

1987

Inland Regional News

North American Bird Bander

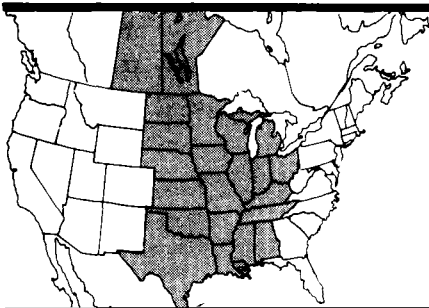
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Inland Regional News

Including the
Inland Bird Banding
Newsletter

Volume 9, No. 2
April 1987

Inland Bird Banding Association

Founded 1922

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By the time you read this paragraph, nine months will have passed since our last meeting. I want to re-emphasize that the IBBA now has five funds; the Paul Stewart Fund for migration studies, the Willetta Lueshen Harris' Sparrow Fund for studies on the Harris' Sparrow, the Willetta Lueshen Student Membership Fund for a membership in IBBA, the Life Membership Fund of the IBBA, and the Memorial Fund for the support of an IBBA archives. Please feel free to donate to any of these funds, but most of all, please feel free to try to obtain the grant or nominate a new member in support of these five funds.

The IBBA Board has committed the IBBA to publishing *North American Bird Bander* with the EBBA and the WBBA through 1988. The *Newsletter* will be the *Inland Regional News* section in the back of the journal. Although I know it provoked a lot of long faces when the IBBA Board decided to stop publishing the *Newsletter* as a separate mailing, it was necessary because of the loss of over 200 members in the past two years, and the subsequent loss of revenue.

The old IBBA brochure has been updated and is available from Membership Secretary, Al Valentine. If you know of any new banders in your area, please have Al send them the brochure.

The index of the first 53 volumes of *Inland Bird Banding News* has been completed for the first ten years only. Due to the illness of Dr. Norman Sloan, all work on the index has stopped. If you know of anyone who is willing to complete the index, please let me know. We have a volunteer to print it. The first ten years are on a disc, which was formatted with DOS 3.1 on an IBM personal computer. Are there any fledgling computer programmers ready to leave the nest and work on the index?

Registration materials for the 1987 annual meeting in Rapid City, South Dakota, will be sent by first class mail sometime after August 1, 1987. The South Dakota Ornithologist's Union plans to run concurrent sessions so all participants should find something of interest throughout the day on Saturday. I plan to be there and I hope you do too!

John Flora

THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION has recently published *The Greater Prairie Chicken in Missouri's Land Use Patterns*, by Donald M. Christisen; drawings by Charles W. Schwartz. It is meant to serve as a guide toward Prairie Chicken restoration and management, particularly in the establishment of native grasses. To obtain a copy write to Missouri Dept. of Conservation, Wildlife Research Section, Fish and Wildlife Research Center, 1110 College Avenue, Columbia, Missouri 65201.

KRAMER NAMED EDITOR OF NABB

Daniel Kramer, an IBBA member since 1979, and editor of the Ohio Bird Banding Association's *Newsletter* for the last five years, has recently accepted the duties of editor of *North American Bird Bander* for Inland Bird Banding Association. He succeeds Ben Pinkowski of Michigan, who graciously served as Acting Editor following the illness and resignation of Norman Sloan.

Dan, a wildlife area manager for the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, is responsible for implementing habitat management practices on several state wildlife areas in northeastern Ohio. He resides on the Lake LaSuan wildlife area.

In 1981 he received a B.S. degree in biology from Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio. Dan began banding birds in 1979 as a subcommittee under Holmes Smith, and was issued his Master Permit in 1982. While still in college, Dan received the Willetta Lueshen Student Membership Award from Inland Bird Banding Association in 1981. He was nominated by Holmes Smith.

Dan and his wife, Marilyn, have a daughter, Elizabeth, who is 1½ years old.

