

2006

## Western Station Reports: Alaska Bird Observatory- Spring Report for Creamer's Field Migration Station (CFMS), Fairbanks, AK

Sue Guers

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### Recommended Citation

Guers, Sue (2006) "Western Station Reports: Alaska Bird Observatory- Spring Report for Creamer's Field Migration Station (CFMS), Fairbanks, AK," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 31 : Iss. 2 , Article 25.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol31/iss2/25>

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## **Alaska Bird Observatory - Spring Report for Creamer's Field Migration Station (CFMS), Fairbanks, AK**

**Migration Monitoring**—Spring 2006 marked the 15<sup>th</sup> year of operation for CFMS and was an excellent year in terms of birds captured. For several species, capture rates per net hours were the highest in station history. These species include: Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay, Swainson's Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco and Rusty Blackbird. In addition, capture rates for several species were substantially higher in 2006 than for 2005. These species include: Yellow-rumped Warbler (the highest capture rate since 2000), as well as several sparrow species including American Tree, Savannah and White-crowned sparrow. As a whole, capture rates of long-distance migrant warbler species (including Orange-crowned, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Blackpoll, Northern Waterthrush and Wilson's) were greater in 2006 than in 2005. Unfortunately, 2006 also marked declines in capture rates of several species including Common Redpoll and Gray-cheeked Thrush—our lowest capture rates ever for these species.

Interesting captures include: a second-year (SY) male Merlin and a SY male Bohemian Waxwing, the first time these species were caught since 2001.

Light snow on 4 Jun 2006 was an unexpected surprise during the last week of daily spring banding (25 Apr-7 Jun). We had been having a later ice break-up and therefore a cooler spring than in previous years; however, no one was expecting snow at this late date. Not only was the weather event unusual for the time of year, we also had the coldest temperature on record for this date.

**Staff changes**—In May 2006, Sue Guers became the new migration program manager at Alaska Bird Observatory (ABO), filling the position held by Tim Walker for the past three years. Sue just completed her MS at Villanova University and has been studying birds for the past 10 years, with such organizations as Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and PRBO Conservation Science. Tim still resides in Fairbanks and will be spending his time as a stay-at-home dad; he will still have an affiliation with ABO.

**Avian Influenza Testing**—The onset of H5N1 in migratory bird populations has spurred one of the largest biological collaborations ever, with Alaska being at the forefront of this effort in North America. ABO has several groups of banders working in various parts of Alaska (Denali National Park, along the Denali Highway, and in the Yukon-Delta NWR) with the goal of swabbing passerines for avian influenza (AI). The target species include Arctic Warbler and Gray-cheeked Thrush, species that overwinter or breed in the Old World—areas of known AI prevalence. In addition, the banders at CFMS continued an ongoing collaboration with University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) in swabbing birds for AI.

See pictures of the Merlin and the waxwing in WBBA's website gallery. Read more about ABO at: <http://www.alaskabird.org/>

**Sue Guers**, Migration Program Manager  
Alaska Bird Observatory  
PO Box 80505  
Fairbanks, AK 99708  
Phone: 907-451-7159  
Fax: 907-451-7079  
Email: [sguers@alaskabird.org](mailto:sguers@alaskabird.org)

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## **Welcome to New Members**

WBBA welcomes the following new members who joined from April, 2005 through March, 2006.

**Bud Anderson**, Bow WA; **Johnnie Denton**, Emigrant MT; **Mike Fisher**, Chico CA; **John F. Green**, Riverside CA; **Manuel Olivier Grosselet**, Mexico City, Mexico (Life Member); **Glenn Johnson**, Tucson AZ; **Gary Lelliott**, Castlegar BC; **NCSU Libraries**, Raleigh NC; **Chris Parker**, Valley Village CA; **Mary Ristow**, Santa Fe NM; **Karen Ritchie**, Pacific Grove CA; **Ben Schonewille**, Whitehorse YT; **Francine Stroman**, Santa Cruz CA; **Andrea Wuenschel**, Des Moines WA; and **Ryan Young**, Pinon Hills CA (Life Member).