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Received 18 April 1988, accepted 5 May 1988.

Are Weekend Data Suspect?

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D. J. Mountjoy and R. J. Robertson (1988, *Auk* 105: 61) found 65-77% of the immature Cedar Waxwings they examined lacked waxy tips. They cite that I found 95% of the birds I banded and 91% of the specimens I examined lacked tips. They attribute the difference in results to: "Some juveniles with only a few small tips may have been overlooked in Yunick's study as the data were collected during the operation of a

weekend-manned banding station" (1988, *Auk* 105: 65).

As a bander who has banded on all days of the week (birds and time being available), I fail to understand what significance weekends have in causing data collected on those days to be any different from data collected on any other day. Further, while my banding data were collected on weekends, my specimen data were not. Therefore I suggest that the reason for the differences in our data is attributable to some factor or factors other than weekends.

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Received 1 June 1988, accepted 1 June 1988.

Response to R. P. Yunick

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Unfortunately, Yunick (1988) appears to have misinterpreted the meaning of a statement in our paper (Mountjoy and Robertson 1988). We did not intend to suggest that the day of the week on which the data were collected should have any influence on the results. However, it does seem realistic to suggest that the manner in which data are collected may affect their reliability.

Yunick (1970: 291) states that the banding data were gathered between 1966 and 1969 "as part of the operation of a weekend-manned 'Operation Recovery' station." He also acknowledges the assistance of 5 people in collecting the data. It is a fact that the various banders collected data intermittently over a long period of time and collection was incidental to the

primary function of the station. Considering the small size of the feather tips on immature Cedar Waxwings (some individuals have only a single tip less than 1 mm in length), it seems possible that some feather tips might have been overlooked. Of course, these arguments do not apply to the smaller data set which Yunick collected personally from museum specimens. If Yunick can establish what other factors might account for the differences in our data, we would be pleased to hear about it.

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Received 23 June 1988, accepted 23 June 1988.