

Inland Regional News

Inland Bird Banding Association

Founded 1922

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the meeting in Biloxi, I was elected President of the IBBA for the next year. That does not mean that I have to have all the good ideas to promote the organization. I have a good slate of officers and board members to back me up, AND I HAVE ALL YOU MEMBERS TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS AND PAPERS FOR PUBLICATION to make 1994-1995 an excellent year for all of us.

Peter Lowther continues as Editor for *North American Bird Bander*.

We have need to find a new Regional Editor to take over the work of Betty Grenon and Ruth Green who have resigned. My thanks to them for their good work.

My thanks also to the group in Mississippi for a very interesting and inspiring meeting and the good arrangements and friendly hospitality. The 1995 meeting will be held at Sand Bluffs in Rockford, Illinois. The 1997 meeting will be held in Ohio, at a place yet to be chosen. Presently, we do not have an invitation for the 1996 meeting. If you know of someone or someplace in the IBBA area who would issue an invitation for the 1996 meeting, I would appreciate knowing about it.

Forest V. Strnad
1400 Autumn Drive #212
Faribault, MN 55021

IBBA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The IBBA General Membership Meeting was held 22 October 1994 at Biloxi, Mississippi. The meeting was called to order by President Vince Bauldry at 3:20 pm. Twenty-nine IBBA members were registered at the conference and the Secretary declared a quorum was in attendance. The previous year's minutes were accepted. These minutes will be published in an issue of NABB for the benefit of all members.

The Treasurer reported the balances in all funds and accounts: Operations Account, \$19,790.05;

Paul Stewart Research, \$15,678.95; Life Membership Fund, \$9,894.35. Total assets amount to \$45,372.36. Current membership was reported as 375 (including 20 Institutional, 4 Complimentary, 1 Exchange). The Treasurer's report was accepted.

The Endowment Committee announced two awards from the Paul Stewart Research Fund. 1) Christopher Danielson received \$500.00 for "Post-fledging behavior and dispersal of Great Horned Owls." 2) Bonnie E. Stout received \$300.00 for

"Weather and fall migration of the Red-necked Grebe." A 1995 student membership award was approved for Jennifer Susan Hogdan of California State University at Sacramento.

Announcements of research grants available from IBBA will be published more frequently in NABB. A copy of IBBA bylaws will be included with the greeting letter for all new members. Revised bylaws are to be sent to all members with the 1995 dues renewals.

The motion to change the bylaws to allow five year consecutive terms for the President, First and Second Vice-Presidents was approved.

A motion to accept the invitation for the 1995 conference to be held at Sand Bluffs in Rockford, Illinois, was carried. Tom Little and Terry Ingram will be co-hosts for the conference to be in early October 1995. The Nominating Committee submitted a slate as listed on the attached schedule. Nominations were closed and the Secretary was directed by motion to cast a unanimous ballot accepting the proposed slate. See inside back cover for current list of officers.

Under New Business, an offer from Black Swamp Bird Observatory for the 1997 conference was entertained.

A vote of thanks for retiring board members was extended to Don Beimborn, Jane Dunlap, Vince Bauldry. A second vote of appreciation was extended to Jerry Jackson and all his cohorts for the present conference. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth A. Grenon, Secretary

Thanks!

Ruth C. Green and **Betty Grenon** end their service as Inland's Regional Editors with this issue. They began managing this section of **NABB** in 1989 with issue 4 of volume 14. Together they supplied a regular column ("Nature Notes from Nebraska"), notes of interest from station, state or regional newsletters and gathered contributions from IBBA members. Neither is escaping service to Inland Bird Banding Association: Ruth has become Second Vice-President and Betty continues in the office of Secretary.

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS AT IBBA/MOS MEETING

at Biloxi, Mississippi
21-23 October 1994

The Legacy of a Polygamist: Male Eastern Bluebird 1211-22114

T. David Pitts, Biology Department,
University of Tennessee at Martin, Martin, TN
38238.

Eastern Bluebirds are typically monogamous, although polygamy and extra-pair copulations have been documented. Male 1211-22114 nested on one of my study areas for three years. I banded male -114 in 1978 as ASY. For both 1978 and 1979, he had one known mate and one known nest site. In 1980, last year on the area, he had two mates simultaneously in one nesting cycle, and then three mates simultaneously in another nesting cycle. During his three years on the study area he had 7 nests, all of which were successful, and fledged 24 young. In 1983, 14 of 31 nesting pairs on the study area included a descendant of male -114. These descendants included 2 sons, 6 granddaughters, 3 grandsons, 1 great granddaughter, and 2 great grandsons. Part of the success of male -114 was probably due to the abundance of empty territories and nest cavities that resulted from the population crash of 1978-1979.

