



# *Inland Regional News*

## *Inland Bird Banding Association*

**Founded 1922**

### **IBBA 1992 CONFERENCE**

The 70th annual conference of the Inland Bird Banding Association was held 30 October to 1 November 1992 at the Deere-Wiman House, Butterworth Center, in Moline, Illinois, on the Mississippi River. The weekend's gray skies and, indeed, later fluid precipitation, did not succeed in dampening the spirits of the 40-some attendees. The various meetings and presentations took place in several very charmingly restored, period buildings, which we also had the opportunity to tour between events. Although Peter Petersen's local committee had very limited notice to prepare for our visit, the arrangements were first class, including, of course, the refreshments and banquet provisions. Our thanks to all who provided for us.

The paper sessions offered information and results from banding efforts as wide ranging as the Sand Bluff Banding Station in Illinois with 25 years of activity and a current set-up of 100 nets [Tom and Ruth Little] to winter feeder banding in a back-yard with two or three Potter traps over a 5-6 year period [Terry Ingram]. Techniques and tools for capturing woodpeckers [Jerome Jackson], a close-up view of why tongues cause so much trouble in nets [Edwin Franks], and the possible effects of chemical lawn spray on feeding birds were also on the list [Karl Bartel, see below]. Our new President offered some well-documented evidence of polygamous behavior in Eastern Bluebirds, and Ken Burton (coordinator of MAPS, from Point Reyes Station, California) presented some results from the first three years of this project.

Bill Howe, BBL biologist now in charge of data review and auxiliary marking programs, gave an update on new band sizes, availability of mist nets from Japan, and the status code change recently initiated. He also discussed future plans to streamline handling of recovery data, the possibility of adding return data to BBL files, and improved computer interfaces. Along these lines, Bill has a questionnaire which will give you an opportunity to tell the BBL what you have or would like in the way of computer compatibility. Write Bill Howe at the BBL to get a copy.

Perhaps the highlight of this conference encompassing the traditional All Hallows Eve, not counting the appearance of a couple of strange "birds" at the dinner table, was the harrowing, thrilling, and chilling real-life adventures of Jerry Jackson in his pursuit of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and other bird banding efforts in Fidel Castro's Cuba. His stories made our Cardinal bites seem a bit pale, but were very entertaining and satisfying to know what our discipline can offer in that real world.

**Next year's meeting will be at Whitefish Point, Wisconsin, 1 - 3 October 1993. Officers elected:**

<b>President</b>	<b>Vince Bauldry</b>
<b>1st Vice President</b>	<b>Forest Strnad</b>
<b>2nd Vice President</b>	<b>John Faaborg</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Betty Grenon</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Tom Bartlett</b>
<b>Directors</b>	<b>Darleen Ayres (1993)</b>
	<b>Tom Kashner (1995)</b>

## **AN INVITATION TO IBBA MEMBERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAPS PROGRAM**

Now in its fifth year, the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program is a cooperative, constant-effort, mist-netting program established by The Institute for Bird Populations (see News, Notes, Comments this issue). The Institute is attempting to enlist an additional 33 MAPS stations in the North Central Region and 22 in the South Central Region.

The methodology used by the MAPS Program is simple and straightforward, and the program provides an excellent opportunity for Inland banders to make an important contribution to avian biomonitoring.

We strongly urge banders from the IBBA region to become part of this exciting project. For more information, please write: **The Institute for Bird Populations, P.O. Box 1346, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956, or call: (415) 663-1436.**

### **BROWN CREEPER CAPTURES**

A HY-U Brown Creeper, 1661-02070, was banded at about 10:30 a.m. on 11 October 1983, Blue Island, Illinois. It was later recovered on my last net check at my Cook County Forest Preserve station, Tinley Park, Illinois, at 3:30 p.m. on 13 October 1983. This bird had moved southwest 8 mi in two and a half days.

