

# Recent literature

## BANDING HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHIES

### **FAN honours its dedicated volunteers.**

Anonymous. 2002. *Alta. Nat.* 32: 92-93. Fed. Alta. Nat., 11759 Groat Rd., Edmonton, AB T5M 3K6 (Brief biographies of eight naturalists, including three banders: Edgar T. Jones and the late Lloyd Lohr given Honorary Life Memberships and Donald J. Stiles given a Volunteer Recognition award.) MKM

### **Who is the Editor of *Corella*?**

Anonymous. 1997. *Australian Bird Study Assoc. Newsletter* 47: 5. Box A313, Sydney South, 1235, Australia (Brief biography to date of Annette Cam, prominent Australian bander.) MKM

## BANDING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

### **A technique to catch free-flying flamingos (or the saga of how I tried).**

T. O. Osborne. 2001. *Afring News* 30:47-50. Box 22, Okaukuejo, via Outjo 9000, Namibia (Review of previous techniques for capturing flamingos and development of a technique using a modified bustard net, with best results at high tide on relatively dark [new moon] nights. Other water birds captured in the nets when experimenting with the technique in Namibia included a pelican, teal, various shorebirds, gulls, and terns. Tables list weights, wing lengths, culmen, and tarsal lengths of Greater and Lesser flamingos captured.) MKM

## IDENTIFICATION, MOLTS, PLUMAGES, WEIGHTS, AND MEASUREMENTS

### **Melanistic Bonaparte's Gull in central Illinois.**

H. D. Bohlen. 1993. *Amer. Birds* 47:378. Illinois State Mus., Springfield, IL 62703 (Description and photograph of small, all-dark gull with darker head and primaries that was the same size as nearby Bonaparte's Gulls and behaved like them.) MKM

### **Blackcheeked Lovebirds in the hand.**

L. Warburton. 2001. *Afring News* 30:39-41. Res. Centre for African Parrot Conserv., School of Bot. & Zool., Univ. of Natal, Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209, South Africa (Means and ranges of mass, wing length, tail length, tarsus length, culmen

length, and culmen width are tabulated for 21-28 birds mist-netted as they came to pool to drink in Zambia. Other species caught are also listed.) MKM

## NORTH AMERICAN BANDING RESULTS

**Wild cares.** S. de Vore. 1993. *Amer. Birds* 47:363-369. address not given. (Essay on avian irruptions, including role of banding in helping to document numbers of Great Gray Owls in the Sault Ste. Marie area of Michigan during one irruption there and numbers of Black-capped Chickadees at Duluth and St. Paul, MN, during a major flight there. Banding totals also helped to document differences among years in numbers of Northern Hawk Owls and Boreal Owls wintering in the vicinity of Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, MI.) MKM

### **1999 annual report Beaverhill Bird Observatory.**

D.T.T. Flockhart (Ed.). 2001. Beaverhill Bird Observatory, Edmonton. iv + 87 pp. Beaverhill Bird Observ., Box 1418, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N5 (During 1999, 4037 birds of 70 species were banded at a site near Edmonton. The numbers of each species are listed in the editor's introduction, including an extralimital Northern Mockingbird. More banding details are summarized for spring, summer, and fall in the reports abstracted below. Reports on general bird sightings and non-bird projects and reprints of three issues of the observatory's newsletter [*Willet*] are also included.) MKM

### **BBO spring report 1999.**

J. Adamyk. 2001. pp. [11-19] in D.T.T. Flockhart (Ed.). 1999 annual report Beaverhill Bird Observatory. Beaverhill Bird Observ., Box 1418, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N5 (Between 24 Apr and 13 Jun 1999, 992 birds of 25 species were captured of which 812 were newly banded and 177 were recaptures from previous years, an increase in numbers captured over 1998. The highest banding day was 18 May, with 135 birds captured and 129 banded. Tables list the number of each species banded, the five most-captured species, five most-banded species, and numbers of "repeats" and "returns/recoveries" of 20 species. Graphs chart weekly capture rates [numbers of birds caught per net-hour] and weekly "avian diversity" [number of species caught]). MKM

