



Inland Regional News

Inland Bird Banding Association

Founded 1922

NATURE NOTES FROM NEBRASKA

Nebraskans are accustomed to seeing White Pelicans every spring and fall. Hundreds of them pass through the state on their way either to nesting or wintering grounds. Non-breeding birds often over-summer in the Sandhills. But a Brown Pelican is something else! When one visits the state, it creates quite a stir. Not since 1977 had this species been sighted or reported until May 9, when one came to a small lake west of Fremont. The local people gathered at the lake to watch this unusual visitor dive into the water for a fish. A television station in Omaha even sent a reporter out to photograph and do a story. Not since the Bean Goose came to DeSoto Wildlife Refuge in 1984 has the avian world experienced such excitement. Needless to say, every birder for 200 miles was there to add it to his/her state list.

This pelican appeared to be an adult in or near its third year plumage. It had the chocolate brown on the back of the neck and a cream color on the top of the head extending in a stripe down the neck--maybe even breeding plumage. The question most people ask is, "Where did it come from?" It seems to me that it most likely is a Gulf Coast bird that has ridden the strong winds from the south into the state; just two days before the bird was sighted, winds were exceptionally strong.

And I suppose the next question is, "Where is it going?" Of course, only the bird knows for sure! However, on the morning of May 12, four birders watched it lift off the lake, climb steadily high in the sky, and head west. Perhaps one of the larger lakes in the state will be its next stopping place. One thing is for sure, if it's looking for a mate in Nebraska, it's going to be a very long summer.

MINNESOTA BIRD BANDERS ASSOCIATION

Lyme Disease Study: The Minnesota banders are continuing with their assistance to a Lyme disease study of the North Central Forest Experiment Station. They meet at the Schuneman Marsh north of White Bear Lake. The ticks collected from the birds captured are sent to a lab for identification and to determine whether the ticks carry the Lyme spirochete. Last year, the Minnesota banders collected 43 ticks from 16 birds. Two of the ticks were deer ticks, but none tested positive for the Lyme disease spirochete.

Purple Martin housing: Don Wilkins of Park Rapids, MN, has been doing some new things with Purple Martin housing. He mounts the boxes eight to a pole and places the poles out in a lake with the boxes about four or five feet above the water. He uses individual boxes rather than multi-compartments and each box can be removed like a drawer since only the tops are mounted on the pole. He put his first house up in 1987 and had 67 pairs of martins in 1990.

Crow in a mist net: Last newsletter we posed the question of whether anyone had ever caught a crow in a mist net. Some answers have come in to the Minnesota banders: Jane Olyphant reports catching a crow in a net uphill from a small pond several years ago. In the net with the crow was a small frog, probably caught at the pond. Kathy Klimkiewicz also has had a crow in her net--one of a group that had been harassing a Red-shouldered Hawk. She states that the crow did not have the loveliest of odors.



OHIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

Bluebird Dispersals

Since 1980, I have been placing U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum leg bands on all nestlings in my nest boxes on five trails in Delaware County. In order to produce a better data base for my local studies, I have also banded nestlings on other trails in the county. During the last two years, five "bluebirders" have assisted with the banding. We band nearly 400 bluebirds and 900 Tree Swallows each year.

Do bluebirds nest on their ancestral trails? Do they change mates? Do they disperse to other trails within the county? These questions can be answered when the bander captures nesting birds on the trails, but the question, "How far will bluebirds travel from where they have been raised?" can be answered only when a banded bird is found by someone other than the bander.

Four of my banded bluebirds have been found far from their birth trails and their stories will help answer questions about dispersals. All four Eastern Bluebirds were banded as nestlings in Delaware County. Unfortunately, all four were found dead. Three of the four definitely died during the local nesting season.

Number 1381-37632 was banded 26 May 1986 and found in Northville, Michigan, on 24 June 1987. Northville is west of Detroit and is 136 miles north of where the male bluebird was banded as a nestling. He was found dead on the ground, the result of a window collision or being grabbed by a cat.

Number 1381-37530 was banded 6 May 1986 and found near Valley City, Ohio, on 25 June 1988. Valley City is below Cleveland--a dispersal of 88 miles.

Number 1411-34123 was banded 14 June 1989 and found in Phenix City, Alabama, in mid-April 1990. Phenix City (no "o") is directly west of Columbus, Georgia. The male bluebird had collided with a window 560 miles south of where it was banded.

Number 1411-58337 was banded 4 July 1988 and found mummified in a wood burning stove on 14 April 1990, four miles south of Indian River, Michigan, 375 miles north of where it fledged. I am awaiting more information about this male bluebird. The stove may have been in an abandoned cottage and I want to know if the stove had been used in 1989. This case is a good reminder that we

lose many Screech Owls and bluebirds when stove pipes are not screened. Starlings may also drop down chimneys frequently; undesirable and hated as they may be, they deserve a better fate--perhaps as breakfast for a Cooper's Hawk.

These four bluebirds demonstrate that our conservation efforts are contributing to more than our local populations. As I talked with Mrs. Loren West of Phenix City, Alabama, she told me how much her family enjoyed the bluebirds and how unfortunate it was to have one that had flown from Ohio die in their yard. I told her not to worry, we'll send more.

(Originally written for the *Delaware County Bird Club Newsletter* and the *Bluebird Monitor*, the newsletter of the Ohio Bluebird Society. Dick Tuttle)

Rare Bird?

