

2003

Western Station Reports

North American Bird Bander

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Recommended Citation

North American Bird Bander (2003) "Western Station Reports," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 28 : Iss. 2 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol28/iss2/11>

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this year in general and/or at my banding location were favorable for local as well as certain migratory birds, especially for Northern Cardinals, which rebounded from all-time lows in the preceding dry years, and for transient thrushes, of which three made the list of the ten most commonly banded birds.

Most of the thrushes apparently used my banding location for a brief stopover because only very few of them were captured more than once. Indeed, a need for replenishing fat deposits generally was not apparent because the majority of birds was well endowed, especially the Wood Thrushes (one of them weighed 76.7g). Yet, fat scores were not reliable predictors of the likelihood to be recaptured.

On the other hand, the two thrushes that I determined to have remained in the area for more than a week (one Wood Thrush and one Gray-cheeked Thrush) started out with only moderate fat deposits, which they then augmented noticeably. During that period the body weight increased by more than 15%.

Among eight returning Myrtle Warblers recaptured this fall were a female banded as a hatching-year bird in Nov 1997, and a male banded as an after-hatching-year bird in Feb 1998. Noteworthy also is the twenty-ninth capture on 30 Dec 2002 of a White-eyed Vireo whose claim to fame is that it is one of the North Florida's few non-migratory individuals. It now hopes to survive its third winter here.

Western Station Reports

PRBO Conservation Science Combining Outreach and Monitoring: Public Interpretation at Mist-netting Stations

PRBO has been conducting research and monitoring on songbird populations at the Palomarin Field Station (Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin County, CA) since 1965. During that time we have published 60 scientific papers from our data, evaluated songbird response to habitat change and weather conditions, trained hundreds of interns in standardized methods for monitoring songbird populations, and shared our findings with approximately 10,000 visitors each year through our Visitor Center and Bird Banding Lab.

At PRBO's Palomarin Field Station we use bird demonstrations, through mist netting and bird banding, as a tool to teach the public about bird conservation. Each year approximately 4500 people of all ages participate in school or community group tours of the mist-nets at the Palomarin Field Station. In addition, hundreds of people observe mist netting at PRBO research sites throughout California. Combining outreach and research is a unique way to expose people to birds, conservation, and field biology; also allowing people to interact with biologists as they work. It is useful in generating funding and support for research. People have a unique opportunity to connect with birds when they see them in the hand.

This highly successful program created a demand for more science-based education programs at PRBO. As a result, our education staff is now involved in classroom and field-led programs combining field ornithology and science education for grades K-12. Using study skins, binoculars, field guides, bird nests, and data forms, we explore with Bay Area students the basics of observing and identifying birds, understanding bird behaviors, and experiencing what it means to be a "bird scientist." In addition, we are partnering with other Bay Area education groups to provide teacher training and educational materials to teachers and other environmental education programs.

Education and outreach is vital to our mission at PRBO. By working with children, interns, volunteers, and the public, we hope to inspire new generations to act as life-long responsible, effective stewards of their environment. Combining outreach with monitoring at mist-netting stations provides a unique opportunity to expose people to conservation. Remember, the child who sees the bright yellow breast of the Wilson's Warbler in your hand could grow up to become a conservationist like you! For more information about PRBO, visit the website at: www.prbo.org

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**Beaverhill Bird Observatory
Tofield, Alberta, Canada
Summer 2003**

Spring 2003 brought uncooperative weather the first couple of weeks of May. The north winds and snowfalls meant a backlog of White-throated Sparrows and Lincoln's Sparrows at the BBO. Also fondly remembered during the first half of spring migration monitoring were the many Myrtle Warblers. At times it seemed to be raining Myrtles and staff could barely keep up. Eventually, these species finished passing through and now visitors to the Observatory are greeted with the songs of Least Flycatchers and Yellow Warblers—our most common breeding species.

Currently, Matt Hanneman and Tara Worobetz staff the BBO. Full-time volunteer Kim McKinnon is also helping out for the summer. The MAPS project is running smoothly with the weather cooperating always just enough to get the work done in time! When the MAPS work is finished for the day, staff continue to monitor the Tree Swallow grid, look for nests, and learn about raptor banding.

For more information about the BBO, visit the website at: www.beaverhillbirds.com; and e-mail contact: jason@beaverhill-birds.com

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**Alaska Bird Observatory
2002 Summary**

The 2002 field season marked the eleventh year of our organization, whose mission is to advance the appreciation, understanding, and conservation of birds and their habitats through research and education in the state of Alaska. As our organization continues to grow, so does our involvement in research and monitoring projects across Alaska. Migration monitoring has always been an important component in ABO's research program, operating a station within the city of Fairbanks, and another satellite station in Denali National Park. In addition to migration monitoring, some of our more recent and on-going research and monitoring projects include: an inventory of birds on Fts. Wainwright (Fairbanks, AK), Greely (Delta Junction, AK), and Richardson (Anchorage, AK) for the Department of Defense; monitoring the effects of military overflights on bird

nesting success; inventory and monitoring of birds in Denali National Park for the National Park Service; a community-level impact study on plots treated for Ruffed Grouse habitat enhancement; a study of bird-habitat preferences in white spruce-dominated forests; Breeding Bird Survey routes; along with several additional contracts.

In 2002, we completed the eleventh year of migration monitoring at Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, Fairbanks. With the assistance of 57 local and out-of-state volunteers, four interns, and several staff members, we banded a total of 3097 birds of 36 species (18,027 net-hr), between 25 Apr and 29 Sep. While overall numbers in 2002 were up slightly from the previous year, capture rates were still well below our long-term average, likely as a result of unusually high precipitation. In fact, at times water levels were so high that even chest waders were insufficient for checking nets and we had to resort to using canoes! For many species, including Alder Flycatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Yellow Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler, capture rates reached record lows in 2002. In contrast, Hermit Thrush, Slate-colored Junco, and Common Redpoll numbers were slightly above average.

As our mission suggests, education is an integral component in the work we do. In 2002, ABO gave bird-banding demonstrations to 2144 youth and adult visitors from at least 26 states and 10 foreign countries. In addition, a total of 83 workshops, walks, and seminars were presented to 2876 participants across the state of Alaska. In March 2002, ABO moved into the new Center for Education & Research, a 2300 sq-ft facility that houses our offices, a classroom, interpretive displays, and a gift shop. Visitation at the new center was tremendous, with 3251 people from at least 47 states and 18 foreign countries passing through between March and December. In addition, we trained ten interns in bird banding, nest searching, surveying, and bird conservation. For additional information on ABO's research and education programs and activities, please visit our website at: www.alaskabird.org

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