My home in Blue Island is one of only half a dozen clusters of trees and shrubs left in Blue Island. The yard is a jungle of fruit, pine, and wild black cherry trees with some 30 poke berry plants and large clumps of wild asters. Between the two stations there is only a slight sprinkling of trees until the forest preserves begin. My Tinley Park station is in the middle of two square miles of forest preserve where I use only three mist nests. This creeper recapture is most remarkable, since the bird had two square miles of oak trees in which to forage.

**Karl E. Bartel**  
2528 W. Collins St.  
Blue Island, IL 60406

On 27 June 1992 I banded an AHY-F and an HY-U Brown Creeper caught together during my MAPS project effort in Fontanelle Forest in Bellevue,

Nebraska. Since Brown Creepers are uncommon during the breeding in this area, earlier AHY occurrences were thought to be possibly late migrants. On 4 July 1992 I caught and banded a second AHY-F. This second bird was recaptured on 8 August and again on 16 August. Creepers have not been identified on any point counts earlier in 1992, nor heard during the normal rounds of MAPS banding until these captures.

**Betty Grenon**  
Bellevue, NB

### **NATURE NOTES FROM NEBRASKA**

Fall Fest is an annual event at Fontenelle Forest Nature Center where I do much of my banding. It is a day when hundreds of people come to see all the programs and everything the Nature Center has to offer. One of the biggest attractions is my bird-banding station; visitors love seeing a bird in the hand.

Since passerine migration has been skimpy, to say the least, this fall I was rather concerned about netting any birds at all to show my visitors on 5 October. I did have resident species such as Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, and always reliable Black-capped Chickadees and even a few Orange-crowned Warblers; but the birds were just "run-of-the-mill" for me, even though others enjoyed them. Then suddenly, out of the blue, things got very exciting; I think a few people might have thought I had flipped out! But what bird bander is there who does not get excited over having a species in hand to share and to band that is 500 mi out of range! You see, a Rock Wren had just popped into my nets from goodness knows where.

Rock Wrens are common in the northwestern tier of counties in Nebraska but that's like saying they are common in Denver, Colorado--it's about the same distance from Fontenelle Forest to Chadron, Nebraska, as it is to Denver, which often surprises people from other parts of the country. Rock Wrens are not even migrants in eastern Nebraska. In fact, this western species has been recorded here only once before. Now, perhaps, you can understand my surprise and the thrill it was to band this one! And I do have pictures!

**Ruth C. Green**

## WARNING: LAWN CHEMICALS

When birds feed on lawns freshly sprayed with herbicides and insecticides, they may be harmed by contact with chemical droplets. If the droplets adhere to the bill, the chemical reaction may cause a deformity or a cancerous-type growth on the bill.

During bird banding operations, I have caught several birds of three species with problems:

- two House Finches had 9 mm diameter lumps on the upper bill
- two House Finches had holes in the upper bills, possibly where growths had fallen off
- one House Finch with a growth extending sideways from the upper bill
- one House Finch with a 4 mm bleeding lump on the underside bend of the wing
- two House Finches with numerous 3 mm bleeding lumps on the feet and tarsi
- one Starling, a bird that probes in lawns for food, with a crossed bill
- one Starling with the upper bill 12 mm longer than the lower mandible
- one Starling with its wing, legs, and feet ulcerated and bleeding
- two Morning Doves with upper bills 12 mm longer than the lower bill, one of which also had an ulcerated leg enlarged from a normal 4 mm diameter to a 10 mm diameter

These birds were trapped and banded between 1 April and 29 November 1989, and notes and photos were taken. Never in my 56 years of banding have I observed song birds that had deformities such of these. Please help birds by discouraging lawn spraying.

**Karl E. Bartel**  
Blue Island, IL

### HONORS

**Holmes Smith** was recognized by the Ohio Bird Banding Association with a plaque of appreciation and lifetime membership for his contributions. **Ruth C. Green** was presented the 1992 Conservation Award of the Year by the Woodmen of the World in Omaha, Nebraska.