IBBA members who wish to submit scientific papers for publication in *North American Bird Bander*, may send copy to Daniel L. Kramer, 3451 CR 256, Vickery, Ohio 43464

VALENTINE APPOINTED BY FLORA

Allen E. Valentine of Dallas, Texas has been appointed to serve as Membership Secretary of Inland Bird Banding Association. Having been born and raised in northeastern Ohio, he "cut his teeth", so to speak, with the Kirtland Bird Club in Cleveland. In the 1950's he moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he became involved with the Detroit Audubon Society and the Michigan Audubon Society. From there he went to Alpena, Michigan, Buffalo, New York, and to Dallas, Texas, always giving of his time and knowledge to bird clubs wherever he went.

In the sixties he started banding with Kay Petts in Michigan, and worked with Sergej Postupalsky, who was studying Bald Eagle and Osprey populations. "What I enjoy", Al says, "is the field work; banding at several stations in the Dallas area, and taking trips to look at birds whenever I can". (He recently went to Nebraska to see the Sandhill Cranes in the Platte Valley, and was caught in a severe blizzard.)

Al served in the 4th Infantry Division in Europe during World War II. He has a BA degree from Wooster College in Wooster, Massachusetts. He worked for 28 years for National Gypsum Company and retired as Vice President of Public Affairs last year.

Al and his wife, Gretchen, have three daughters, and two grandchildren.

CONFERENCE FIELD TRIPS PLANNED

American Dipper, Townsend's Solitaire, Three-toed Woodpecker, White-winged Junco, Pygmy Nuthatch.....and many other birds will be observed on field trips at the IBBA meeting in Rapid City, South Dakota on September 25, 26, and 27, 1987. Several field trips are planned for the SDOU/IBBA meeting weekend. On Saturday morning a banding workshop will be held at the home of Dr. Nathaniel Whitney, IBBA board member, co-author of *The Birds of the Black Hills*, and editor of *The Birds of South Dakota*. Members who prefer an early morning bird walk on Saturday will have the opportunity to view waterfowl at Canyon Lake, or passerines (such as Cassin's Finch and Townsend's Solitaire) at City Springs Park. Attendees who wish to go on half-day or full-day field trips on Sunday can visit Spearfish Canyon in the northern Black Hills, or Hot Springs area/Jewel Cave National Monument in the southern hills. Bird possibilities are as varied as the habitats to be visited.

The northern hills trip list could include Cassin's Finch, American Dipper, Canyon Wren, Gray Jay, Dark-eyed Junco (White-winged race), Three-toed Woodpecker, Ruffed Grouse, Black-billed Magpie, and many more. Birds to be seen (hopefully) in the southern hills could include Pygmy and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pinyon Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Gray Jay, Lewis' Woodpecker, Say's Phoebe, Black-billed Magpie, Canyon Wren, Mountain Bluebird, Three-toed Woodpecker, and more.

If driving by car to or from Rapid City, banders would find enjoyable birding at Badlands National Park, near Wall, South Dakota (easily accessible from Interstate #90) and at Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge (home of the Trumpeter Swan), located near the Nebraska border, south of Martin, South Dakota.

Attend and enjoy the bird splendor of the beautiful Paha Sapa, the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Jocelyn Lee Baker, President SDOU, 3220 Kirkwood Drive, Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

OUTSTANDING PRESENTATIONS TO BE FEATURED

Members and guests attending the Inland Bird Banding Association meeting in Rapid City, South Dakota on September 25-27, 1987 will hear over a dozen interesting presentations on a variety of subjects ranging from cannon netting Aleutian Canada Geese to banding Rosy Finches. Activities will begin on Friday evening when members will learn of the natural history of the Black Hills. Presented by the author of the book with the same title, Dr. Sven G. Froiland, Professor of Biology at Augustana College, and B. J. Rose, Regional Director of Ducks Unlimited, the talk will include slides and a discussion of the birds, flora, fauna, and geological history of the Black Hills.

