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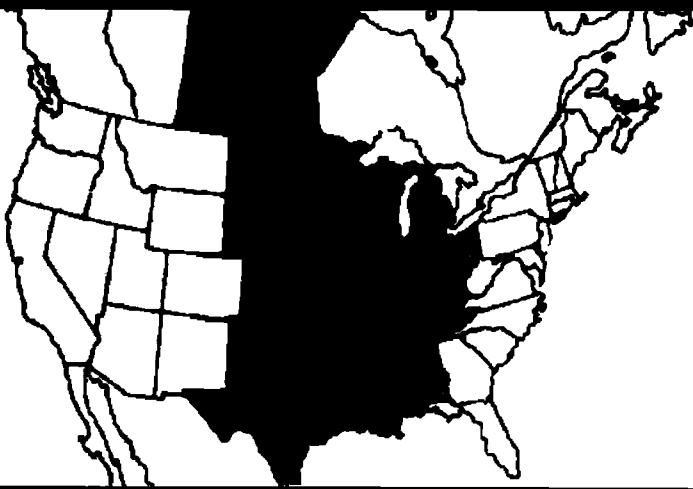
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bwe. Our educational function continued as several elementary, high school, and college classes visited the station.

The banders who participated this year were Lynn Barnhart, Robert Dean, Walter Frye, LeJay Graffious, Sue Haselton, Joan Pattison, Janet Shaffer, Judy Ward, Leon Wilson, Charles Ziegenfus, and station co-leaders Ralph Bell and George Hall. LeJay Graffious was also responsible for the banding shelter, and as usual Genevieve and John Findley were in charge of the net lanes. Ivarean Pierce, who also headed up the Blue Jay-Hummingbird counts, Ken Heselton, and

Carl Rowe were present for extended periods of time. In addition, 53 people aided in tending nets, carrying cages, keeping records, and in many other ways, and their help is gratefully acknowledged. We also thank the personnel of the Monongahela National Forest, Supervisor Jim Page, District Ranger Nancy Feakes, Recreation Specialist Jill Shoemaker, and others of the Potomac District Ranger Station for their cooperation and support. Thanks also to Walt Lesser of the D.N.R. for the use of the Laneville cabin for housing and storage of the shelter. The Brooks Bird Club supplied some financial support.



Inland Regional News

Inland Bird Banding Association

Founded 1922

The Capture of a Merlin: A New Technique

About 9:30, 17 October 1995, I received a call from the manager of Lowe's Department Store here in Springfield, Illinois, about a "hawk" that was flying around inside the store. He wanted to know what could be done to remove the bird from the building. Since I do not usually make "house" visits, when such calls arrive I attempt to explain capture and release tactics to the callers according to their desperation and the probable species involved. Most calls received are from frantic housewives who suddenly find one or more birds flying through their homes (usually starlings or House Sparrows) or a fireplace full of crawling birds (most often young Chimney Swifts). However, the present case seemed different, especially since the bird

was reported as a "hawk" (which in layman's language could be anything). So I volunteered to investigate the problem and help with a potential solution.

I arrived at Lowe's about 9:50 and was promptly shown the "hawk" sitting above one of the check-out counters. Sure enough, it was a hawk, but a species I would never have suspected: a Merlin. In nearly every instance, birds under stress inside buildings stay near the ceiling, even when doors and windows are open. The Merlin was no exception. A simple procedure for capturing birds inside buildings is to keep them flying until they tire themselves out and float down, often to the floor,

where they can be retrieved and eventually released. This was the initial plan for the Merlin, so I asked the store manager how many people he could provide to help with the capture effort. He said, none. With lack of support for Plan A, I moved on to Plan B and called my office, the Natural Heritage Division of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, to see if anyone there would be willing and able to join me in this unusual task. Four persons from the office arrived about 10:30. The goal was still to keep the Merlin flying in an attempt to "wear it out," capture it, and release it.

Now for the challenge. The Springfield Lowe's store is an open store with nearly a city block of inside space, a 7.5 m high girded ceiling, and shelves on all aisles stacked nearly to the ceiling. After just 15 minutes of effort, the five of us realized it would be virtually impossible to keep the Merlin flying long enough to wear it out since there were just too many places for it to hide and rest. And, if we had worn it out, I may not have landed in a place where it could be readily retrieved. So, it was time to consider another approach.

