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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

In his commentary on the WBBA annual report elsewhere in this issue, Professor Emeritus W. Ray Salt expresses concern for the future of amateur banding in North America. In his view, the current requirement for specific studies may discourage many amateurs from continuing or starting to band.

In earlier messages, I have pointed out that long-term station-specific studies, including backyard efforts, can constitute a legitimate research project if designed to determine and monitor trends in a specific area, and also that banding activities can provide a helpful tool in inventory studies of poorly known areas. Many amateurs also conduct major studies on a particular species or group of species in their own vicinity, such as the classic Song Sparrow work of the late Margaret Morse Nice and the more recent Cactus Wren studies of the Andersons. Others may involve wider areas, such as C. Stuart Houston's long-term banding studies of Great Horned Owls and other raptors all over Saskatchewan and Ray Salt's own raptor studies, especially of Ferruginous Hawks, in southern Alberta in the 1930s and 1940s.

Amateurs also tend to form the core of such cooperative efforts as the bluebird trails found in many parts of the continent, and which usually involve banders. Another role that can be played by the amateur observer is suggested by the growing number of observers involved in various types of census, survey, and atlas studies. As suggested by several authors in the volume on estimating numbers of terrestrial birds reviewed in the last issue of *NAAB* (8:25-27, 1983), banding is important in checking the accuracy of census/survey methods. Excellent examples of banding checks on census methods have also appeared recently in *NABB* 7:150-151, 1982 and *Wilson Bull.* 95:276-280, 1983, based on studies in Arizona and Texas respectively. Finally, for amateurs with little access to suitable areas or little inclination for analysis, there may be the opportunity to take part in the activities of a bird observatory, nature center, or other co-ordinated effort, provided, of course, that the bander lives near such a facility. The role of the amateur bander may well be shifting, but as in all areas of field ornithology, the amateur will continue to play a pivotal role in banding on this continent and elsewhere.

Increasing costs and decreasing funds have been hitting private organizations badly throughout the continent, and WBBA is no exception. At our annual meeting, we

were informed that we are now running on a deficit budget. Thus, the WBBA board reluctantly voted to raise dues, subject to agreement of IBBA. EBBA had taken similar action shortly before us. If our recommendation is approved by IBBA, the new dues rate structure (for 1984) will appear on the organizational page opposite this message or in the next issue of *NABB*. In addition to raising regular membership and institutional fees, there will be no separate rate for Associate or Student categories. The raise in fees will not balance the budget completely. Members can help overcome this problem in at least 6 ways: (1) renew your dues promptly; (2) consider paying higher membership categories; (3) consider making a tax-deductible donation either to WBBA generally or to a specific cause (e.g., *NABB*, student award); (4) encourage non-WBBA banders, ornithologists and other naturalists in our territory to join; (5) encourage local libraries, including those of institutions to subscribe; and (6) encourage book publishers, trap manufacturers, binocular dealers, and other appropriate businesses to advertise in *NABB*.

NABB continues to be a high quality journal, largely to the credit of the hard work of the three editors. But editors cannot edit without material, and all members are again reminded to consider publishing at least one paper from each banding project in *NABB*. Readers of the annual report will see a significant change next year, as the report form has been revised to correspond to the many changes in the 6th edition of the American Ornithologists' Union checklist. Thanks to Steve Ervin, Steve Russell, and Phil Walters for their efforts in revising the form. WBBA currently lacks an historian, as Barbara McKnight has stepped down from this position. I would be pleased to hear from any WBBA member who would be willing to take over this task, and prepare notes on WBBA history for *NABB*.

The 1984 WBBA annual meeting has been scheduled for Easter weekend, 20-22 April. Michael Rigney is preparing to host us at the South San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory on Friday and Saturday, and Dave DeSante will show us facilities at Point Reyes Bird Observatory on Sunday. Members will receive a meeting announcement in the mail, but be sure to mark your calendars now, and don't miss this chance to visit two major observatories in the company of fellow banders.

Martin K. McNicholl