Presentations on Saturday will include a report from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bird Banding Laboratory, a slide presentation on the Garrison/James River Project, a discussion of color-banding Missouri River Canada Geese, maximizing band recovery rates, plus others on banding and birding. The featured speaker at the Saturday evening banquet will be Dr. Stuart Houston, who will speak on, *Adventures Banding Raptors in Saskatchewan*. Dr. Houston, a prolific author and bander (over 92,000 individual birds of 200 species) will

present an interesting, humorous slide talk on his experiences as a bander.

Mark September 25-27, 1987 on your "MUST DO" calendar for a weekend of excellent and informative talks on birds, banding, and environmental issues involving wildlife. The IBBA/SDOU meeting in Rapid City is one you won't want to miss!!!

Jocelyn Lee Baker, President SDOU, 3220 Kirkwood Drive, Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

PUBLICATIONS PERUSALS

Beyond Birding; Field Projects for Inquisitive Birders, by Thomas C. Grubb, Jr. 1986. The Boxwood Press. 204pp. \$9.95 paper. This book brings the techniques of analytical ornithology to the amateur, explores how analytical procedures can be applied to field study, examines the concepts and principles of analytical science, and explains how to go about analyzing hypotheses. It is intended for the amateur birder, and the high school biology student.

Audubon and His Journals, Vol. I and II by Marie R. Audubon. 1986 Dover Pub. 1200 pp. \$8.95ea. paper. Included are Audubon's full daily journals of his travels in Europe (1826-1829), a trip along the coasts of Quebec and Nova Scotia in 1833; and his final explorations up the Missouri River in 1843. Edited by his grand-daughter, Marie, she has also supplied a biography of Audubon. Included are annotations on birds, mammals and plants by Dr. Elliott Coues.

Life Histories of North American Diving Birds, by Arthur Cleveland Bent. 1986 (1919 Smithsonian Institution U. S. National Mus. Bul. #107) Dover 320pp. \$6.95. Again available, this classic provides complete and accurate coverage of 36 species of diving birds—grebes, loons, puffins, auks, auklets, murres, murrelets, guillemots, and dovekees. Details of behavior, plumage, reproduction, voice, and migration are given for each.

Life Histories of North American Gulls and Terns, by Arthur Cleveland Bent. 1986. (1921 Smithsonian Institution U. S. National Mus. Bul. #113) 337pp. \$8.95. This is a collection of information about 50 different gulls and terns. Details of reproduction, food, behavior, distribution, voice, and migration of each species are given. This comprehensive study of gulls and terns is completely modern in its approach.

Grand Canyon Birds, by Bryan T. Brown, Steven W. Carothers, and R. Roy Johnson. 1987. Univ. of Arizona Press. 302pp. \$19.95. The authors give the reader the early history of ornithologists who explored Grand Canyon, and describe the habitat of the life zones. The book explains how birds of the region move through and interact with their environment. About 140 pages are devoted to species accounts. Maps, drawings, photographs are in black and white.

Helpers at Birds' Nests, by Alexander Skutch. 1986. Univ. of Iowa Press. 298pp. \$25.00. Cooperative breeding among birds was discovered by the author half a century ago. One bird gives aid to another who is neither its mate, nor its dependent young, and who may even belong to a different species. Each family is briefly introduced by the author, followed by intimate, non-technical accounts of the helpful behavior. The theoretical aspects of cooperative breeding, its evolution, and its kin selection is discussed. It's fascinating! WL

IDENTIFICATION OF HARRIERS

With permission of author, Frances Hamerstrom, the following is taken from, *Harrier, Hawk of the Marsh*, The Hawk that is ruled by a Mouse, published by Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986.

Field Identification: The harrier is a convenient species to work on in North America: the adult males are easily identified by their grayish plumage, the females and juveniles are brownish, the males are smaller than the females, and all harriers have white rump patches. Furthermore, if you see two brown harriers flying near each other and one is noticeably smaller--it's a male.

