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Measurements of Wilson's Warblers in Alberta

Martin K. McNicholl

Recently Wood (1969) published a guide to determining ages and sexes of various bird species in the hand, based on measurements of the birds. The keys in Wood's guide are of greatest use in eastern North America, especially Pennsylvania, where they were devised, although they are partly based on the literature from elsewhere as well. A number of revisions to these keys have been proposed, most notably that of Sheppard and Klimkiewicz (1976). In order to be of greatest value, these keys need to be tested over as much of the range of each species as possible with birds of known age and/or sex. In wide ranging species the possibility of considerable geographic variation exists.

From 17 June to 5 July 1976, I netted and banded 24 Wilson's Warblers (*Wilsonia pusilla*) in the proposed Kananaskis Provincial Park in the Rocky Mountains of southern Alberta. Sex of these birds was readily determined by cloacal protuberance or in-

cubation patch (see Salt 1954). Thus, an opportunity was afforded to test the criteria of Wood (1969), as modified by Sheppard and Klimkiewicz (1976), for a small population in the western mountains. All but one of the birds caught were males. These were all migrating birds, arriving in the vicinity of the breeding grounds, and thus were all AHY birds. Wood's age classification would have to be modified for this area to read Jan.-June (or later) AHY, July-Dec. U.

Table 1 lists the following measurements for these birds: tarsal length of right leg in mm, chord of right wing in mm, right outer rectrix in mm, and length x width of black cap in mm.

The chord length and length of the black cap are used in the Wood key, which, as modified by Sheppard and Klimkiewicz, reads as follows:

1. . . . age: Jan-May (June in Alta) AHY, June (July in Alta)-Dec. U — 2
2. Crown with complete black cap (more than 11 mm long, front to back): Male — 3.
- 2B. Black cap absent or restricted to about 8 mm or less in length; M — wing chord greater than 57; F — wing chord less than 54.
- 2C. Crown black, more than 11 mm and with greenish feather edges, Aug.-Dec. HY-M.
- 3A. Incubation patch: Female.
- 3B. Cloacal protuberance: Male.

As seen in Table 1, all caps were well over 11 mm in length, showing that this is definitely a characteristic of males in this part of their range. The wing chord criterion appears to be less reliable. Only one of the 23 males in the sample measured less than 54 mm, the dividing line to designate female, but four more are less than 57 mm (all 55 mm), and another 6 are 57 mm, thus technically not keyable by this criterion. The one female met both criteria in the key.

The above data were collected when the author was working for Peregrine Research & Documentation Ltd., in contract with the Alberta Provincial Parks.

Table 1. Measurements (in mm) of Alberta Wilson's Warblers

Band	Sex	Tarsal	Chord	Rectrix	Cap dimensions
06	M	18	58	48	14 x 12
06	M	19	58	51	16 x 14
07	M	19	57	41	"full"
08	M	19	58	49	14 x 15
09	M	19	57	48	"full"
10	M	20	59	50	15 x 12
11	M	20	58	49	17 x 14
12	M	19	55	49	18 x 12
13	M	19	57	52	16 x 12
15	M	19	59	52	19 x 12
17	M	19	55	49	13 x 12
18	M	19	58	44	17 x 14
20	M	19	58	49	15 x 11
24	M	20	59	46	14 x 16
26	M	20	57	49	17 x 11
27	M	20	55	48	17 x 12
29	M	19	58	48	16 x 11
31	M	20	59	51	18 x 11
32	M	19	57	52	18 x 13
34	F	19	53	49	no cap
36	M	19	53	50	16 x 09
38	M	19	55	51	15 x 12
39	M	20	57	48	16 x 14
43	M	19	61	53	14 x 11.5

Literature cited

Salt, W.R. 1954. The structure of the cloacal protuberance of the Vesper Sparrow and certain other passerine birds. *Auk* 71: 64-73.

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Wood, M. 1969. A Bird-Bander's guide to determination of age and sex of selected species. Pennsylvania State University.

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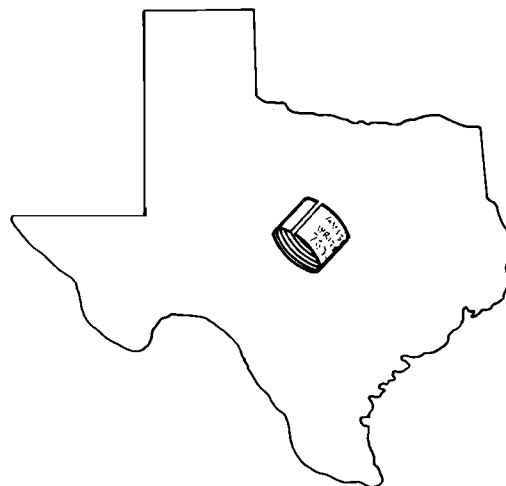
Texas Bird Banding Association

At the spring, 1977, meeting of the Texas Ornithological Society, a group of Texas banders formed the Texas Bird Banding Association. Quoting from Vol. 1, No. 1 of *The Texas Bander*:

The idea conceived by Dr. Keith Arnold (Texas A & M) and Dr. Ralph Moldenhauer (Sam Houston State Univ.), was brought to fruition by Dr. Moldenhauer. The concept was tested first in a mailing of questionnaires to those listed as banders in Texas by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. According to that list, 163 people were licensed to band in the state. Dr. Moldenhauer sent questionnaires to 155 of those listed. Eight did not have a full address as listed by the U.S.F.&W.S. Of those sent, 6 were returned without forwarding address. Of the remaining 149, there were 46 responses. This newsletter is being sent to all respondents and those in attendance at the meeting. Two people were indifferent about the idea, 16 were happy with the status quo, and 34 were in favor of forming a state body. In addition, 8 people attending the meeting were not recipients of a questionnaire. Two of these have permits; the other 6 are interested non-banders.

The meeting was led by Dr. Moldenhauer. Kelly Bryan presented slides and a short talk on some banding work at Sam Houston State Univ. This was followed by a discussion on the purpose and mechanics of organization.

Included in the discussion was an overview of the results of the questionnaire: 20 would like to meet concurrently with TOS (Texas Ornithological Society), 11 preferred independent meetings and five showed no preference; 8 preferred meeting twice a year, 11 preferred once, 17 showed no preference, and 29 said they would attend according to time and means; 36 were interested in receiving a newsletter, 33 would pay modest dues, and 29 would contribute material; 16 were also members of TOS, 10 showed affiliation with NEBBA, 12 with IBBA, 7 with EBBA, and 2 with WBBA.



Drs. Arnold and Moldenhauer were elected Co-Chairmen of TBBA. Tony Gallucci was appointed Newsletter editor, and Kelly Bryan was appointed chairman of the Workshop Committee.

The following decisions were made concerning mechanics of TBBA: There will be two yearly meetings in conjunction with TOS including possibly workshops and paper sessions; newsletter to be issued four times yearly, post-season; \$2.00 dues to cover printing of newsletter and postage.

The following people were present at the April meeting: John Ribble, John Arvin, Frances Williams, Tony Gallucci, Sumner Dana, Gladys Donohue, Steven P. Lewis, Michael W. Hoke, Morgan Jones, Alan Mitchnick, David Blankinship, Ralph Moldenhauer, Marlene Moldenhauer, Kelly Bryan, Phillip Kmiecik, and John Ford.

Dr. Moldenhauer requests that dues be sent to him at Department of Life Science, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX 77340. He would also like input from all those joining on their concept of how TBBA should function — a statement of purpose and ideas of policies TBBA might adopt.