**Beaverhill Bird Observatory summer report for 1999.** C. Priestley. 2001. pp. [21-30] in D. T. T. Flockhart (Ed.). 1999 annual report Beaverhill Bird Observatory. Beaverhill Bird Observ., Box 1418, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N5 (During the summer of 1999, 303 birds of 21 species were caught as part of the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship [MAPS] program, with some additional birds trapped and banded outside of MAPS hours.) MKM

**Beaverhill Bird Observatory fall report 1999.** T. Flockhart. 2001. pp. [31-39] in D. T. T. Flockhart (Ed.). 1999 annual report Beaverhill Bird Observatory. Beaverhill Bird Observ., Box 1418, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N5 (Between 1 Aug and 9 Oct 1999, 2745 birds of 58 species were caught during 2533.5 net hours on 45 banding days. Of these, 2172 were newly banded, 308 retrapped and 265 escaped or were released unbanded.) MKM

**Ontario Bird Records Committee report for 2001.** K. J. Roy. 2002. *Ont. Birds* 20:54-74. 13 Kinsman Court, Fonthill, ON L0S 1E3 (Mist-netting and banding helped document extralimital records of Virginia's Warbler and Blue Grosbeak [both photographed in the hand] in Ontario during 2001. The limp of a Piping Plover banded in Saskatchewan in Jun 2000 and encountered at Presqu'île Provincial Park on the north shore of Lake Ontario in Jun 2001 suggested that it was the same limping banded plover observed "a few days earlier" at Long Point on the north shore of Lake Erie.) MKM

**Beaverhill area bluebirds.** E. Olorenshaw. 1999. *Willet* 12(3):2; also reprinted, [p. 67] in D.T.T. Flockhart (Ed.). 1999 annual report Beaverhill Bird Observatory. Beaverhill Bird Observ., Box 1418, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N5 (At a bluebird trail established near Beaverhill Lake, Alberta, in 1995, 111 young and six adult Mountain Bluebirds were banded in 1998 and 115 young and 11 adults in 1999.) MKM

**Staging of Roseate Terns *Sterna dougallii* in the post-breeding period around Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA.** P. Trull, S. Hecker, M.J. Watson, and I.C.T. Nisbet. 1999. *Atlantic Seabirds* 1:145-158. Cent. for Coastal Studies, 59

Commercial St., Provincetown, MA 02657 (Sightings of color-bands in 1994 and 1996 confirmed that Roseate Terns staging in the Cape Cod area included birds that hatched and/or bred in colonies in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New York.) MKM

**The Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program 1997 and 1998 report.** D.F. DeSante and D.R. O'Grady. 2000. *Bird Populations* 5:49-101. The Inst. for Bird Population, Box 1346, Point Reyes Stn., CA 94956 (During 1997-1998, MAPS grew from 424 stations in 1996 to 467 in 1998. Changes in adult population sizes and productivity levels are estimated among regions and years, based on regional adult survival and recapture probabilities and proportions of residents among newly captured adults derived from between- and within-year transient models based on modified Cormack-Jolly-Seber mark-recapture analyses.) MKM

#### NON-NORTH AMERICAN BANDING RESULTS

**Predictive ecology to the rescue?** I.M. Coté. 2002. *Science* 298:1181-1182. Centre for Ecol., Evol. & Conserv., School of Biol. Sci., Univ. of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ, U.K. (Cites study of changes in tarsal length asymmetry by Lens *et al.* [next abstract] in Kenyan birds as an example of a relatively simple study that can provide predictive values on effects of habitat degradation on local fauna.) MKM

**Avian persistence in fragment rainforest.** L. Lens, S. van Dongen, K. Norris, M. Githiru, and E. Matthysen. 2002. *Science* 298:1236-1238. Dept. of Biol., Lab. of Terr. Ecol., Ghent Univ., K. L. Ledeganckstraat 35, B-9000 Ghent, Belgium (During a six-year study in fragments of rain forest in Kenya, 889 of 3089 banded birds of seven species were recaptured in one or more other fragment(s). Differences among these species in changes over time in degree of tarsal length asymmetry had predictive value in determining amount of species-specific tolerance to habitat change [as indicated by dispersal rate] as forest fragmentation increased.) MKM

