Recent Literature

Banding Equipment and Techniques

Success in eliminating pest species using a large Starling trap. J. Zimmerman. 1985. *Sialia* 7:47-49. -6532 County Highway OK, Sheboygan, WI 53081. -(Diagram and description of the Australian crow trap, used with live decoys and bait to attract European Starlings. The author cautions that Starlings and House Sparrows may learn to escape if the trap is not checked frequently enough. Between 1976 and his unspecified time of writing, 2022 Starlings and 4096 House Sparrows were caught.) MKM

Removing trapped House Sparrows from top-opening nest boxes using a net. H. A. Kruger. 1985. *Sialia* 7:59-62. -Route 2, Box OR 28, Ore City, TX 75683. -(Net placed over Huber trap facilitates removal of birds caught therein.) MKM

Trapping and color banding Brown Noddy and Bridled Tern adults at the breeding colony. J. W. Chardine and R. D. Morris. 1987. *Colonial Waterbirds* 10:100-102. -Dept. Biol. Sci., Brock Univ., St. Catharines, Ont. L2S 3A1. -(A stationary net trap, a noosing pole, a large "butterfly" net and hand capture were used to trap these two tern species in Puerto Rico, with the noosing pole responsible for the capture of 67 of the 81 Noddies and 9 of the 13 Bridled Terns. The trap was especially useful for catching warier birds. Of 51 Noddies banded in 1985, 88% (45) returned in 1986 and only 3 of these (7%) lost their color bands. No abrasion or fading was apparent on color bands of returning birds.) MKM

Identification, Molts, Plumages, Weights and Measurements

The primary moult of the Common Tern in the southwestern Cape; a recording system, observed patterns, and an appeal for information. L. G. Underhill and R. P. Prys-Jones. 1986. *Safring News* 15:44-49. -Percy Fitzpatrick Inst. of African Ornithol., Univ. Cape Town, Rondebosch, 7700, South Africa. -(Summary of known molt patterns, variations thereof, and recommended system for scoring primary molt.) MKM

Sex determination of the Black-billed Magpie, *Pica pica*. C. S. Scharf. 1987. *Can. Field-Nat.* 101:111-114. -98 East St., Middletown, Conn. 06457. -(Eighteen measurements on Alberta magpies were tested for sex/age differences, showing that wing chord and depth of bill at the nostrils correctly classified sex of 95% of juveniles, while wing chord and length of upper mandible correctly identified sex of 98% of adults. These sex criteria can be used throughout the year.) MKM

Smith's Longspur: a case of neglect. A. J. Ryff. 1987. *Ont. Birds* 5:2-20. -26116 Culver, St. Clair Shores, Mich. 48081. -(Includes detailed discussion of identification features in comparison with other longspurs.) MKM

Sexing fledglings and yearlings of Magellanic Penguins by disciminant analysis of morphometric measurements. J. A. Scolaro. 1987. *Colonial Waterbirds* 10:50-54. -Proyecto Pinguino de Magellanes, SECYT-CONICET, Centro Nacional Patagonico, CONICET, 9120 Puerto Madoya, Argentina. -(Discriminant analysis using 11 morphometric measurements provided a simple and objective sex determination tool in these age groups, with total (body) length and bill depth most useful in distinguishing between age classes. Bill depth and tarsus length most readily distinguished sexes of yearlings, while bill depth and length of middle toe were most reliable in distinguishing sexes of fledglings.) MKM

Seasonal variation in body weight and mortality in Herring Gulls. J. C. Coulson. 1982. *Gull Study Group Bull.* No. 4: 26. (Seasonal patterns in body weight were studied in relation to age of color-banded gulls in Great Britain. A close negative correlation was found between mean body weight and proportion of birds over one year old found dead.) MKM

North America Banding Results

Canadian nesting box report, 1983. Fourth annual Mountain Bluebird trail report, Lethbridge, Alberta. D. J. Mackintosh. 1984. *Sialia* 6:92-93. -1719 9th Ave. S., Lethbridge, Alta. T1J 1W4. -(825 nestling and 35 adult bluebirds banded.) MKM

Canadian nesting box report, 1983. Ellis Bird Farm Ltd. report, 1983. B. R. Shantz. 1984. *Sialia* 6:93. -Box 5501, Red Deer, Alta. T4N 6N1. -(426 Mountain Bluebirds, including 353 nestlings, were banded on the study area, while 682 were banded in the general Red Deer area. Twenty-three bluebirds banded in 1982 returned to nest in 1983.) MKM

