

# NEW RESEARCH

## 2010 Shorebird Research Program Report

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### **Historical**

In the summer of 2006, Tom Bartlett and Tom Kashmer began a shorebird banding research project at Winous Point Shooting Club on Sandusky Bay. The purpose of the study was threefold. The first was to determine what species were using northwest Ohio during fall migration and in what numbers. The second was to determine how long they were staying in the area. And the third was, hopefully, to add samples to an avian flu study from shorebirds. During the fall migration of 2006, 226 shorebirds of 10 species plus an additional 10 individuals which were non-shorebirds were banded. Banding occurred on a total of 8 days, with 213.5 net hours of effort, and a respectable 1.11 birds per net hour recorded. During the fall migration of 2007, the effort was repeated at Winous Point. For

the 2007 season 281 shorebirds of 12 species plus an additional 23 individuals which were non-shorebirds were banded. Banding occurred on 11 days, with 379.5 net hours of effort, and 0.80 birds per net hour recorded. At the beginning of the 2008 fall migration banding began again at Winous Point. However, early into the season, Doug Brewer, the refuge manager at Ottawa NWR, requested Ottawa NWR be added to the study and with the attempt to collect some avian flu data there as well. The refuge would supply an intern, John Siekierski, to assist our efforts and collect avian flu samples. The research was expanded. For the fall of 2008, there were 40 banding days, 1404.5 net hours of effort, and 1.21 birds per net-hour. 1593 shorebirds of 16 species plus 106 non-shorebirds of 14 species were banded. All

total, 1699 individual birds of 30 species were banded during the 2008 season. Several hundred avian flu samples were collected during the process. The fall migration season of 2009 began the same as 2008 with Ottawa NWR and Winous Point Shooting Club as the key banding sites and again with the assistance of intern, John Siekierski. Towards the end of the season, a private wetland in Sandusky County owned by William and Lena McClure was added to the study. A total of 1923 individual birds of 46 species were banded at the three sites. These included 1661 individuals of 20 species of shorebirds. Banding occurred over 51 days and included 1808 net hours of effort for 1.06 birds banded per net hour. Over the four seasons, 3761 individuals of 21 species of shorebirds have been banded, plus an additional 400 non-shorebirds. A total 110 days with 3805.5 net hours of effort have resulted in 0.99 shorebirds banded per net hour. In addition, numerous birds were recaptured from previous seasons to demonstrate the importance of the western Lake Erie wetlands to migrating shorebirds. Again, several hundred avian flu samples were collected

and given to Dr. Richard Slemons of Ohio State University. All samples were negative for the dangerous strains of avian flu but several less dangerous strains were found.

## 2010 Summary

Beginning July 15, 2010 the shorebird research program continued into its fifth season. Again, support of money, personnel, and facilities were supplied by Winous Point Shooting Club/Winous Point Conservancy and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. Winous Point supplied banding sites, funding for new equipment and personnel for setting up and moving nets. Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge supplied banding sites, funding for nets, equipment, and personnel. In addition to John Siekierski, several other summer interns were supplied at peak times to assist in the capture, sampling, and banding of shorebirds. Again this year Mr. Siekierski collected hundreds of samples from shorebirds for the avian flu study database for Dr. Richard Slemons at Ohio State University. And for the fifth year of sampling shorebirds, no positive results of avian flu was

found. In addition, the new 2009 site, the property of William and Lena McClure in Rice Township, Section 30 of Sandusky County, about a mile south of the Winous Point properties was also used. Again recapture data shows that the shorebirds are interacting between all three sites.

The 2010 banding project continued to improve as it has for each of the years of the study. This year banding occurred on 46 days with several of those days at two sites at the same time. Net hours of banding effort also increased to 1808. This brings the total banding days to 156 days over five years and 5513.5 net hours of effort. This year 1529 shorebirds of 20 species were banded. Of the twenty species of shorebirds, seven species are of note. Ohio's first Sanderlings(2), first Baird's Sandpipers(4) and first Buff-breasted Sandpipers(3) were banded. Four other species which are rarely banded in Ohio were Marbled Godwit, Western Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, and 15 Red-necked Phalaropes. In addition, 222 non-shorebirds of 26 species were banded. Unusual among these were Hooded Merganser, Sora, and Northern Waterthrush. The

total number of birds banded in 2010 was 1751. 200 individual recaptures of 177 individuals, six escape/released individuals, and 8 casualties were recorded. Of the recaptured birds, one was banded in 2007, seven were banded in 2008, and seven were banded in 2009. The rest were all banded early in the season. The average length of time between banding and recapture was 5.8 days with a range of one to 26 days and an average weight gain of 13.38% body mass. Of the recaptured individuals, 70% showed a weight gain at recapture, 27% showed a weight loss at recapture, and 3% show no change in weight at recapture. A more thorough statistical analysis of the recapture data will be done. There appears to be a relationship between the length of time after capture and weight gain. The actual process of capture and banding may have a short-term negative effect. The casualty rate was a very good 0.46% of birds banded and 0.41% of birds handled. All casualties were deposited at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

A summary of the data is on the following page. Electronic copies of all data collected have

been sent to all supporters of this research. With the inclusion of the 2010 data, we have now banded 5822 individuals. Of these 5200 were shorebirds of 24 species. Project goals are clearly being met.



The two Toms banding shorebirds in 2010.

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