

1986

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Inland Regional News

Including the
Inland Bird Banding
Newsletter

Volume 8, No. 1
January 1986

Inland Bird Banding Association

Founded 1922

IBBA/MBBA Conference Well Attended

Inland Bird Banding Association and Michigan Bird Banders Association held a joint meeting at Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan, October 25-27, 1985. Attendance was 106 from eleven states and one Canadian province.

Those attending were:

ILLINOIS: Karl Bartel*, Carolyn and Peter* Dring, Ed* and Evelyn Franks, Dorothy Flentge*, Nancy and Terry* Ingram; **INDIANA:** Helen Hitchings*, Emma Pitcher*, Henry* and Wilma West, Dea and Clayton* Wiggins; **IOWA:** Don* and Elaine* Johnson, Peter Petersen*, Gil Sandvick; **MARYLAND:** Chan Robbins*, Dan Bystrak; **MICHIGAN:** Ray* and Pat Adams, Ted Black, Curtis Bradburn, Rick Campbell, Art Carpenter* Tom Carpenter*, Lynn Ellen Catt, Ellie* and Howard Cox, Nancy DeBoer, Susan Doehlert, Tim Endlein, John* and Cathy Flora, Jim* and Diana Fowler, Chip* and Julie Francke, Orin Gelderloos*, Leonard Graf, Jim Granlund, John* and Katherine Ham, Mike Hayes, Dan Hayes, Tom Heatley, Evert Horton*, Mary Hurd, Mike Kielb, Joe Komorowski*, Warren* and Dorothy Lamb, John Marshall, Dan* and Jean McGeen, Gail McPeak, Grover Niergarth*, Tim Norwicki, Tom Olkowski*, Ed Pike*, Dave Powell*, Dan and Julie Rabb, Bob and Marjorie Rogers,

Dick Rinesmith, Bill Scharf*, Norman Sloan*, Tim Smart, Gordon Synder, Dave Stimac, Dennis Tar, John Van Orman*, Edie Van Orman, Jim Wheeler, Dick Wolinski*; **MINNESOTA:** Donald Beimborn*; **NEBRASKA:** Jane Dunlap*, Alan Grenon, Betty Grenon*, John* and Willetta* Lueshen; **OHIO:** Ralph Dexter*, Dan* and Marilyn Kramer, Lee and Mrs. Mitchell, Richard* and Violet Phillips, Holmes* and Marcella Smith, Lydia Sommer*, Carol* and Jim Tveekrem; **OKLAHOMA:** Frederick and Marguerite* Baumgartner, Donald Varner*; **PENNSYLVANIA:** Joe ImBrogo*; **WISCONSIN:** Vincent Bauldry*, Bernie Brouchoud*, Noel Cutright*, Charles Kemper*, Ed* and Jeannette* Peartree, Carol Rudy*; **ONTARIO, CANADA:** Wayne Ferguson*, Nigel Shaw.

*IBBA Member

| State | A | B | State & Prov. | A | B |
|-----------|----|----|---------------|----|---|
| Illinois | 8 | 5 | Nebraska | 5 | 4 |
| Indiana | 6 | 4 | Ohio | 12 | 6 |
| Iowa | 4 | 3 | Oklahoma | 3 | 2 |
| Maryland | 2 | 1 | Pennsylvania | 1 | 1 |
| Michigan | 57 | 21 | Wisconsin | 7 | 7 |
| Minnesota | 1 | 1 | Ontario | 2 | 1 |

Total present = 106; total IBBA members present = 56

Column A = Number registered

Column B = Number of IBBA members registered

Petersen calls for papers

Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, Iowa 52803, chairman of the IBBA annual conference requests that anyone wishing to present a paper or workshop at the meeting, please submit to him a brief abstract, plus title, name(s) and address(es) of author(s), give time required, and list audio-visual needs.

The conference will be held at the Deere-Wiman House in Moline, Illinois, October 3-5, 1986. Those attending are asked to arrange for their own housing. A list of motels, available camping facilities, and other information is available from Peter Petersen.

