

Inland Regional News

Inland Bird Banding Association

In Memoriam



Peter C. Petersen

Peter C. Petersen was born 10 Dec 1936 in Davenport, Iowa, and died there 12 Jul 1997. Although he resided in the area his entire life, Pete traveled widely to satisfy his passion for birds. In his 60 years, Pete visited 35 countries, adding more than a third of the world's bird species to his proudly and meticulously kept life list.

At the age of three, Pete was struck by a car and left with a badly injured leg which did not heal properly. Prevented from pursuing more vigorous activities and with the encouragement

of his mother, Pete turned to birds. He published his first note at age 16 in **Iowa Bird Life**; by the time he was 24, he was editor of that journal, a position which he continued to serve in for 25 years. Pete graduated from Iowa State College (now Iowa State University) in 1958 with a major in zoology and wildlife management and minors in botany and education. He was quickly given the opportunity to put his training to work as Curator of Natural History at the Davenport Public Museum. In 1962, Pete married Mary Lou Petersen (they already shared the same family name), a junior high

school science teacher. Mary Lou shared not only his life, but his interests in birds and conservation. In a wonderful memorial to Peter in **Iowa Bird Life** (67:105-109, 1997), she shared his childhood and their years together.

Over the years Pete held jobs with local industry, returned to the museum as Director of Education, worked as staff ornithologist at Deere-Wiman House in nearby Moline, Illinois, then founded two businesses that furthered his own interests and served the ornithological community: Petersen Book Company and Pete Petersen's Wild Bird Shop.

Peter was a patient and astute observer of birds. His excitement at finding a new bird was contagious and shared with all who came in contact with him. More than just a birder, Peter was a spokesman for the birds and a strong conservationist. He wrote a popular nature column in a local newspaper, readily shared his expertise with school groups, garden clubs, civic organizations, and television audiences. Peter also contributed to the science of ornithology through publications in state, regional, and national journals. He was a life member of the American Ornithologists' Union, Cooper Ornithological Society, Wilson Ornithological Society, Association of Field Ornithologists, American Birding Association, National Wildlife Federation, the Inland Bird Banding Association, and several state ornithological societies. He served as President of both the Iowa Ornithologists' Union (1960-1961) and Illinois Audubon Society (1972-1975).

Peter served the Inland Bird Banding Association in many ways beyond his term as President (1988-1990). He attended 30 of IBBA's annual meetings, was always looked to for guidance in IBBA matters, and could be counted on to nurture the enthusiasm of new members. He often used bird banding in his educational efforts and through 1996 he had banded 101,470 birds of 257 species!

For his efforts, Peter was recognized by several prestigious awards, including the Dr. R. M. Strong Award of the Illinois Audubon Society for Outstanding Work in Ornithology and Conservation (1972), the Izaak Walton League of America Outstanding Service Award, the Iowa Governor's Volunteer Award (1993), and the Friend of Science Education Award from of the Iowa Academy of Science (1997).

I knew Peter for more than 20 years and enjoyed his company at ornithological meetings and on field trips. A casual mention of interest in an out-of-print bird book or a back issue of journal regularly resulted in Pete's locating a copy for me. He usually brought books and birding items to donate as door prizes at Inland Bird Banding meetings. In keeping with his generosity, Peter donated his library, field notes, and banding records to Western Illinois University.

Peter's niche in life was unique in that he was a bridge builder, his efforts linking professional ornithology, birders, banders, and the general public. His love and understanding of birds and concern for their welfare were the driving forces of his life and the foundations for his bridges.

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In Memoriam - *Mabel Beers Ott*

Mabel Beers Ott was born 25 May 1905 to Dan and Elsie Beers. She grew up near Syracuse, NE. She attended the University of Nebraska where she met and married John Ott on 20 Aug 1928. She had one daughter, Sandra Herzinger, and two grandchildren, Craig and Kurt. She died 10 Sept. 1997.

