

# Notice Concerning "Auxiliary Marking"

From time to time the Editor and Officers of WBBA receive information suggesting that some readers of NABB are unaware of some aspects of the rules, procedures or plans concerning "auxiliary marking" of wild birds. For the purpose of reminding or informing our readers, we wish to briefly comment here on the current situation and recommended procedures.

"Auxiliary marking" is the use of colored markers, radio transmitters or other means or devices, different from the standard bands issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) to authorized banders in North America. The rules governing the use of such auxiliary markers in North America are presented concisely in *North American Bird Banding*, vol. 1 (pp. 2-9 to 2-11, July 1984 edition), sent to authorized banders by the Bird Banding Laboratory, USFWS in the United States, and by the Banding Office, CWS, in Canada.

In general, the use of auxiliary markers or devices is discouraged, since "data derived from birds thus rendered 'experimental' are not comparable with data produced by birds that are simply banded with standard bands and released". However, in special studies requiring individual tracking or visual recognition without recapture, permission for limited and specific auxiliary marking can be requested from the USFWS or the CWS.

Ornithologists and wildlife biologists who are in charge of studies employing auxiliary marking usually wish to increase the number of public reports of birds so marked. This is particularly true for migrant species of medium to large size. The resulting public appeal for recognition and reportage of specially marked birds further modifies the comparability of data with that obtained from standard bandings and recoveries.

Published appeals for public reporting of specially marked birds appear in different places, from the *Ornithological Newsletter* (published by Ornithological Societies of North America [OSNA], P.O. Box 21618, Columbus, OH 43221) to local newspapers. NABB contains news of such marking projects only if and when the responsible banders or project directors submit a notice or item concerning such for publication. Therefore, NABB's role is incidental and fortuitous. Fortunately there is a central clearinghouse for information about auxiliary marking projects, and that is the Bird Banding Laboratory, USFWS, in the U.S. and the Banding Office, CWS, in Canada. Thus if an observer in North America spots an identifiable bird with an artificial color mark or other device, this can be reported to the national banding laboratory for transmittal to the responsible investigator, if the latter is not known to the observer.

## Western Bird Banding Association's Memorial Grant

Geoffrey E. Hill is the 1985 winner of WBBA's memorial grant. Geoffrey is recognized for his research on the function of delayed plumage maturation in Black-headed Grosbeaks. He is a student at the Department of Biology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Nineteen applications for this grant in 1985 were reviewed by the WBBA Memorial Grant Committee, chaired by Robert C. Leberman of the Powdermill Nature Reserve. Our congratulations and best wishes to you Geoffrey!