Dr. H. Elliott McClure of Camarillo, California, author of *Bird Banding*, will deliver the address at the annual banquet October 4th.



From left, 1st Vice President John Flora, President Don Varner, Willetta Lueshen, Editor, Ed Franks, Member of the Board, and Holmes Smith, Treasurer (back to camera) discuss IBBA business. (Photo by D. Beimborn)

Papers Presented on Many Subjects

The IBBA/MBBA conference papers sessions were presented on Saturday October 26, 1985. A brief summary of each is presented here.

The Use of Avian Sero-surveys for the Detection of St. Louis Encephalitis Virus Activity in Lucas County, Ohio, 1981-1984, by Lee Mitchell. The author discussed the epidemiology of St. Louis Encephalitis in Ohio, explaining that encephalitis outbreaks occur at approximately 10 year intervals and affect people mostly over age 50. The last epidemic occurred in 1975. The virus, which is transmitted by mosquitos (*Culex pipiens*) affects both humans and birds. His study attempted to determine the prevalence of the disease in birds. House Sparrows were collected in different locations each day and tested by drawing a four-tenths ml. blood sample from a vein in each bird's neck with a small needle. Blood analyses indicated that during epidemics 38.5% of the birds tested had been exposed to the virus, but in non-epidemic years the rate was less than .15%.

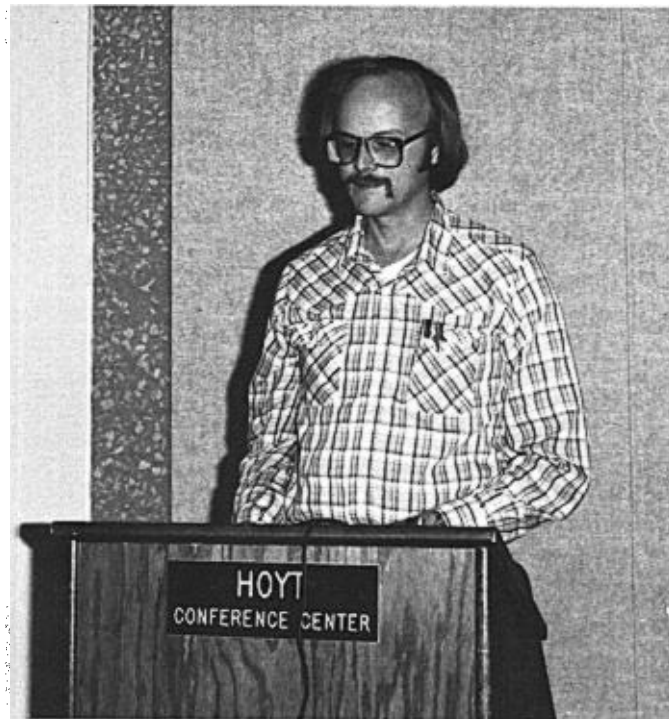
Spring Migration Pattern of Sharp-shinned Hawks Passing Whitefish Point, Michigan, by Tom Carpenter. The Sharp-shin migration occurs in April and May, peaking during the first week of May for AHY (after hatching year) birds and SY (second year) females; SY males peak later. The birds are aged by plumage, since eye color sometimes does not change. Sex is determined by size. Second encounter data were presented showing age-sex ratios, locations and seasons of encounters. Twenty percent of their banded birds have returned, all were females except one.

In Pursuit of the House Finch, by Ellie Cox. Using color banding techniques, the author documented the invasion of the House Finch into the Detroit area during the years 1982-1984; explained the difficulties involved in locating and capturing the birds; and described her trapping and study techniques. She also illustrated the differences between this bird and the Purple Finch.

Update on the Status of Piping Plover in Michigan, by Ed Pike. An alarming decline was reported in the numbers of this rare shorebird in its last significant breeding population on the Great Lakes. Only 19 pairs now remain in all of Michigan. His banding efforts revealed that neither the breeding adults nor the young birds return to the same area the following year; instead new adults come in from other areas. Human interference, Ring-billed Gull predation, and bad weather were significant factors in the population decline, and closing nesting areas to people would probably be beneficial to the birds' nesting success.

