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North American Bird Bander

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Established 1925

**Western Bird Banding Association
73rd Annual Meeting
Marshall, California
24-27 September 1998**

The meeting at the Marconi Conference Center on Tomales Bay started with dinner on Thursday night, the first of a series of excellent meals in the dining hall. After dinner a slide show on Antarctica entertained the meeting attendees, a group which grew to a maximum of 50+ on Saturday.

Foggy mornings on the northern California coast have a magical quality about them and also allow leisurely starts, at least by birder standards, for field trips. The best bird of the day was a Least Bittern near the upper end of Tomales Bay. After a Board meeting and another great dinner, the group enjoyed the hospitality of Cypress Grove, a property of Audubon Canyon Ranch, for an evening social get-together.

Saturday morning's program was a visit to the Palomarin Banding Station of Point Reyes Bird Observatory. We all enjoyed seeing their extensive facilities and chatting with the staff as well as watching their banding routine. During the morning, Pat Johnston, Brenda McGowan, and Marilynne Keyser from the Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project, Lower Willamette River, Oregon, presented a demonstration of live trapping techniques. (See abstract below.)

Live-Trapping Bluebirds and House Sparrows

We will demonstrate the use of Potter traps to capture adult bluebirds for banding and to recapture previously banded adults. Bluebirds are attracted to meal worms placed in the wire trap

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which is on the ground near the nest box. The door drops shut when the bird steps on the trip plate in an attempt to obtain the meal worms. Under the right conditions, we can usually capture any adult bird within 15 minutes of setting the trap. The necessary conditions are: 1) the adult birds are feeding young in the nest box; 2) the adult birds have been acclimated to meal worms (offered to adults near the nest box for at least one or two days); and 3) the trap is set early in the morning before any worms have been offered.

We will also demonstrate the use of Huber traps to capture House Sparrows that are attempting to usurp nest boxes from bluebirds. House Sparrows are attracted to a nest box decoy with a metal plate that covers the hole when the sparrow enters the box and trips the wire holding up the plate. The trap contains the sparrow until it can be removed and destroyed. Under the right conditions, we can usually capture an offending house sparrow within 30 minutes of setting the trap. The necessary conditions are: 1) the House Sparrow has been going in and out of the nest box or has begun nest construction; 2) the nest box under attack is removed or the entrance hole plugged; and 3) the House Sparrow is in evidence when the trap is set.

After lunch at the Marconi Center, the following papers were presented:

Breeding Bird Communities in Riparian Habitats of Southwest Oregon - Part I. Mario S. Mamone and Gail F. Rible--Rogue River National Forest, Applegate Ranger District, Jackson, Oregon

This study examines breeding bird

communities in riparian habitats of southwest Oregon. This study reports on bird banding results for nine banding stations that have been in operation between one and nine years. Habitats studied include low elevation streamside riparian habitats in the Rogue River Valley and within the city limits of Medford and Ashland, regional population centers; mid-elevation streamside riparian habitats; and high-elevation meadow and streamside riparian habitats. This study will describe each riparian habitat and their associated breeding bird communities, as well as bird species diversity for each banding station.

... Part II.

The results of bird captures for nine banding stations that have been in operation between one and nine years are reported. This paper looks at breeding bird communities and more specifically, at bird species composition, trends in species captures, and the role of riparian habitats as juvenile staging areas for migrating birds.

Monitoring, Information, and Education

Rhonda L. Millikin--Canadian Wildlife Service, Pacific and Yukon Region

British Columbia is vast and diverse, having more than 70 percent of Canada's 454 bird species. Yet, 50 percent of current protected areas are <1 km² and lowland riparian areas are poorly represented. Monitoring information must get to policy makers. Though we still have a significant amount of original habitat, it is tough to prove the need for caution when the landscape is changing faster than we can monitor it. We need more powerful tools and to involve more people through a community-based approach. This was the impetus for the now five-year Regional Migration Monitoring Network in B. C. We have combined census, mist-netting and radar techniques to monitor population trends of landbirds. We have demonstrated the importance of riparian habitat for landbird migration, extended range information for some species and given the public a voice for songbirds in their local political arenas. I will present the highlights of this program and how we intend to integrate our results with the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network as well as the Partner in Flight Western Working Group.

