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North American Bird Bander

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Founded in 1925

Western Regional News

Welcome to New Members

The Western Bird Banding Association is pleased to welcome the 22 new members who joined WBBA between 1 September 1999 and 31 August 2000:

James G. Barker, Stockton CA; **Steve and Debbie Bouricius**, Palisade CO; **Robert E. Chapman**, Encinitas CA; **Robert L. Cherny**, Sacramento CA; **Gabriel David**, Victoria BC; **Cheryl Day**, Hotchkiss CO; **Manuel DeLeon**, Vernal UT; **J. Cam Finlay**, Victoria BC; **Dawn Garcia**, Bainbridge Island WA; **Rebecca J. Goff**, Howard CO; **Kathryn Gunther**, Anacortes WA; **Spencer Langdon**, Long Beach CA; **Sheri Lubin**, Idyllwild CA; **Melanie Madden**, Irvine CA; **Martin J. Muller**, Seattle WA; **Ronald McDow**, Boring OR; **The Peregrine Fund**, Boise ID; **Bill Principe**, La Canada CA; **Howard Rathlesberger**, Woodside CA; **Leanna J. Shaberly**, Phoenix AZ; **Kristin Shields**, Los Gatos CA; and **Helen Ulmschneider**, Salmon ID.

WBBA's Website: <http://thecity.sfsu.edu/snfc/western.htm>

WBBA has a new website, intended to provide members with an easily accessible library of information on topics specific to banding in the west. Included at this time are a statement of purpose, the minutes of the 2000 Annual Meeting in Fairbanks, a pictorial guide to molt limits, recent annual banding summaries, by-laws of the organization, and a membership application form. The website also provides a growing list of links to other organizations involved with bird banding.

With only a few species included, our "Pictorial Guide to Molt Limits" section is still in its infancy, but it shows great promise. Very much needed are photographs showing wing and tail molt in western species. We request that readers search their files for pictures which might be included, and contact Jim Steele about the most appropriate way to submit them. We also encourage individual banders to document molt with photographs which can be published on the website. As the number of species presented grows, this section should become an increasingly valuable companion to Pyle's guide.

WBBA members represent a widespread and diverse avian community. Your contributions of pictures, links, and other information from your part of the west will help us support all WBBA members.

Links to organizations in our region include:

Alaska Bird Observatory
Beaverhill Bird Observatory
Colorado Bird Observatory
Golden Gate Raptor Observatory
Great Basin Bird Observatory
Idaho Bird Observatory
Institute for Bird Populations
Point Reyes Bird Observatory
Rio Grande Valley Bird Observatory
Rocky Point Bird Observatory
San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory
San Pedro Avian Resource Center
Southeast Arizona Bird Observatory

Contributions and suggestions for the web page should be sent to WBBA President and webmaster, **Jim Steele: jsteele@sfsu.edu**

NORTH AMERICAN BANDING COUNCIL UPDATE

Dear WBBA members,

At the 1999 WBBA meeting I assumed the position of WBBA's representative to the North American Banding Council (NABC). I want to take this opportunity to brief you on NABC developments since then.

In January 2000, NABC held its 5th annual meeting, this time in Elgin, Arizona. My alternate, Rita Colwell, and I both attended (WBBA paid for my attendance out of funds allocated for the purpose). Although our sessions were interrupted occasionally by Greater Roadrunners and Vermilion Flycatchers and such outside, we did take care of a lot of business. The minutes are available on NABC's website at <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/NABC/>, so I won't rehash the details here. The primary topics of discussion were certification procedures, publications, and organizational structure.

In September 1999, IBBA and WBBA held "experimental" Bander (formerly Permittee)- and Trainer-certification sessions in conjunction with their annual meetings, and these were used as foundations on which to build for standardized future sessions. At the meeting, we also evaluated two local candidates for Trainer. It was decided that, at least until the process is better established, all NABC certification sessions must be approved in advance by the Council. Further, the evaluation process will include standardized written and practical exams, and each applicant must be evaluated in the field by at least two NABC-certified Trainers, neither of whom can be the person who trained him. The written exams will be composed of multiple-choice and short-answer questions drawn from a bank of potential questions submitted by Trainers. Demonstration of field skills is much harder to standardize, but certain basic skills and knowledge are expected of all candidates. At this time, criteria for evaluating Trainer candidates are still being worked out.

Several participating organizations, including WBBA, indicated plans to hold certification

sessions at their 2000 meetings. Since familiarity with the contents of the relevant NABC manuals is expected of certification candidates, the publication of the manuals was prerequisite for these sessions. Unfortunately, no manuals have been published as of this writing. WBBA did hold a Bander-level certification session, using draft manuals, at its September meeting in Alaska and is the only organization to have offered an official, approved NABC certification session to date. Eleven candidates were evaluated by six Trainers (Bob Altman, Anna-Marie Benson, Rita Colwell, Mary Gustafson, Stephanie Jones, and me). The nine candidates who were certified are Gwen Baluss, Gary Blevins, Tricia A. Campbell, Steve Dowlan, Amy Eberhart, Maureen E. Flannery, David Shaw, Kristine M. Sowl, and Carrie Topp. WBBA and NABC extend their congratulations to these new members of the NABC flock.

Although there were a few rough edges, most everyone involved felt that this session was a resounding success and took the certification process to a whole new level. This was due in large part to the hard work and cooperation of the evaluating Trainers; the incredible support and facilities provided by our host, the Alaska Bird Observatory; and the high caliber of the candidates themselves. We benefitted also from the efforts of NABC's Evaluation and Certification Committee.

So where does NABC stand and where is it going? For those of us who have been involved since the beginning, progress has been slower than we initially hoped. This is perhaps inevitable in an organization composed of very busy volunteers with diverse affiliations and a fair degree of turnover. Nonetheless, I do feel that we are making progress. NABC is now officially incorporated as a non-profit organization. Several manuals are nearly ready for publication. Certification procedures are being finalized and evaluation materials and methods are improving. The vast majority of banders in the U.S. and Canada are now aware of NABC, and apprehension within the banding community seems largely to have dissipated as the Council has assumed a more open and public *modus operandi*. Not only is NABC strongly endorsed by the U.S. and Canadian banding offices, it also is being looked at as a model by

banding programs in other countries. NABC-certified banders are finding that certification is recognized as a proof of banding knowledge and expertise when applying for a federal banding permit and makes them more competitive for banding-related employment. Perhaps most important, the certification process itself shows banders where they need to improve and exposes them to new techniques and approaches.

Fostering exchange of and access to ideas, information, and techniques is one of the primary objectives of NABC and, indeed, of the banding associations. WBBA has been and will continue to

be a key player in bringing NABC's goals to fruition. NABC will hold its next meeting in March, and EBBA is slated to hold a certification session in April. We intend to hold another session at our 2001 meeting, at which time I will be stepping down as your representative. In the meantime, please make use of me. If you have any issues or concerns that you would like me to convey to the Council, please feel free to call or email me (415-669-1847; kmburton@svn.net).

Thanks again for allowing me to serve as your representative.

Kenneth Burton
January 2001

2001 WBBA Annual Meeting

September 21-23

Spokane, Washington

Local arrangements:

Gary Blevins
Spokane Falls Community College
5925 W. Excell
Spokane, WA 99208
Email: blevins@spocom.com

Details to be published in *NABB* vol. 26:1.



Black-Billed Magpie by George West