Woodpeckers—'Real Birds', by Emma Pitcher. This slide presentation featured all the woodpecker species native to the Midwest, and illustrated the differences among the species as well as the characteristics of each age and sex category. Mrs. Pitcher's beautiful photographs are a fine review of woodpecker ageing and sexing techniques for all banders.

Longevity of Selected Species from a 50-Year File, by Marguerite Baumgartner. During her 50 years of banding, Mrs. Baumgartner has spent at least 10 years banding in each of three locations, giving her the chance to compile a great deal of longevity data on several species. Including only those birds that are either summer or winter residents, she tabulated survival ratios from return data on the most abundant species she encountered in Wisconsin and Oklahoma.



Dan Bystrak gives report from banding lab.

(Photo by P. Dring)

Report from the Bird Banding Laboratory, by Dan Bystrak. The Banding Laboratory continues to improve its computers and should soon be able to handle non-game data more quickly as well as being able to issue better reports. Cooperation with foreign countries is the order of the day, with Latin American and Chinese banders coming here to study our methods for use in their own countries. Last year's aerosol marking of Purple Martins in Brazil resulted in 29 recoveries of marked birds in the United States. He also reports that the Laboratory is out of several sizes of bands and stressed that banders must anticipate their needs, and order bands well in advance of the time they will be needed.

When Both Return as Nesting Birds in a Colony, Change of Nesting Site and Change of Mates of Chimney Swifts, by Ralph Dexter. This extremely well organized paper resulted from studies of Chimney Swifts since 1944 in ventilator shafts at Kent State University in Ohio. Return data indicates that 82% of the birds return to the same shaft to nest each year, and that 84% remain mated to the same bird, demonstrating that Chimney Swifts exhibit a high degree of nest site tenacity and mate fidelity.

Indigo Bunting Song Learning and Breeding Biology in Southern Michigan, by Susan Doehlert. Bob Payne coordinated this banding project near Pickny, Michigan at the E. S. George Wildlife Reserve. Over 2,000 Indigo Bunting nests were located and 1,623 nestlings were banded, as well as their parents, in an effort to study why and how song patterns are passed from one generation to the next. Trapping and identification techniques were also explained, and some interesting plumage variations noted, including an all blue female. Sonograms were recorded in order to study song variations, and it was discovered that the young male learns his song from a nearby neighbor, and therefore, retains that song throughout his lifetime.



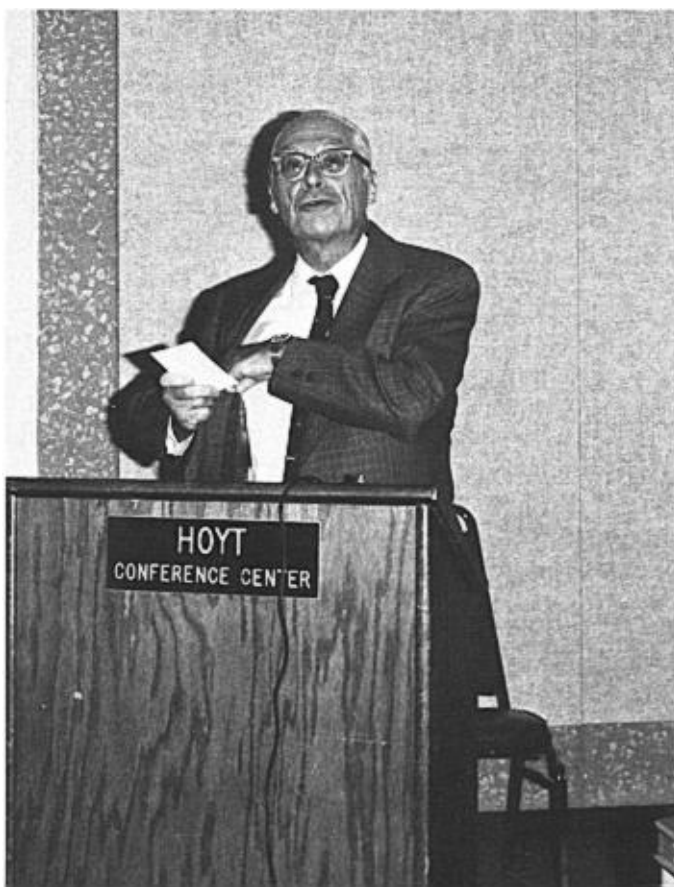
Chan Robbins delivers address at annual dinner.

