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North American Bird Bander

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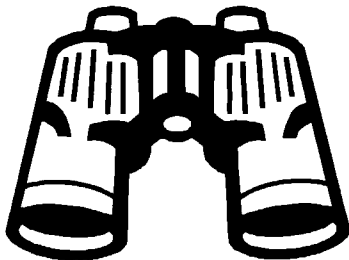
Established 1925

Western Regional News

71st Annual Meeting
Portland, Oregon
13 - 15 September 1996

The meeting will be at Camp Kuralti at Trestle Glen, a retreat/conference center southeast of Portland, near Sandy, Oregon. It is located in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains within a 40-minute drive of Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood (the highest peak in Oregon), Multnomah Falls and the scenic Columbia River Gorge, the wine country of the northern Willamette Valley, and downtown Portland. Attractions within a two-hour drive include the Mt. St. Helens Visitor Center and the Oregon coast.

The meeting will include several field trips, a paper/poster session on recent bird banding projects, demonstrations on techniques, and a morning of bird banding at a fall migration banding station on the Mt. Hood National Forest. The meeting site is approximately one-half hour drive from the Portland Airport. If you plan on visiting any of the area attractions, you will need a rental car. For those just attending the conference, we plan on providing pick-ups and returns to the airport through carpools and shuttles.



Tentative Field Trips:

- * Friday morning - high elevation fall migration birding on the Mt. Hood National Forest and sagebrush country of the high desert east of the forest.

- * Friday evening - calling in Spotted Owls on the Mt. Hood National Forest.

- * Saturday morning - fall migration bird banding at a high elevation mountain meadow on the forest.

- * Sunday morning - hawk migration and banding at Bonney Butte, or birding in the forests and orchard country on the way to Hood River and down the Columbia Gorge.

- * A special treat for those arriving on Thursday morning or afternoon will be a trip to Hapman Middle School in Portland on Thursday evening to observe thousands of Vaux's Swifts going to roost in the chimneys.

Papers/Posters Session:

On Saturday afternoon there will be presentations on results of banding studies conducted throughout the western United States. Posters will be displayed throughout the weekend. Demonstrations on techniques related to banding are also welcome. Abstracts are invited for possible inclusion in the program. Contact Bob Altman (503)658-2537; fax (503) 658-3760; email alt8bird@aol.com.

IS BANDING FOR EVERYONE?

I believe the answer to the above question is a resounding NO! A case in point is the essay in the March/April *Audubon Magazine*. The author was apparently pressured to start a MAPS station and was a bit surprised to receive her very own banding subpermit in the mail before having any hands-on banding experience. The training and supervision she then received was apparently less than she needed. She wrote of her experience expressing her doubts about the future for Neotropical migrants, the value of ornithological research, and her feeling of "violating" the birds she handled. I encourage you to read her essay.

What can we learn from her experience? Most importantly, sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others. Many people interested in birds are curious about banding and eager for an opportunity to actually hold a bird. But as we all know, there can be a world of difference between holding a calm bundle of feathers in your hand and the tedious task of extracting a wriggling bird from a tangle of nylon threads. While many birds almost fall out of the net, a few would try the patience of Job.

I believe the best route for anyone considering bird banding is to start as a helper, after a training course, and gain hands-on experience, enabling them to decide if they are comfortable with all aspects of handling birds. We should give people who worry about harming birds the opportunity to bow out gracefully. Many people enjoy helping at a banding site. Others want a subpermit and the responsibility of their own banding station. We need to respect people's desires to determine their level of involvement.

We also need to be sensitive to differences in the amount of training individuals need, both overall and in particular skills. The most effective volunteer programs involve initial training and a continuing program to update skills. We usually know our weaknesses and welcome a comfortable situation to hone skills. At WBBA meetings, banding demonstrations are always popular; banders at all levels welcome the opportunity to learn new skills and compare techniques.

We need to work to assure that the people we recruit will enjoy banding and that we provide training and support to meet their individual needs.

Bob Tweit



*Scissor-Tailed Flycatcher
Pen and Ink by Keith Lott*