Interesting behavior in Eastern Bluebirds. F. Germond. 1984. *Sialia* 6:151-152. -Shunpike 254, Clinton Corners, N.Y. 12514 -(Author attacked by adult bluebird when banding nestlings, in contrast to lack of attacks during banding operations of previous years.) MKM

Recent Literature

Ottawa Banding Group: 1985 Report. Innis Point banding results: 1985. Introduction. Anonymous; Summary and highlights. T. Dean; Brewster's Warbler. S. Melville; Nestling banding report. T. Dean; Net line analysis. S. Melvile. 1986. *Ont. Bird Banding* 18:33-41. -73 Irving Place, Ottawa, Ont. K1Y 2A2. -(A chronological summary from 1 May to 31 Aug. includes such rarities as "Brewster's" (9th banded in Ont.) and Golden-winged Warblers, unusually low numbers of Black-capped Chickadees, the first summer banding of Evening Grosbeaks, and early, late and peak dates for several species. recaptures totalled 145 birds of 34 species. 43 young of 4 species were banded as part of a concerted nest finding effort that resulted in finding 66 nests of 21 species.) MKM

Banding in Ontario: 1985. B. W. Duncan and D. Shepherd. 1986. *Ont. Bird Banding* 18:4-11, with commentary by M. K. McNicholl, pp. 12-14. -Box 512, Caledonia, Ont. N0A 1A0. -(Reports from 13 individual banders and 20 organized groups are tabulated, with 74,458 birds of 217 species, 2 additional subspecies and 5 hybrids included. Several offices of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources reported, but the Canadian Wildlife Service and most university researchers did not. The commentary includes several highlights and comparisons with previous years, a table of annual provincial totals for 1977 through 1982, and a table of Brown Creeper numbers banded in Ont. 1965 through 1971 and 1977 through 1982.) MKM

Long Point Bird Observatory report: 1985. D. Shepherd. 1986. *Ont. Bird Banding* 18:15-17. -Long Point Bird Observ., Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. N0E 1M0. -(A new record of 30,069 birds banded was 50% higher than the previous record year of 1984 and almost three times the 25-year average, while the species total of 180 was 19 higher than the previous record of 1966. Pine Grosbeak and Red Crossbill were new species on the banding list, while "Lawrence's" Warbler added a new hybrid and "Gambel's" White-crowned Sparrow a new race. Records were also set for 67 species, with still more tied or close to their previous record numbers. Reasons for the exceptional year are discussed, and early results of a "double banding" experiment are summarized. Preliminary indications are that this attempt to increase reporting rates for species that take smaller band sizes by placing an "address band" with the address on the outside on the leg opposite the standard band will succeed.) MKM

Northern Saw-whet Owl studies at Prince Edward Point in 1985. R. Weir. 1986. *Ont. Bird Banding* 18:42-43. -294 Elmwood Ave., Kingston, Ont. K7M 2Y8. (A hatching year proportion of 64.2% of 226 owls banded on 11 nights was a welcome return to normal from 1984's low of 20.0%. In the eleven years of study at this Ont. site, 1983 was the heaviest flight for adults, while big flights of immatures were in 1981 and 1985, with 1978 and 1984 exceptionally low. The cumulative total banded reached 3928.) MKM

Hawk Cliff Raptor Banding Station fifteenth annual report: 1985. D. Fowler and S. Fowler. 1986. *Ont. Bird Banding* 18:18-22; Recoveries, foreign retraps, returns and repeats: 1985. pp. 23-25. -17 Fifth Ave., St. Thomas, Ont. N5P 4C2. -(1985 totals were 2152 birds of 12 diurnal raptor and 2 owl species, summarized by month and banding site. Bandings for an American Kestrel box program were down from the previous two years, but still at a good level. The station also banded nestling Bald Eagles for an Ontario government release project. Thirty-three encounters (21 recoveries, 13 foreign retraps, 13 station repeats and 4 returns) brought the station total to 502 to date, or 1.4% of the raptors banded from 1969 to 1985. A summary of these encounters by species shows the highest number (209) but lowest percentage (1.0) of total banded for Sharp-shinned Hawk, while the Great Horned Owl, with only 7 encounters achieved the highest percentage (9.0) in relation to number banded.) MKM

Bird longevity records. E. T. Jones. 1987. *Alta. Nat.* 17:15. -6115 141 St., Edmonton, Alta. T6H 4A6. -(Retraps of Yellow Warbler and Red-eyed Vireo, each 8+ years of age.) MKM