Mabel often commented that she could not remember a time when she was not interested in birds. In the 1970s, she was introduced to bird banding by Fitzhugh and Hazel Diggs of Missouri and Esther Bennett at the Pioneers Park Nature Center, Lincoln, NE. Not long afterwards, she obtained a sub-permit and later a master bird banding permit and became part of the Nature Center's education program. She continued her work as a bander and

teacher/naturalist for the rest of her life. She banded over 24,000 birds in Nebraska, primarily at the Nature Center. She also banded for the Wildlife Rescue Team and the Raptor Recovery Center. As part of this work, she talked to more than 115,000 children and adults about birds, nature, habitat, and conservation. Inland Bird Banding Association honored her with a Certificate of Appreciation for her work with conservation:

In appreciation of Mabel Ott of Lincoln, Nebraska, for her outstanding contributions to the causes of conservation, nature education, and bird banding, the Inland Bird Banding Association and the Bird Banding Laboratory present this tribute on the 28th day of September, 1991.

/s/ Don Beimborn and John Tautin

Black-throated Sparrow Banded in Omaha, NE

On 20 December 1997, I banded a Black-throated Sparrow (2120-83856) in the vicinity of 43rd and J streets in South Omaha, NE. It was an AHY male, apparently of the form *Amphispiza b. bilineata*, according to descriptions given in J. D. Rising's "A Guide to Identification and Natural History of the Sparrows of the United States and Canada." This subspecies is the smallest of three races found in the United States and is indigenous to central Texas. Besides the smaller size, the identifying field mark is the greater amount of white found in the outer tail feathers. The accompanying photos show field marks very clearly. This bird is the second Black-throated Sparrow to be banded in Nebraska (both in the Omaha area) and the fourth record for the state.

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Fall Banding at Lost Mountain

Fall banding at Lost Mountain Bird Observatory, from 5 Aug to 7 Oct 1997, captured 2691 individuals of 79 species. This is the highest number of species ever for fall. The number of birds was below average but the highest since 1994. Most common species are listed:

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|------------------------|-----|
| Yellow-rumped Warbler | 520 |
| Yellow Warbler | 511 |
| Alder Flycatcher | 192 |
| Dark-eyed Junco | 122 |
| Least Flycatcher | 114 |
| Blackpoll Warbler | 90 |
| Chipping Sparrow | 87 |
| Clay-colored Sparrow | 77 |
| Orange-crowned Warbler | 76 |
| Wilson's Warbler | 70 |

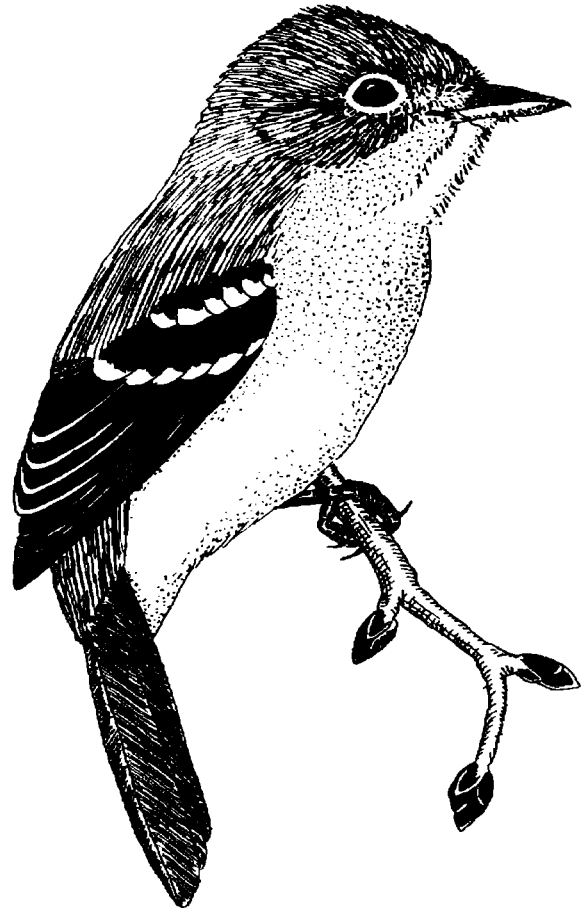
As in 1996, there were seven days with over 100 birds captured. The best day was 8 Sep with 164 birds captured. It was surprising that despite this large catch, only 18 species were represented. It was an average day of banding until just before closing our nets, when a huge mixed flock of warblers and sparrows moved through the northern part of our study area. Within minutes, four nets had captured over 100 birds!