If you can sneak close enough to a perched brown harrier to get a good look at its eyes, and if the eyes are chocolate, the bird is a female and not yet a full adult. If the eye of this brown bird is grayish brown or straw colored, it is a young male.

Next we come to the fine points: juvenile harriers have no molt until the next summer (when they are a year old). They have deep rufous tawny breasts and very dark backs and wings from the time they leave the nest and are free-flying, so it is easy to distinguish birds of the year from older females. (Obviously it is easy to distinguish between them and the old gray males.) But juvenile harriers have lost their Rhode Island Red-colored breasts by spring! The breast feathers have faded to almost white, and it is no longer possible to tell them from adult females by plumage--except for one little trick which Bill Clark, an expert on hawks, told me. A dark patch under the wings characterizes the immatures.

And now we come to still finer points: before mid-June, in the Lake States, and probably throughout the breeding range, any harrier with gaps in both wings at about Primaries Number 1 through Number 3 (roughly near the center of the wing) is an adult female. These gaps are present because the adult females have dropped feathers and have started molting. The yearlings and the males will commence their molt later in the season.

Not a few bird watchers become suspicious of you if you watch a hawk--obviously a harrier--winging its way far above you against the bright blue spring sky and they hear you exclaim, "There goes an adult female." My suggestion is to get them to place a bet with you. Then refer them to the extraordinary work of two harrier gabboons, Josef and Sheila Schmutz, who published on the relationship between molts and nest-brood events in the *AUK*. (The gaps must occur symmetrically in both wings and in just the right position. There is still some illegal hawk shooting going on. Even though gunners can make gaps in wings by missing the body of their target, not even a rifle can eliminate Primaries Number 1 through 3 on both wings without killing the hawk.)

Anyone who has struggled with field identification of the only species of harrier in North America can sympathize with the problems of the European bird watchers, who might see three of their four species in one day--and the females and juveniles of at least two species are said to look very much alike! This caused enormous confusion in earlier times. In Britain there are three species, the males of all three of which were correct-

ly named, but ornithologists thought that the females were still another species, which they called "Ringtails" because of their barred tails! Even now in Britain, female harriers are affectionately called ringtails. I was taught in New England to call raccoons "ringtails"--a nice woodsy name for these sizeable mammals. It is a bit unnerving to go birding in Britain and have an authority point high in the sky and joyously shout, "Ringtail!" The harrier plate in Peterson, Montfort, and Hollom's *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* is useful in telling adult harriers apart, although it scarcely shows the juveniles. And Donald Watson has an excellent popular discussion in his book, *The Hen Harrier*. Having just one species of harrier in North America has simplified my life immeasurably.

Identification of Nestlings: Small, downy hawklets of all species all look pretty much alike to me. For harriers my method of identification is simple. If the nest is on the ground and the parent harriers are screaming at me when I visit it--it is a harrier nest.

Sexing of nestlings is slightly more complicated: female downies already have thicker tarsi than the males even when they are very small. But every now and then a slightly abnormal will be impossible to sex: is it a thick-ankled male or a slender-ankled female? Abnormality in thickness of tarsi is not frequent. Adult males normally take a U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Number 4 band and adult females a Number 5. Of 301 birds that were banded, only two males required a Number 5 and only one female required a Number 6.

In 1963, I noticed that nestling males have grayish brown irises, whereas those of the nesting females are chocolate. These differences are clearly detectable after the downies are 11 days old. Even novices have no trouble in detecting the difference in color if the nest contains young of both sexes, but they do tend to become distraught if the nest contains five young of the same sex because they cannot see the difference in color.

Identification with Bird in Hand: Males and females are easily separated by weight and wing measurement.