(Photo by P. Dring)

Winter movements of Snow Buntings, by Wayne Ferguson. Despite frigid winter weather conditions, these researchers used ground traps to capture and band large numbers of Snow Buntings in the open fields of Ontario, north of Toronto. Red, green, yellow, and blue dye applied to the birds enabled observers to trace their movements during the winter, and long distance band recoveries were also reported. Unfortunately, many birds are not returning because the birds are still being killed and eaten in parts of Canada, so complete migration patterns are yet unknown.

Territory Size in the Barn Swallow, by Richard Wolinski. In order to determine whether this colonial species maintains and defends territories, Mr. Wolinski mapped the barn, indicating the nesting sites of all swallows using the building; then recorded the territorial interactions between birds. The light tail spots were dyed in various color combinations so that individual birds could be identified. Several interesting nesting preferences were discovered during the course of the study: Barn Swallows prefer to use barns with livestock, they don't like to use outside walls, and do not have any preference about darkness. The night roosting place of the males was not discovered.

Carol Rudy, W3866 Hwy. H. Chilton, WI 53014



Ralph Dexter reports on Chimney Swift studies.

(Photo by P. Dring)



Nigel Shaw, left, Wayne Ferguson, and Jan Hinshaw study tray of Snow Buntings at museum. (Photo by D. Beimbom)



Carol Rudy, Secretary and Noel Cutright, 2nd Vice President, scan skies for birds. (Photo by D. Beimbom)

Martin D. Floyd, 414 East 11th Street, Crowley, Louisiana 70526 reports his 1985 banding as follows: Carolina Chickadee, 1; Northern Cardinal, 4; White-throated Sparrow, 2; Brown Thrasher, 2; and Northern Mockingbird, 1.

Editor's Note: All members are urged to send to the editor, banding totals, highlights, returns, recoveries, and accounts of interesting or unusual events in 1985. Send to Editor, Willetta Lueshen, R. 2, Box 26, Wisner, Nebraska 68791.

Returns reported by Snow

After 37 years of banding birds, I have decided to tell about some of my Returns. The first and most interesting was a white-crowned Sparrow which was color-banded in January, 1948. It returned with the snow for eight successive years and sang on the window shelf feeder.

Several Northern Cardinals have repeated and returned, as well as Carolina Chickadees. These I have always considered permanent residents, as I have them repeat and return all seasons of the year. However Northern Cardinal #61-133336, banded 12 June 1974 returned on 8 April 1984. I do not know whether it had been away all these years, but it was the only time that I re-trapped it.

A male Northern Cardinal #61-133329 banded 14 January 1974 returned 22 May 1980 and again on 22 May 1984.

A female Northern Cardinal #66-197290 banded 25 April 1980, laid an egg in the Potter-type trap 21 May 1980. It returned on 25 July 1981, and again on 22 May 1984.

Three other Northern Cardinals have returned for five years. Several Carolina Chickadees have repeated and returned for as many as four years, and one for seven years.

Others have returned for at least one, and several for two years. These are White-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, American Robin, House Wren, Slate-colored Junco, American Goldfinch, Indigo Bunting, White-throated Sparrow, Downy Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher, Common Grackle, and Song Sparrow.

My only Foreign Retrap was a Slate-colored Junco, which I recovered live on 7 April 1965. It was banded 15 April 1963 in Escanaba, Michigan, by Mr. and Mrs. Taylor.

A female Rufous-sided Towhee banded 12 July 1964 was banded in Alexandria, Indiana by J. C. Carpenter, and was recovered by me 16 June 1965 while nesting on my property.

A Myrtle Warbler banded 16 October 1973 was recovered in Ironwood, Michigan 26 September 1974.

