

1994

Inland Regional News

North American Bird Bander

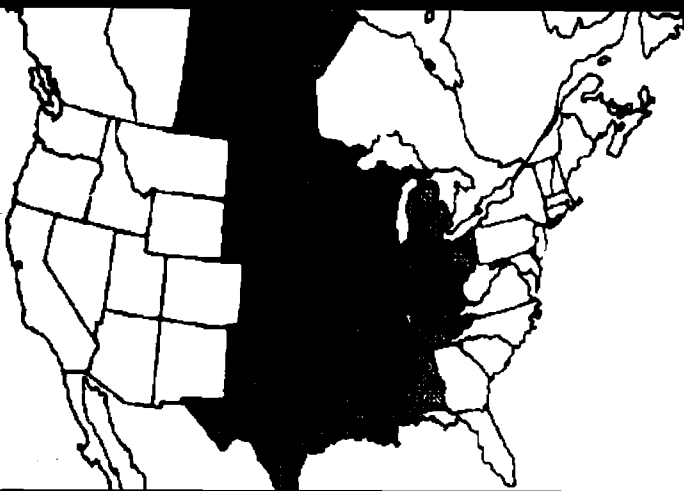
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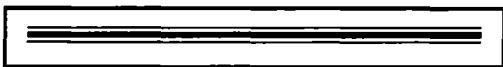
Inland Regional News

Inland Bird Banding Association

Founded 1922

This issue's IBBA newsletter section is "mighty thin." Our newsletter needs contributions from members. Share your banding activities in an informal setting.

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NATURE NOTES FROM NEBRASKA

It's 28 May 1994 and I have just returned from checking nest boxes of American Kestrels along Interstate 80 between Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska. Of the 32 nest boxes mounted on the back-sides of highway signs, only four had birds big enough to band this time. But, in just another week, at least four more broods will be ready to band. Then, after another week, the remainder should be ready. These first four boxes contained 17 birds--five young from each of three boxes and two in the other.

The Sierra Club of Omaha, together with Nebraska Game and Parks, began this project of providing nest boxes along the Interstate. All boxes are

mounted on metal signs and have proven to be very successful nest sites. The metal posts have eliminated practically all nest predators; interference from European Starlings remains the biggest problem. These boxes have produced between 40 and 50 young birds per year; the all-time high was 73 young in 1992.

I began doing the banding last year because John Dinan of Nebraska Game and Parks could no longer spare the time. It has been interesting to me to see how each year shows differences in the nesting behavior and results. The weather, I think, has its own unique controlling influence. In 1993, all nestlings were ready to band on 12 June--36 birds in all. A very late spring with lots of rain, no doubt, delayed the onset of nesting. Apparently all the adult kestrels began incubation about the same time. A much different and milder spring this year has produced a much different picture. First, some birds were almost ready to fledge a good two weeks earlier than last year. Second, clutch initiations were spread over a much longer period this year. And third, if all goes well, there will be twice as many birds to hatch and fledge.

This cooperative project can be duplicated almost anywhere and I would encourage banders to promote and participate in similar activities. I am sure it could be as rewarding for them as it was for me.

Ruth C. Green