The weighing of a high-energy, nervous bird like a wild hawk can be accomplished with utter simplicity. Put the hawk into a long tube made of fruit juice cans--two 4 1/2-inch-diameter cans for females, one 3 1/4-inch-can for males. One end has small breathing holes, the other is wide open so the bird can void, passing its splashy whitewash (urares) easily whenever it wants to. Hawks do not infrequently seem to fall asleep within the cool dark tube. I suspect that they really do. On the other hand, as I have pointed out in *Birding With A Purpose*, owls tend to struggle violently in the dark, so we weigh them in the light, confined in nylon stockings.

Every now and then when we are weighing a harrier--and we tend to take them to the car, where the rather heavy scales are kept--we hear the sound of brakes and somebody stops to see what we are up to. Nowadays the world contains numerous busybodies who threaten to report us for stuffing a live hawk into a tube!

I ask gently, "Do you know how to keep a hawk happy while it is being weighed?" Then I tell them about the owls in nylon stockings. If they are still hostile, I ask them what they would do if they encountered a hawk with a broken wing. "Would you put it in a nice big parrot cage to take it to a veterinarian?" Members of the public tend to nod.

"That," I admonished them sternly, "is about the most cruel thing you can do. Can't you see that the poor bird will keep struggling? And bash itself against the walls of the cage until its wrists and cere (that tender, soft part of its beak) are all bloodied? Can't you see that it is kinder to transport a hawk in a cool, dark tube?"

Weighing a hawk is really rather simple, but coping with busybodies is not.

Measuring wings needs to be done with care. The bird's body must be held high enough, and near the ruler, so that the shape of the chord is not distorted. The Europeans measure the flattened wing, being careful to get the full length from bend to tip. For comparison of chord versus flattened-wing measurements and weights of the American harrier in Wisconsin and the hen harrier in Scotland, see Appendix of *Harrier: Hawk of the Marshes*.

We measure both the flattened wing and the chord, in part because I want to compare my measurements with those of the Europeans. But I have a more devious reason. If one of the gabbos brings in figures with an improbable discrepancy between these two measurements from the same bird, it behooves me to take him to task, and to have him practice measuring in front of me so I can figure out what he is doing.

The common mistake in museum specimens is that brown male harriers are labelled "adult female"--and these mistakes have crept into the literature. It took a bit of sleuthing to find out how these mistakes (mostly in the older specimens) kept occurring. I have unearthed two reasons. Before the turn of the century, most museums only wanted birds in full plumage, and until recently it was not known that brown subadult males rather frequently breed. The other reason came as something of a shock to me: museums paid more for breeding adults, so if a dishonorable collector labelled a brown male "Adult female," he would get more money!

In North America female harriers can be aged to the year with a fair degree of certainty by eye color until they are five years old. The chocolate irises of the subadult tend to turn amber in the second year. Gradually the percentage of brown flecks decreases at a fairly constant rate (although there is some individual variation). Almost all females known to be over five years old have yellow irises--pale yellow like the yolk of hen eggs bought in an American supermarket. Curiously, the female irises of the closely related hen harrier have an orange tinge--more like the yolks of hens that have roamed around free to eat what they please in a farmyard.

Females, by the way, are not old when they are five-year-olds. A harrier was known to live 16 years and 5 months in the wild.

Adult male harriers have bright lemon-colored eyes. The grayish brown eyes of the young turn to pale straw during the first winter of life. Males also have slimmer tarsi.

Ageing by Fault Bars: When birds undergo great stress at the time that they are growing one or more new feathers, the growing feather is weakened, and this weakness leaves a mark on the feather. Fault bars are particularly common in meat-eating birds. We used to call these bars "hunger streaks", but now suspect that severe stresses other than hunger may also produce them--perhaps cold; and certainly fault bars can result from injury to the base of a growing feather.

The fault-bar technique for ageing is particularly useful for birds like those owls that have plumage that looks the same for both immatures and adults. For harriers I have only had to resort to it for females found dead in spring. Their breast feathers were bleached almost white like an adult's and they had been dead long enough so that I couldn't tell whether their eyes had been chocolate or yellow at the time of death.

