

# *Inland Regional News*

***Inland Bird Banding Association***

**Founded 1922**

## **OBSERVATIONS OF A WINTERING KESTREL**

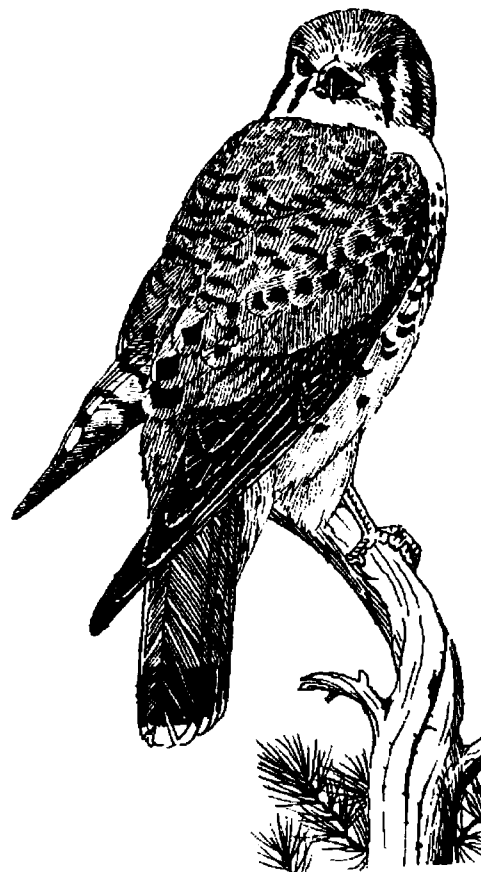
On 26 January 1992, while I was trapping Snow Buntings in the front fields of my farm near Alma, Ontario, I observed an American Kestrel on my trap. Although I jumped into my truck and drove quickly to the trap, it had killed 3 buntings by the time I arrived. In the past, when I have experienced this problem with Northern Shrikes and kestrels, I have placed the dead birds in the centre of the ground trap. Therefore, I decided to try the same thing this time.

I had just returned to the house when I observed the kestrel entering the trap. I returned and after removing the bird, realized it was one I had banded as a SY F on 6 January 1991. After I had taken my usual measurements, I released her, hoping she would be upset enough to leave the area. However, she flew out to the hydro wire and then flew out to the trap and entered it. I removed her again. I decided that I would have trouble with her all winter, so I drove her 15 km south to the Elora Gorge Park, released her and watched her fly up to a nearby tree. I drove directly home and, as I emerged from the garage, I saw a kestrel back in the empty trap. I had captured the same female again. She had almost beaten me back home. I gave up, released her, packed up my trap, and

called it a day. As there had been no kestrels around for a few months, this return suggests there is a strong tendency toward site fidelity on the wintering grounds.

***T. W. Bast***

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## NOTE ON NESTING EASTERN BLUEBIRDS

On 25 May 1990, I went to a friend's farm near Guelph to band the birds in his nesting boxes. One of the boxes (D1) contained Eastern Bluebirds. The female (1421-50481) and 5 young (1421-50482 - 86) were banded; young fledged a few days later.

One month later, the pair moved 200 m east to another box (D20) and re-nested. We had by chance re-checked this box and captured a bluebird setting on 5 eggs. I recorded the band (1421-50483), but assumed it was the original female from box D1, until I re-checked the numbers and realized it was one of the young. At least two possibilities exist: 1) either it had followed the parents to the new nest to continue to be fed; or 2) it was assisting in rearing the next brood.

**T. W. Bast**

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## GREBE BANDING

During a recent study on morphological and mitochondrial DNA variation in *Aechmophorus* grebes, I found that many wildlife agencies have become interested in these grebes (especially now that *clarkii* has been resurrected), but know very little about them. Many biologists assume that grebes are as highly philopatric as are many ducks. Since many states are now starting to assess populations of colonial waterbirds and establishing management plans, information on migratory movements of grebes should be published (see article in this issue). Historically, banding of all North American grebes has been limited. Therefore, many questions about grebe movements cannot be answered without additional banding efforts.

Banding of grebes is probably limited because state, provincial and federal biologists lack the funds necessary to conduct banding of nongame species, and non-professionals generally do not band aquatic species. For the Eared Grebe, which may be the most numerous North American grebe,

only 4,076 birds were banded during the 30-year period 1955-1984 (Jehl & Yochem, *J. Field Ornithol.* 57:208-212, 1986) and only 1,429 Western Grebes during this same period (Eichhorst, this issue). Compare these numbers with 330,000 Black-capped Chickadees and 3.5 million Mallards banded through 1982 (Clapp, Klimkiewicz & Kennard, *J. Field Ornithol.* 53:81-124; 54:123-137, 1982-1983).