New fall high counts were set for 10 species. Two species were banded that had been captured previously only during spring: female Orchard Orioles were caught on 7 and 10 Aug, and a Spotted Towhee caught 24 Sep. The number of Chestnut-sided Warblers was most noteworthy; the nine individuals caught fall 1997 equaled the total number banded at Lost Mountain Bird Observatory from 1989 - 1996! Although Long-eared Owls are often observed in the area during Aug and Sep, the individual flushed into a mist net 18 Aug was only the second of its kind to be captured at LMBO.

The news was not all good. This fall saw the lowest ever banding totals for Blue Headed Vireo (1) and American Goldfinch (7). The 11 Swainson's Thrushes and 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks captured were the fewest since 1990 when only a partial banding program was conducted.

Alan R. Smith

from *The Black & White Warbler* 2(1): 1, 1998
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Metro Beach Metropark 1997 report

Banding studies monitoring spring and fall birds at Metro Beach Metropark, off Lake St. Clair, east of Mt. Clemens, Michigan, have recorded a 9-yr old Black-capped Chickadee. Initially banded 9 Sep 1989, this male chickadee has since found his way into Metro Beach mist nests 23 times! On 27 Sep 1997, he appeared bright-eyed, strong and healthy.

Minimum age and sex of some of the older repeats in 1997 include the following: Downy Woodpecker, 3 yr M; Black-capped Chickadee, 9 M, 4+ F, 3+ F; Gray Catbird, 4+ U; Yellow Warbler, 7+ F, 6+ M, 6+ M, 6+ F, 6 M, 5 M, 3+ F, 3 F, 3 M; Common Yellowthroat, 6 M, 4+ M, 4+ F, 4 F; Song Sparrow, 5 M, 3+ F; Swamp Sparrow, 3+ M; Red-winged Blackbird, 4+ M, 3 F; Brown-headed Cowbird, 7+ F; Baltimore Oriole, 4 F; and American Goldfinch, 7 M.

Mist nets were up 11 days in spring (25 Apr - 1 Jun) and 14 days in fall (23 Aug - 5 Oct). While totals of banded individuals for both spring and fall were down from previous years, spring banding captured 94.7 birds/100 net-hr (only slightly below 1996) and fall banding only 39.6 birds/100 net-hr (lowest in 8 years).

These studies were made possible with the excellent cooperation of Metropark authorities and dedicated, hard-working assistants: C. Barlow, M. Brown, R. Brown, A. Chartier, K. Cooper, L. Daniels, M. Gazette, T. Halatek, F. Hull, M. Johnston, K. Konopka, M. McCullough, F. McDonald, J. Pease, J. Rebitzke, P. Schroeder, J. Tyler, J. Wheeler, S. Wright, J. Young and J. Zinisek.

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IBBA Meets in Nebraska

The 1998 meeting of the
Inland Bird Banding Assoc.
will be held:

**9 - 11 October 1998 at the
Eppley 4-H Center
Nebraska National
Forest, Halsey, NE.**

The featured speaker will be James D. Rising, author of "A Guide to Identification and Natural History of the Sparrows of the United States and Canada." He will present a workshop on grassland sparrows and will also be available to autograph copies of his book, which will be for sale at the meeting. More details about the meeting will be provided later.

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