Observer Variation as a Factor in Standardized Wing Measurements.

Robert B. Hole, Jr. and Gregory A. Smith,
Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi
State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Variation in measuring wing length of birds during banding may lead to problems in identification of cryptic species or subspecies where wing length may be the most important characteristic. To test whether observer differences are a potential source of confusion, the right wing chord (distance between wrist and tip of the longest primary of the folded wing) of study skins of 15 Purple Martins and 15 Red-headed Woodpeckers were measured by two observers. Each bird was measured in three ways: feathers flattened along a ruler, feathers not flattened along a ruler, and the latter distance measured with dial calipers. Although differences

between observers using the same technique were not great (e.g., for martins, regression $R^2 = 0.88, 0.86, 0.83$ respectively for the three measurement techniques), differences among techniques used by the same observer were comparable or less ($R^2 =$ as high as 0.97).

Red-cockaded Woodpeckers In Mississippi: Efforts to Monitor an Endangered Species

Margaret Copeland. 909 Evergreen St., Starkville, MS 39759.

Since 1989, the Oktibbeha Audubon Society has continuously monitored Red-cockaded Woodpecker populations at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. These efforts have included monitoring cavity and artificial cavity use and movements of marked individuals, with special efforts being made during the breeding season. We have also begun efforts to monitor populations elsewhere in the state and encourage volunteer efforts to provide an independent assessment of Red-cockaded Woodpecker populations throughout the Southeast.

Nesting Least Terns on the Mississippi Coast: A Profile of Changes in Populations and Habitats

Jerome A. Jackson. Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762

While populations of the Least Tern are considered endangered in some areas, on the Mississippi Gulf coast they grew through the 1970s and 1980s in numbers of colonies, numbers of birds, and in diversity of habitats used. Since 1992, however, there have been evidences of problems and declines in populations. Most problems are associated with increased human activity in the colonies, but there are also possible problems in feeding areas. In this presentation I will discuss nesting habitats used, shifting colony sites, problems resulting in reduced reproductive success, and research needs.

Status of the Bald Eagle

Terrence N. Ingram. Eagleland Environmental Consultants, 300 East Hickory, Apple River, IL 61001.

The Bald Eagle was declared endangered in 43 states in 1976. Recovery plans were developed in five different regions of the lower 48 states and recovery goals for each region were developed. Have these goals been met? Current population statistics will be presented, as well as the banding results from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Michigan. Also presented will be the results of the 1994 hacking program in Kentucky and Tennessee. Each member of the audience will have the opportunity to participate in a questionnaire to determine their opinion about the Fish & Wildlife Service's proposed Rule to reclassify the Bald Eagle.

