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News, Notes, Comments

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Banded American Wigeon in Great Horned Owl nest

C. Stuart Houston

Although I have visited well over 1500 nests of the Great Horned Owl, (*Bubo virginianus*), nearly all found by my loyal farmer friends, I continue to have new experiences. In 1981 the Great Horned Owls were at the peak of their 10-year cycle (Houston, C.S. 1975. Reproductive performance of Great Horned Owls in Saskatchewan. *Bird Banding* 46:302-304.) All known pairs were breeding, only 7 pairs failed for various reasons, and I was able to band a record 407 flightless young.

The 3 nests found in 1981 by Jim Olah near Watrous, Saskatchewan (51° 40'N, 105° 20'W) were of special interest because of the generous supply of uneaten food in each nest when visited on 16 May 1981. One nest contained 3 big fat Northern Pocket Gophers (*Thomomys talpoides*) and a Long-tailed Weasel (*Mustela frenata*); 1 contained 2 pocket gophers, a Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*), and a Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Pedioecetes phasianellus*); the 3rd contained 3 pocket gophers and the uneaten hind end of an American Wigeon (*Anas americana*).

Upland game remains are surprisingly uncommon in Great Horned Owl nests in Saskatchewan and this was only the 5th occurrence for Sharp-tailed Grouse. Various water birds are common items and this was the 10th occurrence for the American Wigeon, among visible food remains in owl nests during 21 seasons.

The exciting difference, on this banding day, was the presence of a somewhat worn band, 876-42064, on the wigeon. The banding office informed me that it had been banded on 22 February 1978 as an adult male on the Delta-Breton National Wildlife Refuge, near the tip of the Mississippi River delta, about 10 miles east of Venice, Louisiana (29° 10'N and 89° 10'W).

This is within the known wintering range of the wigeon I have banded in Saskatchewan, west of Yorkton (51° 10'N and 102° 30'W) and east of Saskatoon (52° 00'N, 106° 20'W). From 85 wigeon banded, I have had 5 recoveries in Saskatchewan, 1 each from Manitoba, North Dakota, and Minnesota and 6 from their wintering grounds: Back Bay, Virginia on 3 November; 25 miles southeast of Lake Charles, Louisiana on 1 December; near Quanah, Texas on 16 November; near Barahoa, Dominican Republic on 25 December; 20 miles north-

east of Navajoa, Sonora, Mexico on 18 February. All but 3 of the 14 recoveries were within a year of banding, but the Dominican Republic recovery was at 1 year, the Texas recovery at 3 years, and the Mexico recovery at 11½ years.

Encounters

Rock Sandpiper. N359666 (U.S.S.R.). Banded as AHY-M by P. Tomkovich, Uelen, Chukotski Peninsula, USSR on 15 July 1978. Shot at the mouth of the Tutakoke River, Yukon Delta, Alaska, on 29 August 1980. Also seen at the Yukon Delta site in 1979 and 1980 were three other Rock Sandpipers color-banded by Mr. Tomkovich at Uelen during 1979 and 1980.

Black-capped Chickadee. 1440-68918. Banded at Sorrento, Maine on 30 September 1980. Encountered 3 miles (5 km) south of Rector, Pennsylvania, 11 November 1980. This was a southwesterly movement of 750+ miles (1200 km) in 42 days.

Color-marked Bald Eagles

As part of a continuing study of Bald Eagles in Wyoming, nestling and wintering immature Bald Eagles are being color-marked with patagial markers. Your help in sighting and reporting these birds will be greatly appreciated.

The eagles are marked with blue markers on the left wing and green on the right. The letter "E" followed by 2 numbers is written in black letters on both markers. All eagles are banded with U.S.F.W.S. bands and some carry radio transmitters on their backs (nestlings) or tails (wintering immatures). These eagles can be expected to be seen in Colorado, Wyoming, northern Utah, eastern Idaho, Montana, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, and perhaps areas peripheral to these.

If any of these eagles are sighted, please note exact location of the sighting; date and time of the sighting; colors and positions of the markers; marker letter and numbers; any other information you believe is pertinent.

Please telephone Alan Jenkins collect at 303-234-2126 (also the FTS number) as soon as possible. A letter detailing this information should be sent to the Bird Banding Laboratory with a copy to M. Alan Jenkins, Federal Center, Bldg. 16, Denver, CO 80225, USA.