## AVIAN DIVERSITY ON RESTORED GRASSLANDS IN NORTHWEST OHIO: A COMPARISON OF SWITCHGRASS AND COOL-SEASON GRASSES

In response to declining numbers of breeding grassland birds, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources initiated a "private lands habitat restoration program" in 1979. This program was designed to establish 40,000 ha of grassland habitat throughout the state, with an average field size of 17.5 ha. Management plans for these Wildlife Production Areas (WPAs) include establishment of switchgrass, a dense, warm-season grass believed to provide excellent nesting and winter cover for traditional game species, such as the Ring-necked Pheasant, and may be easier to manage than cool-season grasses, such as timothy. However, it is not known how attractive switchgrass is to nongame bird species during the breeding season. This study compared switchgrass and cool-season grasses in their ability to attract songbirds. Eighteen WPAs in NW Ohio were monitored for the presence of grassland species. Each field was walked four times at two-week intervals during May and June of 1991 and 1992. Following are initial findings:

- Size of WPA does not affect density of birds on each field.
- Total birds observed on cool-season grass plots increased with increasing edge; no such relationship was found for switchgrass plots.
- Cool-season fields had statistically significantly more Red-winged Blackbirds, meadowlarks, and Bobolinks than switchgrass fields; cool-season fields had more (but not significantly so) Field Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Grasshopper Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows than switchgrass fields.
- The Common Yellowthroat was the only species more abundant on switchgrass fields.

**Jennifer Caito**  
1735 Neil Ave.

The Ohio State University  
Columbus, OH

## ROAD SIGNS AND AMERICAN KESTRELS

How many American Kestrels did you see per kilometer last time you raced along Highway 401? Why were they there and not somewhere else? Why were there so few along the more open stretches despite a seeming abundance of food? These were the sorts of questions being asked 10 years ago in Iowa by various wildlife and non-government agencies. They decided to cooperate with the Iowa Department of Transportation and initiated a nest box program covering big stretches of the state's highways by simply affixing the boxes to the backs of highway road signs.

Naturally, this was an interesting project for the transportation authorities to get involved in, and the successes speak for themselves. For example, nest boxes are now operative on virtually every mile of Interstate 35 from Missouri to Minnesota! Box occupancy by kestrels averages 50%, and young are raised in approximately 70% of these boxes. The ubiquitous European Starling occupies most of the other boxes. Dan Varland has recently completed his Ph.D. working with these kestrels and has discovered some interesting things about post-fledging movements and behavior from his banding and telemetry studies. In his study, only 2 of 16 youngsters that died within their first few months had collided with vehicles, indicating that traffic was not a major cause of mortality.

This project would seem to be a great way to boost kestrel banding totals, improve our understanding of their movements, and give the species a helping hand in areas where natural nest sites are in short supply. The Iowa DOT, in conjunction with a number of other bodies, has produced an excellent eight-page color brochure on this project which gives background information on kestrel biology and detailed instructions and diagrams for making and attaching boxes. With the consent and, hopefully, the involvement of your local highway department, perhaps you would like to do a similar project. This would also make a great project for school kids, who could help build and erect the boxes, and perhaps even do some of the nest monitoring as part of an environmental science class. For the brochure, write: **Iowa Department of Transportation**, Office of Project Planning, Planning and

Research Division, 1800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010. For more information on the project contact:

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources,**  
Nongame Wildlife Program  
Wildlife Research Station  
Rural Route 1  
Boone, Iowa 50036  
(515-432-2823)

**Peter J. Ewins**  
Ontario Bird Banding Newsletter  
Vol. 37, No. 3

---

---

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON COMMON TERNS

Common Terns on Lake Champlain have been color marked in a study of their breeding ecology and post-breeding dispersal. In addition to the F&WS band and three color bands, each adult is marked with yellow color dye on the breast, belly, undertail, and/or rump. Juveniles are marked with a F&WS band and a single yellow colored band. Observers are asked to note specifically which areas of the plumage are marked, color band combination, date and location of sighting, and as much other information as possible. Please report to:

**Chris Rimmer**  
Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences  
Woodstock, VT 05091  
and the  
**Bird Banding Laboratory**  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Laurel, MD 20708.