Northern Harriers banded at Hawk Cliff: 1972-1985. B. W. Duncan. 1986. *Ont. Bird Banding* 18:27-32. -Box 512, Caledonia, Ont. N0A 1A0. -(Of 614 harriers banded at this site on the north shore of L. Erie, 64.6% were males and 95.5% HY birds, caught mostly in Sept. and early Oct., with extreme dates of 22 Aug. and 28 Dec. Seven have been encountered since (1.14%), with the oldest at 8 years. Numbers banded were fairly constant from 1974 to 1979, increased in 1980, declined markedly from 1981 to 1983, and increased substantially in 1984 and 1985.) MKM

Recent Literature

New Journal

Bulletin of the Japanese Bird Banding Association. Vol. 1, nos. 1-3. 1986. -c/o Yamashina Institute for Ornithology, Kanoyama, Abito, Chiba 270-11, Japan. -(Although most papers in this welcome new journal are in Japanese, most also have English titles, and often English tables. A detailed account of bird topography in the third issue (pp. 56-59) provides a glossary of English-Japanese terms, complete with diagrams. Other topics in this inaugural volume include the significance of bird banding, a World overview of banding, a detailed account of the 272 species banded in Japan between 1 Feb. 1985 and 31 January 1986 summarized by prefecture, 2 articles on banding in specific areas, identification/sex determination in two *Phylloscopus* warblers and a bulbul, specific studies of Short-tailed Albatross and Hoopoe, and various miscellaneous notes, announcements and requests.) MKM

Banding Equipment and Techniques

A study of winter roost site management and the use of sites by Eastern Bluebirds in Delaware State Park, Ohio. R. M. Tuttle. 1987. *Sialia* 9:43-49. -61 S. Washington St., Delaware, OH 43015 -(Reactions by bluebirds to capture and banding at night showed that banding is not feasible in the dark.) MKM

Identification, Molts, Plumages, Weights, and Measurements

Mountain × Western Bluebird hybrids. A. Aylesworth. 1987. *Sialia* 9:9, 21. -Box 794, Ronan, MT 59864. -(A Western male mated with a Mountain female in MT were successful in fledging young, providing the first known case of hydridization between these species.) MKM

Incidence of leucism in Blue Grouse from Oregon. J. A. Crawford. 1987. *Murrelet* 68:27-29. -Dept. Fish. & Wildl., Oregon State Univ., Corvallis, OR 97331-3803. -(Two examples of leucism from 1018 wing and tail sets collected from hunters between 1974 and 1985 plus 53 older museum specimens, showing an incidence of about 0.1% A footnote provides an additional example from 978 wing/tail sets collected in 1986.) MKM

Weights and wing lengths of juvenile Gannets *Sula bassana*. J. D. Okill and S. Wanless. 1986. *Ring. & Migr.* 7:125-129. -Heilinsbretta, Tronda, Shetland ZE1 0XL , U. K. -(Newly fledged birds were heavier and had shorter wings that adults.) RCT

A new character for age determination in the Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*. J. P. Cronau, R. G. M. de Goede and E. Nieboer. 1986. *Ring & Migr.* 7:135-138. -Vrije Universiteit, Dept. Biol, Box 7161, 1007 MC Amersterdam, Netherlands -(The width of the white inner edge of the fourth primary can be a valuable age determination character for populations occurring in w. Europe; 88% of first-year birds had a white inner edge wider than 1.7 mm and 91% had an edge less than 1.1 mm.) RCT

Further comments on the field identification of North American pipits. K. C. Parkes, 1982. *Amer. Birds* 36: 20-22. -Carnegie Mus. Nat. Hist., Pittsburgh, Penn. 15213 -(Difference in plumage among the three races of Water Pipit in North America are sufficient to suggest more than one species if seen together. Such differences are shown in both basic and (especially) alternate (breeding) plumages, and there is also at least a weakly developed sexual difference in at least one race, *Anthus spinoletta rubescens.*) MKM

North American Banding Results

A history of the Ellis Bird Farm. B. R. Shantz. 1986. *Sialia* 8:143-146. -Box 2920, Lacombe, Alta, T0C 1SO -(Of over 1200 Mountain Bluebirds banded near Red Deer, Alta. since 1982, 29% of adult females, 34% of adult males and 4-5% of immatures returned as breeding birds in subsequent years. Three birds have been recovered 50-100 miles away from the study area.) MKM