**Ringling and twitching.** K. Garvin. 1999. *Willet* 12(2):1-3, also reprinted [pp. 61-63] in D.T.T.

Flockhart (Ed.). 2001. 1999 annual report Beaverhill Bird Observatory. Beaverhill Bird Observatory, Edmonton. Box 1800, Inuvik, N.W.T. X0E 0T0 (Brief notes on two banding sites in England and contact information for foreigners wishing to visit bird observatories there.) MKM

**An east African ringer in Lebanon.** C. Jackson. 2001. *Afring News* 30:32-34. A Rocha Kenya, Box 383, Watamu, Kenya (Highlights of a two-week project of banding in an area of depleted wetland habitat, the first banding in the area for about 25 years. Eurasian Reed Warblers constituted 34% of the 1034 birds of 33 species banded. Three birds previously banded elsewhere were also caught: a swallow banded in Hungary and Eurasian Reed and Moustached warblers banded in Israel.) MKM

**Movements and timing of moult and breeding of the Cape White-eye *Zosterops pallidus* in KwaZulu-Natal.** C.T. Symes, C.T. Downs and M. Brown. 2001. *Afring News* 30:35-39. School of Botany and Zool., Univ. Natal, P/Bag X01, Scottsville 3209, South Africa (Of 408 Cape White-eyes mist-netted at 22 sites, 26 have been recaptured one to three times. Data are included on habitat in which the birds were captured, molt periods, and breeding period as indicated by presence or absence of brood patch. Only three recoveries to date in a 50-year data base have been beyond 100 km of the banding site.) MKM

**The successful release of wild-caught birds used in laboratory experiments.** M. Brown, C. T. Symes and C.T. Downs. 2001. *Afring News* 30:42-43. School of Bot. & Zool., Univ. of Natal, Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209, South Africa (Of 73 banded birds of eight sunbird, sugarbird, and mousebird species released after being used in nectar preference experiments, eight birds [11%] have been recaptured or sighted one to eight times up to seven months and 20 days later and up to 135 km from the release site.) MKM

**Forest bird longevities in NW Tanzania.** L. Baker and T. Oatley. 2001. *Afring News* 30:44-46. Tanzania Bird Atlas, Box 9601, Moshi, Tanzania (A mist-netting effort in forest in the border region of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda resulted in the capture and banding of 363 birds of 58 species, as well as the recapture of seven birds of six species

banded there in 1987. These data extend the known longevity of five of these six species. Their 1997 and 2000 body masses are included in the data table.) MKM

**Breeding success of Common Gulls *Larus canus* in west Scotland I. Observations at a single colony.** J.C.A. Craik. 1999. *Atlantic Seabirds* 1:169-181. Scot. Assoc. for Marine Sci., Dunstaffnage Marine Lab., Box 3, Oban, Argyll PA34 4AD, Scotland (Bands helped estimate fledging rates by allowing the continued tracking of individual chicks after they left the nest but before they fledged.) MKM

**Rainfall correlates of bird populations and survival rates in a Puerto Rican dry forest.** K.M. Dugger, J. Faaborg and W.J. Arendt. 2000. *Bird Populations* 5:11-27. Coop. Wildl. Res. Lab., South. Illinois Univ., Carbondale, IL 62901-6504 (Population levels of birds in Puerto Rico's Guinaca Forest, measured from capture-recapture data from mist-net runs most winters from 1973 to 1998, were correlated with total annual rainfall and parameters association with rainfall during the first six months of the year.) MKM