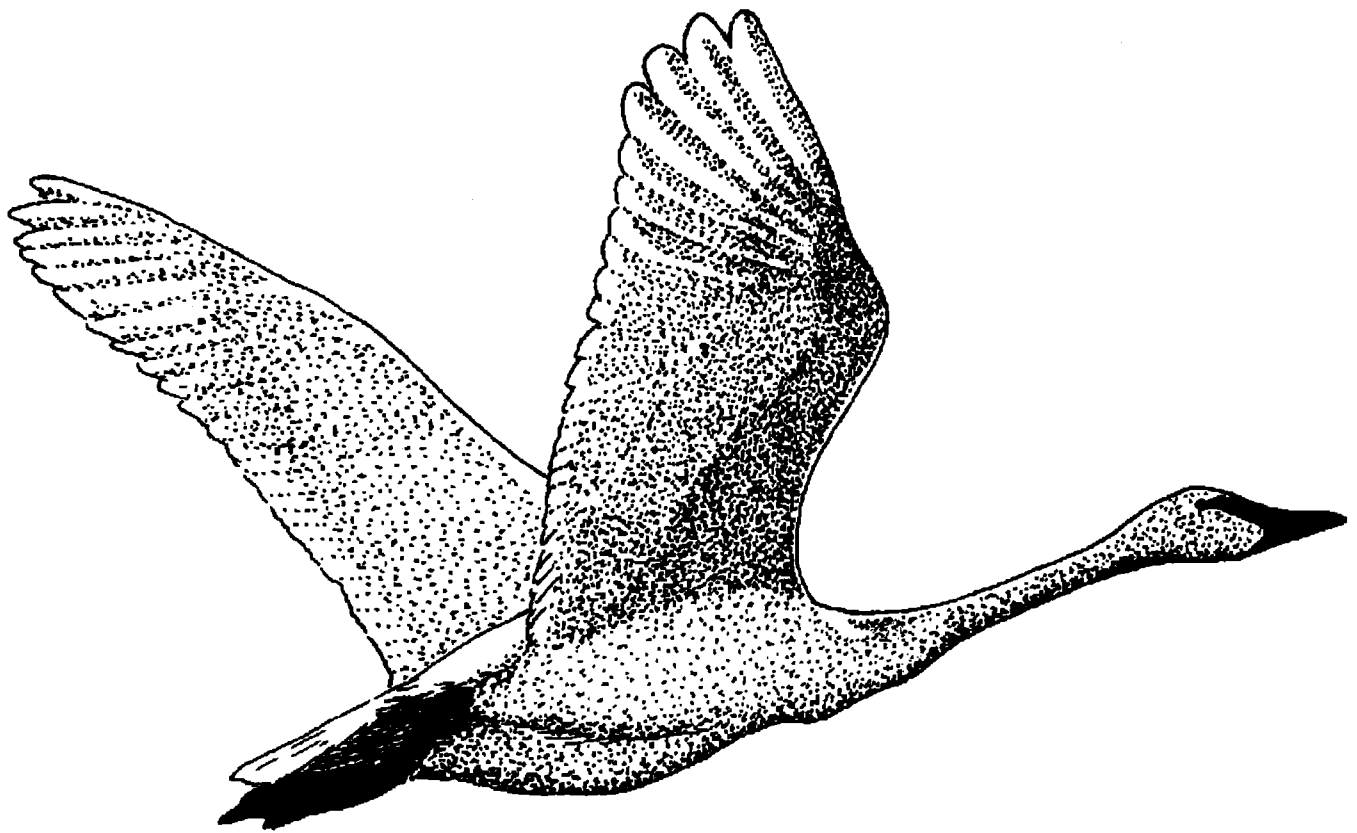
Landbird Population Levels and Productivity In the Southeast from 1989 to 1993: An Overview of the First Five Years of Results from the MAPS Program

Kenneth M. Burton and David F. DeSante.
The Institute for Bird Populations, P.O. Box 1346, Pt. Reyes Station, CA 94956.

Constant-effort mist-netting data from MAPS stations in the Southeast Region were analyzed to monitor year-to-year changes in adult population size and productivity between 1989 and 1993. Changes in adult population size (measured by the capture rate of adults) and productivity (capture rate of young and proportion of young in the catch) will be presented for 1989-90 through 1992-93 for 12 target species and for all species pooled. Results indicate a significant decrease in capture rate of adults from 1990 to 1991. No significant changes in proportion of young were detected from 1989 to 1992. Preliminary results suggest that capture rate of adults was up significantly in 1993 compared to 1992, with no significant change in either measure of productivity.

NATURE NOTES FROM NEBRASKA

As I was driving along Highway 2, near Whitman, Nebraska, on 8 October 1994, I saw nine Trumpeter Swans on Collins Lake. This lake is not a place where I had ever seen them before so, as always, I was curious to know more about their presence and status. My first thought was perhaps they were on their way to LaCreek Wildlife Refuge near Martin, South Dakota. As I continued to the Black Hills, I decided I must stop on my way back at refuge headquarters and see what I



could learn. After all, if these birds were on their way to LaCreek, then they would be headed north to wintering habitat and then south to nesting territory. And that seems unnatural migration for the Northern Hemisphere.

Two days later, I discussed this unique situation with Rolf Kraft, the refuge manager. I learned that over 200 birds return to the refuge to overwinter because food is supplied and water is kept open. It is true, these swans will head south from LaCreek to nest in several Nebraska counties (Grant, Garden, Arthur, Cherry, and McPherson), and also west to Crook County, Wyoming, and ten counties in South Dakota. As this restored flock continues to increase, it is forcing some of these birds to "pioneer" wintering habitat in areas such as Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. As Mr. Kraft says, "the problem is that pioneering from a hostile winter environment to unknown wintering grounds is unnatural and extremely hazardous for the birds involved. The high mortality associated with reverse pioneering severely limits success and progress will be extremely slow." In a natural situation, when species pioneer further north in spring

and find suitable breeding grounds, they know where they have come from and can retreat when harsh winter weather threatens their survival.