The method is rather like detective work, but actually simple. It is a matter of asking oneself the right question.

At what age do birds grow all their wing and tail feathers at once? Only when they are nestlings.

At what age do birds grow just two or three feathers simultaneously on both wings? Only when they are a year or more old.

Understanding the sequence in which harriers molted their feathers used to strike me as peculiarly worthless information--that is, until it came time to mark birds for individual recognition.



VIREOS with eye rings linked by loreal stripes to form "spectacles" always have wing bars. Other species have eyebrow stripes and no wing bars.

FIELD GUIDE CRITICIZED

Several excellent field guides of North American birds, some new, some revised, were placed on the market in the early 1980's. The competition was fierce. All publishing companies wanted to be first to market a guide using *The A. O. U. Check-list of North American Birds*, Sixth Edition, and the pressure was on the author/artist teams to complete the work as quickly as possible.

In 1985 Rich Stallcup, P.O. Box 36, Inverness, California 94937, authored and published, *Birds for Real*, a 100-page book which points out the errors in *The Guide to Field Identification of the Birds of North America*, by Chandler S. Robbins, published by Western Publishing Company. Some notes cover errors, or omissions, others cover the author's personal opinion, or preference.

After all of Stallcup's criticisms, I will still recommend Robbin's field guide to beginning and experienced bird watchers.

On the whole, all the field guides are very good. Many bird watchers have wisely chosen to purchase and use all of them. WL

H. ELLIOT MCCLURE IS GUEST SPEAKER

Members and friends of the Inland Bird Banding Association were privileged to have Dr. H. Elliott McClure, and his wife, Lucy, as part of the 1986 Annual Meeting at Moline, Illinois. The McClures, formerly from the midwest and long-time IBBA members, now reside in Camarillo, California. Dr. McClure has always had an intensive interest in birds and banding, and took his expertise to Southeast Asia where he spearheaded the Migratory Animal Pathological Survey (MAPS) project during its years of operation, 1963 through 1971. The MAPS project was headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. McClure put together an impressive ornithological team with cooperation from nine Asian countries.

This unique Asian project was responsible for the discovery of a tremendous amount of information including the identification of important migratory patterns. The project helped to determine that there are four migratory flyways in Asia and Europe just as there are in North America.

One of the first things that Dr. McClure completed as the banding program developed was the preparation of *An Asian Bird Banders Manual*. Because the manual was so popular, an updated version, which included an extensive section on bird banding techniques, was published in 1966 in order to stimulate bird banding and to encourage cooperative effort among ornithologists worldwide. The results of the Asian study were summarized in the book, *Migration and Survival of Birds of Asia*. Most recently, in 1984, Dr. McClure had another book published by the Boxwood Press simply entitled, *Bird Banding* (which should be in every bander's library). This newest book discusses everything from the development of migration routes, banding techniques and equipment, and record-keeping to some of the other activities in addition to simply banding the birds. It also repeats "A Bird Bander's Ethics".

During the regular paper session, Dr. McClure presented an extremely informative paper that many banders might consider boring--*Research on Zoonosis Diseases*. As could be anticipated, the subject was a key project of the MAPS program--how birds can be the transient source for vectors, of diseases common to man and other animals, from one country to another. Dr. McClure's winning way made the paper surprisingly interesting and informative. For the banquet presentation, *Bird Banding Around the World*, Dr. McClure showed slides of projects and techniques involved in the nine Asian countries cooperating with the MAPS program. Because of the different habitats, as well as lack of communication between countries prior to the MAPS program, each country had developed unique methods of capturing birds--usually not for banding purposes. The Japanese had developed a method for capturing shorebirds by using decoys to lure the birds in to be caught by throw nets; they also captured ducks as if they were butterflies. The Japanese banded large numbers of herons in colonies, but are most noted for the development of the "mist" net, the use of which has become widespread since the 1950's.