A six year study of nesting Tree Swallows in Delaware State Park, Delaware, Ohio 1979-1984. R. M. Tuttle. 1987. *Sialia* 9:3-7,34. -61 S. Washington S., Delaware, OH 43015 -(Banding showed that of 71 females nesting in the park in 1984, 34 (47.9%) had nested there in 1983 or earlier, with 20 (58.8%) of these birds having hatched there. Two of these females were 5 yr. old. Of 32 adult females nesting in both 1983 and 1984, 10 (31.3%) returned to the same box, 16 (50%) nested within 100 yds. of the 1983 box, and 29 (90.6%) were within 65 yds. In contrast, 4 of 8 1983 fledglings that returned to nest in 1984 nested between 2734 and 2953 yds. from the box in which they hatched, and only 2 of the 8 were within 328 yds. Since 1977, 13 females hatched in the park were known to have dispersed to other trails, the farthest being 43.8 miles north. Six swallows hatched on other trails were also known to have dispersed into the park.) MKM

Bring back the bluebirds. L. Scott. 1987. *Sialia* 9:29-31. -Box 995, Indian Head, Sask. S0G 2K0 -(Banding returns from 6000 Mountain Bluebirds and 11,000 Tree Swallows in s. Sask. from 1969 to 1985 indicated that fewer than 1% of nestlings of either species returned to nest in the same area in later years. About 75% of the females of both species caught in any given year were unbanded, indicating they had come from elsewhere. One female swallow lived to at least 9 yr., and another was found nesting in the same box where it had been banded 6 yrs. earlier. Only one of the 6,000 bluebirds banded was recovered elsewhere - in Man., and only 2 of 11,000 swallows - in N.D. and Minn.) MKM

Another possible record of long-term pair bonding in wild Mallards. G. L. Ivey and D. G. Paulin. 1987. Murrelet 68:31. -U.S. Fish & Wildl. Serv., Malheur Natl. Wildl. Ref., Box 245, Princeton, OR 97721 -(Of one adult female and 9 males banded in OR on 27 Sept. 1982, the female and one of the males were shot together acting as if paired 480 km s.w. in Calif. in Nov. 1984.) MKM

Robins in Vancouver, J. Smith. 1986. *Discovery* 15:72-73. -Dept. Zool, Univ. British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 2A9 -(Many details of the life history of the American Robin on UBC campus were determined by color-banding nestlings and adults, including the finding that birds with large territories do not show significantly different nesting success than those nesting semi-colonially, that individual pairs may nest 3-4 times in a season, males sometimes caring for the young of the first hatch while the female is incubating the next, and that birds that appear on campus in late fall after nesting birds have left to molt in unknown areas are the same birds returning. An average of 50% of breeding birds return the next year, with few living more than 5 yrs.) MKM

Searching for Boreal Owls in the Okanagan. R. Cannings. 1986. *Discovery* 15:19-20. -#1-2176 W. 13th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V6K 2S1 -(A Boreal Owl that flew in broad daylight in semi-arid scrub habitat into a mist-net of Edmonton bander E. T. Jones provided the first record for B.C.'s Okanagon Valley, stimulating a further search by the Cannings, who managed to find one more bird at night in more usual habitat.) MKM

Occurrance, distribution and plumage of Gyrfalcons in the Calgary region. A. N. Wiseley and H. Pinel. 1987. *Alta. Nat. 17:37-41.* -#202, 635-56 Ave. N.W., Calgary, Alta. T2V 0G9 -(The belief that Alta.-wintering Gyrfalcons breed in the western Arctic is supported by 2 Alta. recoveries of Yukon-banded birds.) MKM

Spring movement of an adult Bald Eagle from southeastern New York to central Ontario. L. Bautz and P. Nye. 1987. *Eyas* 10(1):32-33 & 38 -N.Y. State Dept. Environ. Conservation, Div. Fish. & Wildl. -(A 5½ yr.-old male eagle radio-tracked on his wintering grounds headed n. 200 km on 29 March, spent most of the next day in n. N.Y. probably feeding with other eagles, then travelled about 800 miles in 8 days n. to near Wawa, Ont., stopping for only one major meal en route. Radio telemetry allowed the observers to document times and directions of daily movements.) MKM

Status report: the Osprey in Pennsylvania (1980-86) -a hacking success story. L. Ryman. 1987. *Eyas* 10(1):34-35. -address not given -(Of 23 Penn.-hacked Ospreys relocated in 1986, most were 3 yrs. old, but at least 3 were 4-yr. old nesting birds.) MKM

Beaverhill Bird Observatory 1985 annual report. G. Holroyd (Ed.). 1987. *Edmonton Nat.* 15(2):5-11. -c/o Edmonton Nat. Hist. Club, Box 1582, Edmonton, Alta. T5J 2N9 -(624 birds of 36 species were banded and 11 birds of 6 species banded in previous years returned. Projects involved artificial nest structures for ducks, raptors, swallows and wrens. Banding totals for cormorants and pelicans not included in the above totals are presented by P. H. R. Stepney, along with totals for each year since banding began in 1980.) MKM