This is my first year for banding the House Finch. As to date (1 September 1985) I have banded two pairs and two young, and presume I will band more, as they seem to be here to stay.

But now, at the age of 83 (September 10), I think I will make this my last year of banding. I have had a busy and interesting life and bird banding has been a very challenging part of it.

Mabelle M. Snow (Permit #6833), 2211 Chester Blvd., Richmond, Indiana 47374.

Lines from a Country home

Birding vacation spots are "plenty as blackberries," but in late August the magnetism of Manitoba's Interlake region lured us to this great birding area for the umpteenth time.

The Interlake area is that portion of the prairie pothole basin lying between Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. Much of the area is marshland and wetland that has been drained for farming.

Here in northeast Nebraska we have no marshes, so we (my husband, John, and I) are fascinated by the life in the wetlands. This is also the time of year that birds begin to move down from the bush and the tundra, stopping in the marshes to rest and feed on their southward migration.

In the Interlake there are numerous public places where one might go to see birds, many of which are described in *A Bird-Finding Guide to Canada*, edited by J. C. Finlay, and published by Hurtig. We have visited many of these places, but this year we made our first visit to Oak Hammock. (It shall not be the last.)

Within a broad lowland area known as St. Andrew's Bog, about 15 miles north of Winnipeg, there existed for many years a remnant marsh which was a small but attractive retreat for waterfowl and other birds. This site is now part of the nearly 9,000-acre Oak Hammock Wildlife Management Area embracing both marsh and upland habitat. More than 250 species have been observed here, with 105 known to have nested.

Acquisition and development of the area is a cooperative undertaking between Ducks Unlimited of Canada and Manitoba Department of Mines, Resources, and Environmental Management. Joint efforts by private and public sectors are rare.

It was a warm, quiet day in late August when we drove to Oak Hammock. On either side of the long road into headquarters, we noted the lure crops, wheat and rape, or Canola, as the Canadian farmer prefers to call it. Lure crops are planted to attract waterfowl, cranes, blackbirds, and other birds, away from the farmer's crops.

Headquarters is built on one of several large mounds created in the marsh. The mounds and dikes give the bird-watcher excellent vantage points throughout the area.

As we explored the grounds at headquarters we discovered a boardwalk built just above the marsh. The handrails were draped with alders and willows that seemed to be alive with birds. They frequently came into full view only a few feet from our eyes.

We slowly and quietly moved down the walk stopping frequently to look and listen. It was an unusually quiet day and birds were active. Whisper songs could be heard all

about us. Warblers and flycatchers were plentiful. Once we heard a splash of water at our feet and looked down to see a Sora come walking out of the marsh, onto the boardwalk to the other side, and drop in among the vegetation again. Young Song Sparrows being fed by parents entertained us for a long time. They sat on the handrail begging for handouts.

At the end of the 330 yard boardwalk was a large mound where we climbed to view the waterfowl in the open marsh. There we saw four species of grebes, and many, many ducks. Hours slipped by as we sat in comfort, absorbing the warm friendly sunshine and watching the activities in the marsh before us.

As we left at the end of the day, we wished for a longer day, and made plans for a visit to Oak Hammock again next year.

Editor Sloan Hospitalized

Norman F. Sloan, Houghton, Michigan, who is editor of North American Bird Bander, suffered a stroke in mid-February. At press time (March 5) his condition had stabilized. During Dr. Sloan's illness manuscripts and other mail pertaining to the journal may be sent to President Don Varner, Route 1, Box 1, Welling, Oklahoma 77471.

Willetta Lueshen

A BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, band #1580-73307, banded at the J. C. Hormel Nature Center, Austin, Minnesota, on 02-17-81, as U/U (age and sex unknown), was recaptured 11-14-85. Elapsed time is four years, nine months. There were no previous recaptures. Band showed little wear. The individual was at least five years, five months old.

Vincent E. Shay, P.O. Box 673, Austin, Mn 55912.