**The Guánica, Puerto Rico, bird monitoring project.** J. Faaborg, W.J. Arendt and K.M. Dugger. 2000. *Bird Populations* 5:102-111. Dept. of Biol. Sci., Univ. of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211-7400 (Summary of first 28 years of annual mist-netting program in which 16 nets were operated in a single, end-to-end, net line from sunrise to sunset [as determined by cessation and commencement of bat flights] for three consecutive days each year. The short height of the vegetation ensured that most birds within the sample area would be caught over the three-day period, with numbers of birds per day declining as the birds became familiar with the presence of the nets, but the three-day results provided a measure of year-to-year variations and long-term trends, enabling the authors to examine effects of drought and a hurricane. Expansion of the project is outlined and contributions to date on winter site fidelity, longevity, and survival of several migrant and resident species summarized.) MKM

**Red-listed species continue to decline on constant effort sites.** D. Balmer and W. Peach. 1998. *British Trust for Ornithol. News* 215:8-9; also

British Trust for Ornithol., The Natl. Cent. for Ornithol., The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU, U.K. (Numbers of adult birds caught at over 120 "Constant Effort Sites" in Britain and Ireland during the 1997 breeding season were the lowest since monitoring began in 1983. A comparison between 1996 and 1997 at 82 sites indicated declines in adults of all but two of 24 species

monitored. On the other hand, 1997 saw increases in numbers of young of most species captured, with Great Tits and Bullfinches attaining record highs.)  
MKM

**MKM** =Martin K. McNicholl

**Note:** Thanks to Kay Loughman for copies of the two *Science* notes abstracted in this compilation.

## Books

**COLLINS BIRD GUIDE.** By Lars Svensson and Peter Grant. 1999. Illustrated by Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterstrom. Harper Collins, London, and Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 392 pp. 24.95 pounds Sterling.

**THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF EUROPE.** Authors, illustrators and publishers as above. 392 pp. 29.95 pounds Sterling.

Over the last 50 years there have been published numerous field guides to the birds of Britain and the rest of Europe. For such an over-served geographical area, one might reasonably ask, "why would anybody bother to write (and illustrate) yet another one?" This question is answered very effectively by Svensson *et al.*: because you can do it so much better than anybody else. Bird books, like everything else, tend to be good, bad, or indifferent. The "Collins guide" is none of the above. Simply, it is superb.

We are in fact looking at two separate editions of one work; the original "bird guide," 8 x 5.5 in (20.3 x 14 cm), weighing about one pound 10 ounces (about 737 g), and the coffee table "birds of Europe," 12.5 x 9 in (31.8 x 22.9 cm) and almost three times as heavy. Basically, these are identical except that the bigger format of the "birds of Europe" allows for the illustrations to be much larger and consequently more clear.

Notwithstanding the titles, the books cover more than Europe, since all of northern Africa, the Levant, and Turkey are included; Europe is defined as east to the Urals and south to the Caucasus. As a result, many more species are included than in, for example, the classical Peterson *et al.* "Field

guide to the birds of Britain and Europe," published almost half a century ago. This is extremely useful, not merely because countries like Morocco, Israel, and Turkey are visited frequently now by bird-watchers, but also because many of the breeding species of these peripheral regions show up in western Europe as vagrants.

The meat of the books start with a useful introduction which in addition to explaining the layout and conventions of the text, has informative sections on plumages and the effects of viewing conditions on observation. This could with profit be read by all bird-watchers in Europe or elsewhere. The bulk of the books consist of individual species' accounts and accompanying illustrations, and it is here that the true worth of the work emerges.

Each account of a family or group of birds starts off with some general comments, giving background information and the typical characteristics of the family or genus; in some cases detailed and useful (I consistently repeat the word "useful" in this review, but it is always the most appropriate word) analyses of genera or groups with emphasis on features which aid field identification, are given. The books use the "side-by-side" format; that is, the illustrations and the text for each species sit adjacent to each other, rather than the system used in the early Peterson guides in which all the species were illustrated on one page and one had to search elsewhere for the text. The illustrations are, in a word, magnificent, enormously detailed (e.g., there are no fewer than 15 separate flight pictures of Honey Buzzard, showing all the variations of color phases, ages, and flight attitudes) and very accurate. Despite having two artists, a remarkable uniformity of style has been