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North American Bird Bander

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Western Regional News

Western Bird Banding Association

Founded 1925

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Applications for membership in the Western Bird Banding Association should be sent to the Treasurer. All classes of membership receive *North American Bird Bander*. Membership classifications are: Active Member, \$8.00 per year; Associate Member, \$8.00 per year; Sustaining Member, \$16.00 per year; Student Member, \$6.00 per year; Non-Subscribing Member, \$3.00 per year; Life Member, \$200.00. Outside the U.S., postage must be added to each membership except Life Member.

From the President

In recent years, there has been a welcome trend towards emphasis on "quality" of banding, i.e. banding for a specific purpose rather than banding purely for the sake of ringing birds' legs with aluminum, or what the late William Rowan dubbed "picnic banding." I have always believed that banders should have specific goals in mind when they start a banding project rather than some vague idea that their banded birds may someday turn up somewhere. But I have also not welcomed the interpretation of this concept that banders should avoid general banding or netting, because such activity can form a major portion of studies of a specific area. I was thus pleased to read an editorial by Terry Oatley in the 1981 issue of *Safring News*, a banding journal for South Africa, calling for more banders, including those whose activities are concentrated in the back garden.

Similarly, Steve Wendt in a June 1982 publication of Canadian Wildlife Administration, called for an increase in banding in Canada and encouragement of intensive local banding efforts, such as conducted at Long Point, Kingston, and the ravines of Toronto — all in Ontario. I am sure that all readers will recognize the potential data return of such intensive efforts, exemplified in the West by Point Reyes Bird Observatory in California. Dave Hussell and his co-workers at Long Point have shown how such data may be used in migration monitoring. However, the value of such long-term localized efforts need not be restricted to major observatory efforts. Prof. W. Ray Salt found the long-term "back yard banding" data base of Edgar T. Jones in Edmonton extremely useful in documenting migration patterns of vireos and wood warblers in Alberta when he (Salt) wrote a book on these birds in that province. Similar data on other species in Eddie's notebooks remain to be tapped, and I am sure that such long-term data exist in many other banding households.

Thus, although banders should have some goal(s) in mind whenever a net or trap is put in place, general banding over a long period of time can furnish valuable data provided that these data are eventually published. In my next message, I shall consider general banding as a tool in inventory studies.

Speaking of publishing, my room-mate's cat, Blanche, reminded me to reiterate Charlie Collins' frequent plea to researchers to publish in NABB details of trapping techniques, successful or otherwise. On a rainy day after my return from our meeting in Logan, Utah, I heard a great commotion in our dining room. An investigation revealed Blanche with a completely unharmed Starling in his mouth. So, a new method of catching Starlings appears to be to persuade them to fly down chimneys, waking up any resident cat who may be present, and hoping the cat doesn't eat the bird before you band and release it. Well, I am pleased to see that more practical techniques are being published in NABB and look forward to seeing more such papers in future issues.

On my way to Logan last April, I took a detour to Victoria on Vancouver Island, during which time I visited Ray Salt. Besides his work on Alberta birds mentioned above, Ray is well known to banders for his work on cloacal protuberance in passerines — work that led to a highly useful sex determination technique for banders to employ. I am pleased to announce that Ray has agreed to write the commentary for our 1982 annual report.

Finally, I must remind WBBA members to plan to visit New Mexico next May and attend our annual meeting, to be held jointly with the Cooper Ornithological Society. EBBA and IBBA members are also most welcome!

Martin K. McNicholl

Worksheets for western birds

Ageing/Sexing worksheets for western birds are mailed as published with NABB, to Western Bird Banding Association members only. They are, however, available to anyone interested. For each worksheet desired, send 25 cents (or \$1.00 for any five worksheets) to Mrs. Donald F. Radke, P.O. Box 446, Cave Creek, AZ 85331.

The following species sheets have been issued: Merlin, Harris' Hawk, Scaled Quail, California Quail, Gambel's Quail, Mountain Quail, Common Snipe, Band-tailed

Pigeon, key to kingbirds, Eastern Kingbird, Tropical Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Cassin's Kingbird, Myarchis flycatchers, Violet-green Swallow, Tree Swallow, Yellow-billed Magpie, Roadrunner, Clark's Nutcracker, Verdin, Bushtit, Varied Thrush, gnatcatchers, Orange-crowned Warbler, waterthrushes, Oporornis warblers, Tricolored Blackbird, Western Tanager, Summer Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Cassin's Finch, American Goldfinch, Lesser Goldfinch, towhees, White-crowned Sparrow.