Female-biased Sex Ratio of a Wintering Population of Ruby-crowned Kinglets

Diana L. Humple, Nadav Nur, Geoffrey R. Geupel, Michael P. Lynes--Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA

Many species exhibit a differential distribution of males and females throughout their wintering range. Hypotheses which explain this segregation include the behavioral dominance hypothesis, the arrival time/sexual selection hypothesis, and the body size/physiological hypothesis. We investigated 21 years of capture data from the Palomarin Field Station's ongoing constant-effort mist-netting program in the Point Reyes National Seashore, to determine if an unbalanced sex ratio occurs within the population of Ruby-crowned Kinglets (*Regulus calendula*) wintering in the area. We primarily examined the months of November through February and found the capture ratio to be significantly female-biased. This bias was consistent across months. We then examined the recapture probability of the sexes in order to address the possible effects of sex-specific differences in capture probability. We found male and female kinglets to have an equal within-season recapture probability, which strongly suggests that the population of kinglets wintering in the area is female-biased. We also compared the capture ratio of nets located in coastal scrub habitat to nets in riparian woodland habitat, and although both had a significant female bias, the bias was significantly stronger in the coastal scrub.

Breeding Season Duration for 26 Species of Passerines Nesting in Northern Alaska

Anna-Marie Benson--Alaska Bird Observatory, Box 80505, Fairbanks, Alaska

Mist nets were used from 25 April to 15 June (spring) and from 15 July to 30 September (fall) 1992-1997 to capture passerines at Creamer Field Migration Station, Fairbanks, Alaska. I analyzed the median dates of passage for after-hatch-year birds of 26 species that were represented by at least 10 individual captures in each migration season for all years combined. Alder Flycatchers spent the shortest time (47 days) on the breeding grounds and American Tree Sparrows spent the longest time (124 days). The number of days passerines spend at their breeding locations is likely linked to distance between breeding and non-breeding ranges.

Navigating the Future with MAPS

Dan Froehlich--Institute for Bird Populations, P. O. Box 1346, Point Reyes Station, CA

As the number of stations in and operators contributing to the MAPS Program continues to grow, IBP is developing MAPSPROG, a data entry/import, editing and verification program, in cooperation with the BBL. The program allows operators to enter or import data, verify the consistency of the data collected, both within and between capture records, check band numbers without previous capture records, and produce data files for their own use as well as for the MAPS Program. Putting data verification in the hands of the data collectors allows those who are most familiar with the data to address any data discrepancies and thus provides them with an opportunity to improve their ageing and sexing techniques. The BBL and Bird Studies Canada plan to incorporate the program into their new BAND MANAGER as its data verification module. With seven seasons of MAPS data and a prospect for a cleaner data set in the future as a result of MAPSPROG, IBP is devoting more effort to data analyses. IBP has hired a landscape ecologist to include spatial weather data and landscape level habitat data as covariates in future productivity analyses and future survivorship models. Such analyses will enable us to test hypotheses regarding the causes of population declines and eventually should allow for prescriptive land management recommendations.

Bander Training Workshop

Rhonda Millikin

I initiated a bander training workshop for the Regional Migration Monitoring program this year at our northern-most station, in order to provide a venue for integrating all stations in the province and as a means of quality control as well as increasing our pool of local experts to run the stations. This enabled us to start banding a week earlier without taxing our monitoring budget.

Understanding and Using the Identification Guide to North American Birds.

Kenneth M. Burton--PO Box 848, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

Peter Pyle's new **Identification Guide to North American Birds, Part 1**, (published last year by Slate Creek Press) is now considered THE reference for in-hand identification, ageing, and sexing of North American passerines and "near-passerines." It contains a great deal of information

not presented in the original **Identification Guide to North American Passerines**, although its overall structure is similar. This workshop will include an overview of passerine plumages and molts as they are presented in the guide, an explanation of molt limits, a summary of plumage and molt related ageing characteristics, and tips on interpreting the bar graphs in the guide. Suggestions for efficient use of the book in the field will be offered.

M. Kathleen Klimkiewicz presented an update on developments at the Banding Lab.

At the **Business Meeting** the following slate of officers was elected:

President - Bob Altman

1st Vice-President - Jim Steele

2nd Vice-President - Ken Voget

Secretary - Rhonda Millikin

Treasurer/Membership - Ken Burton

Director (term ends 1999) - Tricia Campbell

Director (term ends 2000) - Mario Mamone

Dennis Vroman becomes Immediate Past-President

Retiring Past President, **Barbara Carlson**, was thanked for her many years of service on the WBBA Board.

Ken Burton reported the cash surplus for fiscal 1998 will be sufficient to allow presentation of two research awards.

After dinner, **John Kelly**, of the Cypress Grove Preserve, presented the fascinating natural history of Tomales Bay.

The meeting ended Sunday morning with a choice of field trips. One of the highlights was a visit to Golden Gate Raptor Observatory with a spectacular view of the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco and the north bay.

WBBA thanks **Ken Burton** and **Kay Loughman** for organizing a great meeting!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
1999 WBBA Annual Meeting
Reno, Nevada, early fall

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birdbanding@compuserve.com