When Trumpeters were restored to historical breeding grounds at LaCreek Refuge, there was no remnant population remaining. As a result, there were no wild, migratory birds to act as guides. This flock has become somewhat residential in the Great Plains as a result of artificial wintering habitat. Until some true migration develops, the cost of pioneering for these birds will be heavy. It is hoped that in time they will develop natural migration routes. Unless this happens, Trumpeter Swans will not be wild, free-ranging birds independent of man-supplied feeding and open water.

It is an exciting experience to see these beautiful, big, white birds under any circumstances, but hopefully the day will come when they will breed north and migrate south naturally. Then and only then, will they be considered fully restored to the Central Flyway.

Ruth C. Green

Vol.19 No. 4

Hawk-trapping at Sand Bluffs Banding Station

Sand Bluff's Hawk Trapping Station has a colorful history, and not all of it savory. Lee Johnson constructed the first building from used lumber that was considerably past its prime. While it was not especially beautiful — it looked like a two-story outhouse — it did the job, and Sand Bluff began catching and banding hawks.

That old building swayed in any breeze and permitted raindrops to land just about where they would have without the building. The old lumber made for a well-ventilated building — it did little to stop the wind. But there were many peepholes. Inside, banders were in constant danger from each other as they jockeyed for position to scan the sky and pull the strings. Since the trap door out was in the middle of the floor, much like the fabled fireman's pole, when a hawk was caught, everyone had to jump back as the excited bander threw the door open and dived down.

The hawk station disappeared quickly during the memorable prairie fire of 1981. According to eye witnesses, one moment it was there and then it was gone, replaced by a sort of mushroom cloud. The old lawn mower stored underneath melted — it looked like an artifact from the Chicago fire.

That's when Richard Hamilton, who had already started to take on the "King of the Hawks" job, constructed the new hawk station with the help of Tom Little. In a drastic departure from past practice, Richard created a thing that looked like a professionally built space station on the hill — and he built it of NEW LUMBER!

On the day of dedication we decorated the new station with pink crepe paper streamers and, armed with a large bottle of cheap muscatel, drank a toast to Richard's hard work. The celebration was interrupted several times as hawks appeared overhead and the banders bolted inside to lure them in. Hawks don't seem to mind crepe paper; we caught several that day. The camera set up to record the historic event turned out to have no film — so you have to take our word for the excitement of this historic occasion.

Now, after more than 10 years of faithful service, the "new" building is old and must be replaced. No doubt number 3 will include innovations to increase bander comfort, safety and hawk catching efficiency.

You need to know that banding hawks is different from "dicky-bird" banding. Not only are hawks elegant and impressive creatures which inspire awe in most of us, they are much more likely to be caught again by us or others. Returns on hawks, mostly Red-tails found dead in Louisiana, are much more likely than for small birds.

This is partly because hawks migrate during the day, and can be lured by banders and partly because a dead hawk is large enough for a person to find compared, for instance, to a departed House Wren. There is usually enough left of a dead hawk on a road to be interesting whereas there is precious little left of a squished sparrow. Our banded hawks have yielded a great deal of information about migration patterns in the Mississippi flyway.

Ruth Little

from Sand Bluff Banding Station Newsletter



Spring at UM-Dearborn Banding Station

The bird banding station at the University of Michigan-Dearborn banded 261 new birds and handled 47 returns during the spring 1994 season. Banding began 11 April and ended 31 May, with 42 days of banding and just over 1200 net-hours. The big day was 29 April with 46 birds banded. Despite the low totals compared to last year (832 birds of 66 species), number of birds per 100 net-hours remained similar (25.2 birds/100 net-hours this spring vs 22.9 last spring). We tried a new location this year along the freshwater lake rather than in an old field/forest edge habitat. While this area harbors a much higher concentration of birds during spring migration, it is also much more accessible to the public. Vandalism was a problem; we had to move nets to less optimal locations after several were destroyed. While we operated a similar number of days as last year, we had only one-third the net-hours.

In general, spring was cool and very few days had winds from the south. There would be long periods of no activity, then a wave of birds would go through. Migration windows for most species were very small and we felt many birds overflow when suitable conditions finally occurred. Most abundant species were Myrtle Warbler, 79; White-throated Sparrow, 39; Slate-colored Junco, 20; Hermit Thrush, 13; and Song Sparrow, 9. Only 3 Swainson's Thrush and 11 Gray Catbird were banded! A male "Brewster's" Warbler, present for several days and singing the Blue-winged song, was banded on 29 April, the only notable capture for the season.

Julie A. Craves

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