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News, Notes, Comments

North American Bird Bander

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News, Notes, Comments

BANDING OWLS IN NEST BOXES -- PROBLEM OF DESERTION?

Florida Audubon owns 43 acres (17.4 hectares) in Orange County, FL, five miles (8 km) north of Zellwood. Since 1972 nest boxes have been monitored. Birds using them are Great Crested Flycatcher, Tufted Titmouse and Eastern Screech-Owl. Lifting the top of the nest box has not caused desertion of the nest box.

Bands were applied to adult screech owls for the first time this year (2000). 19 March: Three adult owls in separate nest boxes were banded. None were on eggs. 23 April: Four adult owls were in nest boxes, each with two eggs; two were recaptures, two unbanded. All were in different boxes from the ones occupied 19 March. The two unbanded were banded. 21 May: Two owls were in the boxes, both recaptures, one was sitting on

three eggs in a different box from the one she was in 23 April. The other was in the box she was in 23 April. There were two young in this box about two weeks old.

Summary: Owls moved when they were banded 19 March and only one banded owl remained in the box 23 April. The other banded owls deserted their eggs.

Conclusion: In the future, owls will not be banded or even lifted to see if they are on eggs. Has anyone else had experience banding owls in nest boxes? I would like to hear from them. Should we band owls with young and should we band young?

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Recent Literature

BANDING HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHIES

Remembering Otto Hohn. L. A. Lima. 1997. *Edmonton Nat.* 25(2):23-24. c/o Edmonton Nat. Hist. Club, Box 1582, Edmonton, Alta. T5J 2N9 (Biographical tribute to avian physiologist, best known for his research on phalaropes, based partly on banding and color-marking.) MKM

BANDING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

Plastic color bands have no short-term effect on White-breasted Nuthatch behavior. V. A. Weiss and D. A. Cristol. 1999. *Condor* 101:884-886. Dept. Biol., College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795. RCT

Weight loss of stainless steel rings on Hooded Vultures. P. J. Mundy. 1996. *Safring News* 25:74-75. Dept. Natl. Parks & Wildl. Manage., Box 2283, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (Wear and weight loss of band was slight on bird found dead 256 months after banding, and writing on band still legible. Rate of weight loss suggests band should last 99 years. Weight loss of another band from a bird 81 months after banding was slightly less than that on the first.) MKM

The influence of nest controls, catching and ringing on the breeding success of Baltic Dunlin *Calidris alpina*. O. Thorup. 1995. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 76:26-30. V. Vedsted Byvej 32, V. Vedsted, DK-6760 Ribe, Denmark (During a six-year study in Denmark, 265 adults were caught in walk-in traps in 399 catching attempts without causing any desertions. Color-banding of chicks had no demonstrable effect on chick survival, and visits to nests did not increase mammalian predation, but probably increased predation by Common Gulls on some study plots.) MKM

Field technique suggestions for the study of Collared Pratincoles *Glareola pratincola*. B. Calvo and M. Vasquez. 1995. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 78:33-35. Applied Ornithol. Unit, Graham Kerr Bldg., IBLS, Glasgow Univ., Glasgow G12 8QQ, U.K. (Since most nest traps were avoided by pratincoles nesting in Spain, and nesting adults handled at the nest tended to desert at any stage of incubation, trapping of adults by night dazzling or other means outside the incubation period is recommended. Dye-soaked sponges left in nest cups were accepted by the birds, but their feathers did not absorb the dye. Chicks can be captured away from the nest by night dazzling, combined with sweep nets.) MKM