Raptor migration at the Golden Gate. A. Fish. 1987. *Newsletter Hawk Migr. Assoc. North Amer.* 12(2):8-10. -Raptor Migration Observ., Golden Gate Natl. Recreation Area, Building 201, Ft. Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123 -(A first-year Cooper's Hawk banded in San Francisco was recovered in Mexicali, Mex., 564 miles to the s. 113 days later. Four fall-banded immature Red-tailed Hawks recovered further n. in their first winter apparently represent natal dispersal.) MKM

Varied Thrush in Saskatoon. R. Jensen. 1985. *Blue Jay* 43:52. -1027 King Crescent, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 0N9 -(Documentation of this provincially rare species included banding by C. S. Houston, thus becoming his 200th species banded.) MKM

I married a bird bander. C. Wylie. 1985. *Blue Jay* 43:58. -43-23 Central Place, Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 2S2 -(Account of C. S. Houston's 1983 annual "pelican weekend," banding pelicans, gulls and scoters on Redberry Lake, Sask. by wife of K. A. Wylie.) MKM

MKM = Martin K. McNicholl
RCT = Robert C. Tweit

Using Decoys for Winter Finch Capture

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Using decoys to attract birds for shooting is an ancient art. For certain species, it is also a useful practice for assisting capture for banding. During the 1986-1987 winter and spring banding season, I found that I could greatly improve my trapping success on Pine Siskins (*Carduelis pinus*) and Common Redpolls (*C. flammea*) by using live decoys. The method is simple and appears to lend itself to several types of seed-baited traps; and in particular to the usually gregarious winter finches such as siskins, redpolls, American Goldfinch (*C. tristis*), Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*), and Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*).

In my yard I use two platform traps (R.P. Yunick, 1971, *EBBA News,* 34: 122-125, and also North American Bird Banding Manual, 1984, Vol. 1, p. 2A-9). When I am not using them, these traps are kept open and function as feeders. They attract large numbers of the finches named above. Up to 30 individuals can be taken per trap with a pull of the trigger string.

In order for this trap to function productively, it needs to constantly attract birds. The species named above tend to flock to the feeder once the first bird or two begins to feed. Trapping success relies on attracting that first bird as quickly as possible. However, at certain times when migration produces a rapid turnover of birds, many of which are not accustomed to using the feeder; or when frequent trapping makes birds trap shy, it can be difficult after the first trap load or two, to get those first birds to start feeding and thereby attract others.

These platform traps require a transfer cage measuring 6 × 6 × 12 in. to remove birds from the trap (R. P. Yunick, 1971, *EBBA News,* 34: 125-126). The transfer cage is made to hang on the side of the trap at a string-activated exit door. The string is released to drop the trap exit door, birds are herded into the cage, the exit door is closed with the string, and birds are then removed by hand from the hinged back door of the transfer cage.

When I completed removing the birds from the trap and reset it, I found that by leaving two or three siskins or redpolls in the transfer cage, their calls and visual appearance brought other birds back to the trap very quickly, sometimes even before I returned to the house. When the trap was next emptied, new decoys were left in the transfer cage. At no time did I leave birds in the cage for more than 10-15 minutes. If attempted with Evening Grosbeaks, no more than one should be placed in the transfer cage. When I used mist nets, the same technique of leaving two or three birds in a net facilitated the return of otherwise reluctant birds. Using these decoys lessened the time interval between captures and increased my trapping rate on days when otherwise there would have been little activity.

Scrub Jays Cooperate with Banders

We were fortunate in locating a Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma caerulescens*) family on our bird atlasing block, Laurel No. 3, in Sarasota County, Florida. Since we always carry peanuts in the car, we were able to feed them. On the next scouting trip we decided to try to band the family and carried a four-cell Potter trap with us. Arriving on their territory, we started to offer peanuts when it occurred to us, "Why not just close our hands on their feet and legs when they perched to take a peanut?" So we did—and we banded the four adults—but the one fledgling would not come to us. Amazingly, the banding process did not inhibit the birds in any way and they continued to return to our hands for the peanuts again and again. On subsequent trips when we stopped, they immediately came to our hands.

Unfortunately, they are being pushed out of their habitat in our area. In the past year, two family groups have disappeared due to a housing development and creation of a huge new post office complex. If only they could be more adaptable in their habitat requirements.

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