In times past, I had captured Screech Owls and Kestrels in buildings using a mist net; however, the problem with this plan was the mist nets and needed poles were at my home, 30 minutes away. I departed and was back by 11:50 with net and poles (and a change of clothes, since staff at the store didn't believe that someone with a tie and jacket could be knowledgeable about handling live birds). This time, with approval from the store manager, I was able to borrow two of his staff and their accompanying forklifts for about 15 minutes. The forklifts were positioned under an area where the Merlin frequently flew and in such a manner that the Merlin would not readily see the operators as they stood on their elevated forklifts near the ceiling. The net was strung between two 3 m aluminum poles and stretched tight by adjusting the distance between the two forklifts. The net was then raised to a position just below the ceiling girders and held firmly there by the two forklift operators.

The Natural Heritage staff were now ready to relocate the resting Merlin and attempt to "direct" it toward the area where the net was stretched. The

Merlin was extremely cooperative. When it first appeared in the "target" area, it landed on a girder about 18 m from the net. During its next forced flight, it flew directly into the net and was quickly retrieved as the forklift operators lowered the net.

The Merlin, a hatching-year female, was in excellent health, was photographed, is now wearing band number 524-23808, landed near the top of a nearby tree when released, and after a 10-minute rest, took off for places unknown.

I express appreciation to Glen Kruse, Jean Karnes, Kim Roman, and Terry Campos for taking time out of their busy schedules to help with this capture project--a once-in-a-lifetime event.

Vernon Kleen

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Bird Monitoring Program at Metro Beach Metropark

A banding program to monitor spring and fall migration at Metro Beach Metropark on Lake St. Clair, near Mt. Clemens, Michigan, began fall 1989. The program was benefited from the deep interest of many hard-working, dedicated volunteers. So far, 9,169 birds have been banded. Regular observations of birds in the banding area during banding hours also are recorded for comparative purposes.

Data compiled are useful in helping to record species composition, magnitude, and timing of migration. Particular attention is given to recaptures, which document use of this area as a resting and refueling site for migrants, and to support the need to preserve this area in its undeveloped, natural state.

Of interest each season are the recapture data for "at risk" Neotropical migrants. During 14 banding days, 1 August through 8 October 1995, 291 birds of 19 "at-risk" Neotropical species were mist netted and banded:

- 1 Yellow-billed Cuckoo,
- 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker,
- 1 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher,
- 6 Veery,
- 17 Gray-checked Thrush,
- 19 Swainson's Thrush,
- 76 Wood Thrush,
- 3 Solitary Vireo,
- 3 Red-eyed Vireo,
- 4 Tennessee Warbler,
- 2 Northern Parula,
- 1 Chestnut-sided Warbler,
- 7 Magnolia Warbler,
- 88 Bay-breasted Warbler,
- 1 Blackpoll Warbler,
- 7 Black-and-White Warbler,
- 25 American Redstart,
- 9 Ovenbird,
- 13 Canada Warbler,

Overall, 55.1 birds/100 net hours were banded, the second lowest rate for our seven falls of banding at Metro Beach Metropark. On some banding days, there were extremely low numbers of birds in the banding area. At other times, there was good movement, with a spectacular showing on 8 October, when 141 birds were mist netted and banded on the last day before hunting commenced nearby.



Banded fall 1995 totals show six species of thrushes and 20 species of wood warblers. Overall, top numbers include:

- 76 Golden-crowned Kinglet
- 76 Swainson's Thrush
- 46 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- 30 Hermit Thrush
- 29 White-throated Sparrow
- 25 American Redstart
- 19 Gray-cheeked Thrush
- 18 Common Yellowthroat
- 17 Black-capped Chickadee
- 17 Veery
- 17 Black-throated Blue Warbler

Bottom numbers include, 1 each: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Golden-winged Warbler, Northern Parula, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Indigo Bunting.

Birds banded but not independently observed, include:

- 3 Solitary Vireo
- 4 Philadelphia Vireo
- 1 Golden-winged Warbler
- 2 Orange-crowned Warbler
- 3 Mourning Warbler
- 1 Indigo Bunting

As always, the program is indebted to the Metro Beach Metropark administration and staff for cordial cooperation and to the following members of the fall 1995 banding team for dedicated participation: B. Adams, M. Brown, R. Brown, A. Chartier, J. Ciplewski, H. Cox, K. Cooper, L. Daniels, M. Gazette, T. Halatek, F. Hull, K. Konopka, A. Leonard, F. McDonald, L. Robbins, P. Schroeder, C. Smart, J. Tyler, J. Wheeler, J. Wiencek, and S. Wright.

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