In Korea, where there are few trees, live decoys in cages worked well. The Koreans would also successfully use caged birds in barren areas by placing the cages in artificial plants. In the Philippines, an interesting migratory pattern was discovered along

the ridges of northern mountains on the island of Luzon; native Filipinos would congregate near the ridgetops on foggy nights, start small fires (but later used Coleman lanterns), and stand behind the bright "lights" with special nets to capture the birds as they migrated up the slope and across the mountains. The natives were capturing the birds for food, but the Philippine banders negotiated with the captors and were able to band and release many of the birds that were caught. It turned out that more MAPS project banded birds were recovered in the Philippines than anywhere else.

In Thailand, Malaya, Borneo, Korea, and Taiwan, swallows were often captured in large quantities by using nets at night-time roosts; Dr. McClure indicated that in Bangkok the banding staff often needed police protection to control traffic while taking the birds out of the nets at midnight. In Malaya, much of the banding activities were accomplished from the back of a truck. All of the teams often took blood samples and ectoparasites, along with the regular measurements. An additional technique included "dusting" in order to rid the birds of mites. Since mites were usually covered with an "oil", the "dusting" would act as an absorbant causing desiccation of the mites. These studies resulted in banding more than a million birds of 1200 species, with more than 50,000 recoveries and returns.

During the project years there was considerable banding in several other locations including Taiwan and Hong Kong. He had the privilege of joining team members in Japan, Philippines and Hong Kong in 1967. At present, banding is being continued in Japan, India, and Malaya. In Australia there is a lot of "backyard" banding with string traps; other projects include studies of penguins and some island species populations. In India, a fair amount of banding is sponsored by the Bombay Natural History Society. One technique for shorebirds includes the placement of nooses on a string in the mud. There are intensive banding programs in England and most of the European countries; Russian works extending into Siberia.

While briefly discussing North American banding, Dr. McClure primarily limited his comments to the Bird Banding Office at Patuxent, to a unique ranch near Tucson, and the Point Reyes Bird Observatory in California. During his discussion, Dr. McClure emphasized two important points concerning the care of captured birds: first, birds readily tire themselves when carried in bags or containers from which they are able to see out; and second, bruises on birds do cause problems. Therefore, extreme caution is required, at all times, when handling birds.

In conclusion, Dr. McClure was quick to point out the importance of volunteers; he said that they give so much to science, biology, and knowledge.

As would be expected, Dr. McClure's program was very well received.

Vernon Kleen, Route 2, Athens, IL 62613

IN THE KIRTLAND'S WARBLER RESEARCH effort in Michigan in 1986, 27 warblers were trapped and color banded, and six were radio-tracked. One adult was followed for 9½ days. No problems were noted with the transmitters, or the ability of the birds to carry them. Adults were noted to remain near the established territories the young tended to move about a mile or more from the nest area.

CARDINAL HAS UNUSUAL PLUMAGE

On 07 September 1986, Mildred, my wife, observed a female Northern Cardinal come to a feeder on our front porch in Bethany, Oklahoma. The only unusual thing about this was that this female had white cheek patches. The patches of white appeared to be identical on either side. I tried unsuccessfully several times to catch this bird in mist nets. It was not, however, until 28 November that I was able to net the bird and band it with band number 961-97264.

During this time the female appeared regularly to the front feeder, or feeders in the back yard, when the nets were not up. Most of the time she followed a very red and apparently normal male cardinal. When the bird was in hand I observed other flecks of white scattered over the back of the neck, and some on the breast. Apparently this unusual arrangement of white is due to albinism.

We are waiting for spring season to see what change may take place in its plumage.

Hubert R. Harris, 4907 N. Willow, Bethany, Oklahoma 73008.



INSECTIVOROUS SPECIES ENTICED

Whether you are a bander, a casual bird watcher, a life-listing bird chaser, or a bird-feeding enthusiast, you try to draw to your area as many species as you can. Thistle seeds, sunflower seeds, cracked corn, suet, and other foods will bring many of your friends to your yard for observation. But how do you entice the species that have an insectivorous diet?