Tom Kashmer from Fremont, Ohio, caught and banded a rare bird at his winter feeding station on 25 November 1990. It was a European Goldfinch, AHY-U. Tom has photos.

Barn Owl Study

The Division of Wildlife in Ohio has embarked on a statewide Barn Owl project to determine the extent and distribution of nesting Barn Owls and to annually monitor population and productivity trends. Distribution of nesting pairs is determined through Barn Owl use of nest boxes strategically located in barns within close proximity of quality moist grassland and wet meadow habitats. Presently, 105 of these "sentinel" nest boxes, as they are termed, have been placed by DOW personnel. To further determine the extent of local breeding populations, DOW personnel place three additional nest boxes within a five-mile radius of each known active Barn Owl nest. As the "area" nest boxes are used by nesting Barn Owl pairs, additional "area" boxes will be added until the extent of the breeding population is defined. All nest boxes and previously active nest sites are checked during May for nesting owls. Active nest sites are checked a second time in late September to document nest success. Box work, including cleaning, repairs, relocations, removals, and new placements, is completed annually by the first of March.

The following table depicts the program's success:

PARAMETERS	1987	1988	1989	1990
----- Nest Success-----				
Active Nests	7	19	12	16
No. Successful Nests	6	14	11	15(a)
% Successful Nests	85.7	73.7	91.7	93.8(b)
Young Fledged	22	55	50	63
Young Fledged/Success Nest	3.7	3.9	4.5	4.8(c)
--Banding and Capture Success--				
Young Banded	30	76	52	68
Adults Caught (d)	6	20(e)	18	14(e)
Adults Recaptured	0	1	4	5
% Adults Recaptured	0	5.0	22.2	35.7

- a) 15 successful nests; 1 unsuccessful nest
 b) for 15 nests where nest success was determined
 c) for 13 nests where counts of young were available
 d) includes banded and unbanded birds
 e) includes one migrant adult previously banded as a nestling out of state

Through long-term band recovery analysis, we hope to learn more about the dynamics of Ohio's Barn Owl population. We hope to gain insight into the role of fledged young as they enter the breeding population, and the degree of interaction of breeding adults between disjuncted centers of owl nesting activity. Future research efforts will include an investigation of Barn Owl habitat requirements. For further information contact:

Olentangy Wildlife Experiment Station
 8589 Horseshoe Road
 Ashley, OH 43003
 (614) 747-2525

SAND BLUFF BANDING STATION WINNEBAGO COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Sand Bluff Banding Station is run and funded totally by volunteers. They are located at Colored Sands Forest Preserve in the northwestern corner of Winnebago County, IL, eight miles west of Beloit, WI.

Dates: 1 March through 31 May and 1 September through 30 November

Hours: Friday afternoon until after dark; Saturdays dawn until after dark; Sundays dawn until noon.

Cost: Free, but donations appreciated; groups wishing tours are expected to make a donation.

Contact: Burpee Museum of Natural History, Rockford, IL (815)965-3132 or Tom Little (815) 963-8312

1990 Fall Banding Season

Our anticipation of dramatic gains in numbers of

birds after a nearly perfect spring and summer breeding season went unfulfilled as the large numbers of immature birds we expected to see did not appear. Expecting species to recover losses sustained during the drought periods, we were disappointed to see fall totals scarcely larger than in the spring (a two-to-one or greater ratio is the norm in the fall). The spring of 1990 was particularly strong and the best since the mid 80's with more than 2800 birds, but this performance was unsupported by the meager 2897 new birds captured in the fall. Thirty-nine (new) retrapped birds in the fall gave us a grand total of 2924 encounters. Ninety-one species and one hybrid Oregon x Slate-colored Junco were represented. Two foreign recoveries showed up on the same weekend: an Eastern Bluebird, #1421-30198, on 29 September; and a Red-tailed Hawk, #877-99481, on 30 September.

Several factors contributed to the lackluster fall. Shortage of volunteers caused late net openings, timing of weather fronts, and the erratic nature of individual groups during migration. Part of the loss felt was in warblers. Good representation of species, but numbers down 50% from mid 80's.

Increases: Song Sparrows, American Tree Sparrows, and Tennessee Warblers. Improved: Blue-winged Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Swainson's Thrush and Gray-cheeked Thrush; also Northern Waterthrush, Scarlet Tanager, Black-billed Cuckoo, Gray Catbird, Hairy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, American Woodcock, and Olive-sided Flycatcher. Insect eaters took advantage of the incredible health and vigor of the Sugar River mosquitoes that abounded through Colored Sands this fall.

Declines were most serious among three families--warblers, vireos, and sparrows--with many species posting numbers down 50 to 75 percent of 1983-85 numbers. Down were Ovenbirds, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Chestnut-sided, Nashville, and Black-and-White Warblers; Savannah, Vesper, and Grasshopper Sparrows; and Philadelphia, Red-eyed, and Yellow-throated Vireos. The lack of Vesper Sparrows is of special interest to Sand Bluff with its mid-continent positioning and prairie habitat. Many seasons have seen Sand Bluff banding as many as 200 Vespers; many right off the nest and more in the big sparrow push in late October, as much as 25 percent of all Vespers banded in the U.S. in a year. Also not a good year for banding raptors.

Missing: Hooded, Kentucky, and Northern Parula Warblers; Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Oddities and Rarities: Brewster's Warbler, Orchard Oriole, Prothonotary Warbler, Marsh Wren, Swainson's Warbler, House Finch, and Red-headed Woodpecker.