Preserve near Chillicothe in Ross County. Six northern saw-whet owls were captured and banded, and one foreign re-trap was caught and released. This re-trap of 21 November 2003 was originally banded at Holiday Beach, Ontario on 5 November 2003, when it was recorded as an after-second year female with a weight of 97g. Upon recapture, the bird was again aged as an after-second year based on molt; however, the sex was indeterminable due to a weight of 83.2g which placed this bird in the unknown sex category.



Gary Meszaros

Two of the six owls banded were recaptured. The first recapture, originally banded on 8 November 2003, was a hatch year female that was recaptured on 21 November 2003 and had maintained its weight of 99.5g. The other recapture was an after-hatch year female originally banded on 20 November 2003 weighing 88g and recaptured on 30 November 2003 weighing 85.5g. The sex of the remaining four owls could not be determined since the mass and wing chord measurements were in the unknown range; however, three were aged as after-hatch years and one as a hatch year based on molt limits.

The banding station was open on 2 December 2003 and 7 December 2003 with no additional owls captured. Monitoring throughout 2003 and during the winter and spring of 2004 will continue to attempt to better determine fall migration dates, over wintering population, and approximate spring migration dates. The information from this pilot project will guide a northern saw-whet owl banding project for 2004-2005. 🦉

John Pogacnik of Perry, Ohio, has provided some interesting information (via an e-mail to the author dated 14 February 2001) pertaining to the winter status of Bonaparte's gull in Ohio along the Lake Erie shoreline. Some of his comments are as follows:

"What was interesting this past winter was the large [fall] movement of Bonaparte's gulls on December 31, with none the following day. The birds were seen moving west at Headlands Beach, but none were seen west of there and only a couple were seen anywhere the next day. I personally have not heard of any Bonaparte's gulls in Ohio since around January 15, and that was only a single bird. As far as wintering of Bonaparte's gulls in Ohio is concerned, it is very dependent on the weather. During a typical year, most usually leave toward the end of December or in early January. The winters of 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 saw a few over-winter, although the numbers were generally very low. In 1999 there was an early [spring] migration of Bonaparte's gulls in late February with numbers exceeding 500 birds; the interesting thing about this was the record number of little gulls (27+) that were with them. The winter of 1997-1998 saw good numbers of Bonaparte's gulls with counts exceeding 500 throughout the entire winter. In 1996-1997 there were about 20+ that lingered into late January, but none were present thereafter"

The winter status of Bonaparte's gull at Point Pelee is remarkably similar to what is described above for Ohio. For example, most years Bonaparte's gull typically remains at Point Pelee only to early January. But during the winter of 1997-1998 (when more than 500 remained throughout the winter in Ohio) there were also considerable numbers recorded all winter at Point Pelee, with a maximum count of 550 birds on 27 February. And with these birds were two or three adult little gulls on 26-27 February. At the time they were assumed to have probably over-wintered somewhere on Lake Erie; however, considering the significant arrival of little gulls that occurred in Ohio during late February in 1999, it is more likely that these birds were in fact early spring migrants—the earliest to be recorded at Point Pelee prior to 2001.

We are grateful to author and editor Alan Wormington for permission to reproduce this paper, which appeared in Point Pelee Natural History News 1(2):38-40. This quarterly will appeal to Ohio birders: subscriptions are available from The Friends of Point Pelee, 1118 Point Pelee Drive, Leamington, ON, Canada N8H 3V4. Web site: <http://www.wincom.net/~fopp/>. 🦉