Cowbird Returns after 16 Years

On May 17, 1985 I took a banded Brown-headed Cowbird wearing band number 55-135538, from the mist net. I recognized the band as one of mine, probably used a few years ago, since 1-A is my least frequently used size.

After examining the bird and noting that it was in apparent good shape, I released it and went to my records to find the banding date, which was May 30, 1969, sixteen years ago! Since the bird was banded as an after-hatching-year, male (AHY-M), it was at least seventeen years old when recaptured and released.

The Encyclopedia of North American Birds, by John K. Terres, lists the oldest Brown-headed cowbird as thirteen years, ten months (Kennard, 1975) and therefore, this bird's age surpasses the record listed by Kennard.

Carl L. Strelitzer, 3266 S. 91st St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53227

Baumgartner Receives Certificate

After fifty years of banding birds, A. Marguerite Baumgartner, a member of Inland Bird Banding Association, was presented a Certificate of Appreciation at the annual banquet held at Ypsilanti, Michigan, October 26, 1985.

When studying Tree Sparrows, their winter flocking and territorial behavior, Marguerite Heydweiller Baumgartner began banding under a sub-permit with the late Dr. Arthur A. Allen, Cornell University, Department of Ornithology.

She developed a feather-marking technique, which she used when studying Tree Sparrows on their nesting ground at Churchill, Manitoba. For two years Marguerite studied nesting habitat and banded nestlings.

In 1935 Marguerite received her doctorate in ornithology, the second woman to do so. In the same year, when leaving the university and Dr. Allen, she applied for and received her own Master Permit, #5199.

In 1936 she and Frederick Baumgartner, who also received his doctorate at Cornell University were married. While rearing four children, she did only desultory banding, but in 1947, when they purchased a rural home north of Stillwater, Oklahoma, she began serious banding as a research and teaching tool. Much of her banding was Harris' Sparrows, which gave her the background for writing a section on the Harris' Sparrow, along with the Tree Sparrow, for *Life Histories of North American Birds: Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Finches, Sparrows, and Allies*, by A. C. Bent.

Frederick left Oklahoma State University at Stillwater, in 1965, to take a position at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Again the Baumgartners purchased a home in the country. Here she soon developed an obsession with northern finches, and was impressed with the abundance of nesting Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Each spring for nearly 20 years, Marguerite taught a one-week spring bird class at The Clearing, a nature school in Door County, Wisconsin.

Upon retirement in 1975, the Baumgartners located on a quiet acreage in Northeast Oklahoma Ozarks, south of Jay, where the study of finches continues. Summertime studies include Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

Here in the beautiful wooded hills, Marguerite and Frederick have established a nature school, known as Little Lewis Whirlwind Nature School and Sanctuary. Teaching remains an important part in their lives even though retired.



Dan Bystrak, center, presents gift from BBL to Marguerite Baumgartner, while Chan Robbins gives her a standing ovation. (Photo by D. Beimborn)

The American Goldfinch leads the list of numbers banded, with the Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Harris' Sparrow, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and Northern Cardinal next in order.

Asked to recollect some special banding experiences, Marguerite replied with, "My first nestling—Tree Sparrows at Churchill, Manitoba, 2,000 miles from home. I watched them hatch, put different colored threads on their tiny legs, weighed them daily, watched the parents feed them and attend to the nest. I banded them at seven days; and at nine and a half days I found "Green," the youngest, alone in the nest. I watched his departure, three times, as he followed his father across the hummocky tundra. It was just like millions of other little birds, but he was **mine**, and the culmination of what I had come here for.

"Another special experience' this one suggested by Fred—and about another sparrow—my big automatic cloverleaf trap in the plum thicket contained six or eight limp bodies, one shrike, and one mousey little House Sparrow he (the shrike) hadn't nailed. The shrike was terrified, and Mousey was attacking him every time he dived in a corner. Eventually I rescued the shrike, and though I usually exterminate House Sparrows, I felt compelled to give brave Mousey her freedom. A special banding experience is what one makes of it."

Asked which species she enjoyed most, Marguerite replied, "Those I have banded most, and am most familiar with. But, basically, the bird in hand is the most important and enjoyable."

Willetta Lueshen