Many questions remain about Western Grebe movements. The following are some of the more important ones: (1) What is the extent of breeding site philopatry, and does it vary depending on the location, size, and habitat condition of a marsh? It is possible that sites that provide plenty of nesting habitat and fish from year-to-year have higher rates of philopatry than sites which are more ephemeral. (2) Do the majority of Western Grebes from southern breeding sites winter along the Pacific coast? Are some individuals year-round residents? (3) What are the basic migratory routes between breeding and wintering areas, and are there any stopover sites of importance? (4) What is the extent of intra-winter movement along the Pacific coast? Are there southward movements after arrival in the fall and northward movements before spring migration? (5) Do the movements of Clark's Grebes differ from those of Western Grebes? The frequency of Clark's Grebes in breeding populations declines with increasing latitude, but the frequency in northern populations may currently be increasing due to habitat loss (Eichhorst & Parkin, *Blue Jay* 49:196-200, 1991). A much higher level of banding effort will be necessary to answer these and other questions. Color-marking will be necessary to obtain multiple sightings of individuals. State, provincial and federal biologists should consider marking and/or banding Western and Clark's Grebes, especially at breeding sites which are of special concern or importance. Wildlife rehabilitators are encouraged to band any grebes that they release. Bird banders that live near marshes should consider banding grebes and other aquatic species. Anyone that would like information about trapping and banding grebes can contact me.

**Bruce A. Eichhorst**

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## NATURE NOTES FROM NEBRASKA

The weatherman says Nebraska has had the coolest and wettest summer on record. I like the cool part but the wet has certainly played havoc with banding. The Bank Swallow colony where I have banded for the past 3 years did not fare well at all. Every time the birds settled down to serious nesting, another deluge of rain would erode the embankment to the point that nests were lost. And with the soft ground, raccoons could climb up and destroy many of the remaining nests. Even though I banded 300 adults, I netted only 2 HY birds. The nest site is gone now, bulldozed away to enlarge the nearby lake, but another bank has been built. It will be interesting to see if they will use the new site next year.

Fall passerine migration began with a big surprise in eastern Nebraska on 8 August. A Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus*, considered as a rare fall migrant even in the western tier of counties of Nebraska, stopped at a feeder in Omaha. Vagrant Rufous Hummingbirds often stray well away from their usual migration routes; this one was at least 500 miles east of its route. This bird was a male in the best and most brilliant plumage I have even seen in California or Arizona. It certainly presented no identification problems. It came to feeders twice, seemed to feed quite heavily, rested on a nearby branch for about 5 - 10 minutes and then was gone. I photographed it for a first record for Douglas County.

Mobbing action of small birds against an enemy is not uncommon behavior. This kind of action proved to be fatal for an Eastern Screech Owl that had apparently flown to a horse trough for water. Unable to escape from the swallows, the owl drowned before anyone could reach it. It had been banded in 1991 by Mabel Ott of Lincoln and recovered near Omaha on 20 July 1992. After I removed the band to be sent to the Banding Lab, the owl was taken to Fontenelle Forest Nature Center to be made into a study skin for educational purposes.

**Ruth C. Green**

## OSPREYS IN MINNEAPOLIS

A couple of days ago somebody rang our doorbell. On request, they put a box on our porch, chained it to a post, and locked it up. There is a telescope in the box. The system is to have a group of people show up every three hours or so, take it out and go down to the lake. They are watching a few young Ospreys in a hack box across the lake. They watch and watch and make notes of everything that happens. This is a Raptor Center project. The plan is to release three or four young Ospreys on Cedar Lake each year and wait for them to come back to nest in about three years. Does that sound a bit optimistic? And, when they come back, will they nest in a good place? Or, will they pick out one of the highest monuments in Lakewood cemetery to pile up a stack of sticks? We will see.

Another attempt to hack Ospreys was started at Lake Vadnals. After an owl killed one of the birds, they were moved to Cedar Lake. We have seen a Great Horned Owl at Cedar Lake a few times this spring. Good luck, birds. A utility post was left in the middle of the Roberts Sanctuary at Lake Harriet hoping that Ospreys will use that as a place to nest in a few years.

**Donald Beimborn**

Minnesota Bird Banders Newsletter

Vol. 4

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## PUT THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR

### **Ontario Bird Banding Association:**

Annual general meeting at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario,  
6 March 1993.

### **Ohio Bird Banding Association:**

Spring Meeting at Clinton County, Ohio  
April 1993.

Spring Bandout, Barneby Center, Ohio,  
April 1993.

Annual Meeting, Old Woman's Creek, Ohio,  
August 1993