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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, \$10.00 per year; Sustaining Member, \$20.00 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

North American banders are accustomed to quickly consulting the bird banding manual for recommended band size whenever a bird with which they have had little or no previous banding experience comes to hand. A major review of band sizes recommended for birds in southern Africa is given by T.B. Oatley (*Safring News* 11:62-66, 1982). Oatley lists about four pages of species for which he either considers the size listed in their manual to be inappropriate or for which no size had previously been listed!

But, we should not be too complacent. When I was studying Arctic Terns with Roger Evans at Churchill, Manitoba in 1967, we found that the bands were too large for the chicks, a problem that Jeremy J. Hatch on the east coast has also mentioned to me. We were studying growth rates and easily overcame the problem by using temporary felt-pen markings. Those researchers needing more permanent markings have sometimes used small patagial tags on chicks, but in no case should a smaller size band be used on a chick that will later outgrow it. I encountered the opposite problem in Alberta, where the recommended band size was too small for some Evening Grosbeaks (*NABB* 2:55, 164-165, 1977). In this case, some of the birds had legs swollen from disease, but there also appeared to be a population difference in size—a point still needing further study. Bluebird trail operators in some parts of western North America report, from time to time in *Silalia*, an apparent population difference in size of Mountain Bluebirds, based on ease at entering the nest box; I wonder if this affects band size locally in this species, too. The legs of some extremely old male Blue Grouse occasionally

outgrow their band size on Vancouver Island, according to observations of Fred C. Zwickel, although this is by no means common even in the older birds there. Banders should be alert to such age, population or disease-caused differences in appropriate band sizes, and communicate them to other banders through the pages of the banding journals.

At the WBBA annual meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1983, the board decided to publish an important compilation and review of bird weights for North American species by John B. Dunning, Jr. A committee is working on production and marketing plans, and members should watch for an announcement on availability of this new research aid. We believe that Dunning's compilation will serve as a standard reference source for many years and hope that it will also stimulate publication of additional data, ranging from improving the sample size for some species to noting geographical or other variation in others. Even some common species still need further work.

I hope to see many WBBA members at the 1984 annual meeting in California. Members should have received their notices by now in a separate mailing. Banders not able to join us this year should reserve June 1985 for our meeting to be held in Colorado, probably shortly before the 6-10 June joint meeting of the Cooper and Wilson Ornithological Societies. A former WBBA president, Ronald A. Ryder, has generously agreed to serve as our host. Exact times and place will be announced when they are available, but circle your calendars now!

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, Black-chinned Hummingbird, key to kingbirds, Eastern Kingbird, Tropical Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Cassin's Kingbird, *Myarchis* flycatchers, Violet-green Swallow, Tree Swallow, Yellow-billed Magpie, Road-

runner, 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.