In my 22 years at this location in the woods I've listed 101 species in my yard. My offerings of food brought many of them in but greater numbers are drawn by my tri-level flowing bird bath. Water flows constantly into this ground level structure, which is built on the side of a bank behind the house. A hose from the faucet on the back of the house supplies the water, and on the numerous freezing days of a typical Michigan winter, a heater keeps the water open for free drinks and baths on a 35 degree day. During the northerly migration in May and June, and the return south in August and September, over 30 species of warblers have investigated the sound of the trickling water. Seven species of thrushes have also paid a visit.

In 1986 we filmed over 35 species from a blind. The camera lens was 12 feet from the surface of the water in the bath. Scarlet Tanagers were very cooperative so we photographed a brilliant male, a drab female, and a molting male in September. On September 4, eight species of warblers performed for us.

In our new film, which now has been fully edited, we have 13 species of warblers. As of early January the film has been scheduled for six showings in early 1987.

John B. Ham, 1551 Laraway Lake Drive, SE., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506.

MEAHLS BAND 4,595 HOUSE FINCHES

Howard and Marcella Meahl, 3680 Austinburg Road, Ashtabula, Ohio 44004, reported a total of 9,033 individual birds of 91 species banded at their residence in 1986. Most astonishing, perhaps even alarming, is the total number of House Finches banded--4,595--which is more than half of the total of all birds banded.

Others high on the list of birds banded in 1986 are Slate-colored (Dark-eyed) Junco, 789; Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warbler, 603; American Tree Sparrow, 265; American Goldfinch, 228; White-throated Sparrow, 223; Song Sparrow, 201; and Gray Catbird, 191.

THE XX INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS will take place in Christchurch, New Zealand, from 2-9 December 1990. Professor Charles G. Sibley of United States is President, and Dr. Ben D. Bell of New Zealand is Secretary-General. The anticipated Congress program will include plenary lectures, symposia, contributed papers (spoken and posters), workshops, discussion groups and films. There will be a mid-Congress excursion day. Pre- and post-Congress excursions are planned to interesting ornithological sites in New Zealand and adjacent regions. Requests for the First Circular and suggestions regarding Congress organization should be addressed to: Dr. Ben D. Bell, Secretary-General, XX International Ornithological Congress, Department of Zoology, Victoria University of Wellington, Private Bag, Wellington, New Zealand.

THE RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION will hold its annual meeting October 28-31, 1987, at the Red Lion Inn Riverside, Boise, Idaho. A Raptor Migration Symposium, posters, art show, films, paper sessions, field trips, and banquet are scheduled. For further information contact Rich Howard, Endangered Species Program, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Boise Field Office, 4696 Overland Rd., Room 567, Boise, Idaho 83705 (208) 334-1888.

THE PRAIRIE GROUSE TECHNICAL COUNCIL Meeting will be held September 15-19, 1987, at Crookston, Minnesota. For further information contact Daniel Svedarsky, Chairman, Natural Resources Department, University of Minnesota, Crookston, Minnesota 56716 (218) 281-6510.

THE 49TH MIDWEST FISH AND WILDLIFE conference will be held December 5-9, 1987 at Marc Plaza Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A centennial celebration of the birth of Aldo Leopold. Everyone is welcome to join in paying tribute to him. For full information contact Kent E. Klepinger, Bureau of Research, Department of Natural Resources, P. O. Box 7921, Madison, Wisconsin 53707 (608) 266-8170.

THE COLONIAL WATERBIRD SOCIETY will hold its 11th Annual Meeting at the Red Oak Inn in Thunder Bay, Ontario, CANADA, 10-13 September, 1987. Lynn Hauta and John P. Ryder, Department of Biology, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 5E1, Canada, are in charge.