North American Bird Bander

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EBBA's 85th Annual Meeting Abstracts

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NABC Delegate Report:

Mary Doscher reported that as a NABC representative she attended the 2008 joint meeting with EBBA last year, and reported that several motions had passed which are of general interest. An applicant may now be tested for both bander and trainer level certification in the same session. Trainers may recommend that a bander candidate who fails due to one or two errors be re-evaluated at a later session only on the failed sections. NABC manuals will be made available for downloading from the website.

The 2010 meeting will be held 5 - 7 Mar in Tucson, Arizona. Anthony Hill will be the primary representative to NABC and Mary will be the secondary.

Bander Certification:

Bob Yunick reported that the next session will be at Braddock Bay, 27, 28, and 29 Sep. There will be simultaneous bander and trainer sessions.

EBBA's 85th ANNUAL MEETING 27-29 MARCH 2009

ABSTRACTS

Winter Distribution of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow Complex in Virginia

Fletcher Smith - Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA

Beginning in the winter of 2006, The Center for Conservation Biology at The College of William and Mary initiated a tidal marsh bird trapping study. The primary means used for trapping birds was the rope-drag method. Over 300 high marsh birds have been banded up to March 2009. The primary goal of this project is to determine the distribution of the two species of Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Seaside Sparrow, Sedge and Marsh wrens, and other wintering birds occupying tidal marsh habitat in Virginia. Other goals are to determine the relative abundance of each subspecies of Sharp-tailed Sparrow and to document site fidelity of these species. This project is ongoing and further studies are planned to look at other aspects of the ecology of this group in winter and at migration patterns of these birds.

Color banded American Oystercatchers in Virginia – Where Do They Go From Here?

Alexandra L. Wilke - The Nature Conservancy in Virginia, and ***Ruth Boettcher*** - Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

The American Oystercatcher is a species of high conservation concern along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States. To address the conservation, research, and management needs of the species, an American Oystercatcher Working Group was formed in 2001 comprised of interested researchers, managers, and students along the coast from Massachusetts south to Florida. One of the most significant accomplishments of the Working Group to date is the adoption, by all members actively banding oystercatchers, of a coordinated color banding protocol and the initiation of a cooperative mark-resight study investigating range-wide movement and dispersal patterns of Atlantic and Gulf Coast oystercatchers. The banding program in Virginia currently consists of partners from The Nature Conservancy in Virginia, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Center for Conservation Biology. Since 2004, we have individually color marked over 420 American Oystercatchers throughout coastal Virginia, with an emphasis on the barrier islands on the eastern shore of the Delmarva Peninsula. The majority of those birds (95%) were banded *as* chicks on natal territories. Resighting efforts both in and out of state during the breeding and nonbreeding seasons have resulted in over 2,000 resights of birds color banded in Virginia. Sixty-eight percent of the total number of birds banded in the state have been resighted at least once. In addition, we have recorded over 500 resights in Virginia of at least 110 individuals banded out of state. While the overall analysis of the Working Group's coopera-

tive banding and resighting database is pending, resight records within Virginia offer initial insight into the migratory and dispersal patterns of birds using Virginia's coast.

Tracking Purple Martin and Wood Thrush Migration Using Geolocators

John Tautin - Purple Martin Conservation Association, Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive, Erie, PA 16505, and ***Bridget J. M. Stutchbury, Scott A. Tarof, Tyler Done, Elizabeth Gow, and Patrick M. Kramer*** - Department of Biology, York University, Toronto, On M3J 1P3

We tracked the migration of Purple Martins *(Progne subis)* and Wood Thrushes *(Hylocichla mustelina)* from northwestern Pennsylvania in 2007 by mounting light-level geolocators on 20 and 14 birds, respectively. In 2008, we retrieved geolocators from two returning Purple Martins and five returning Wood Thrushes, and we analyzed sunrise and sunset times to reconstruct migration routes and to estimate wintering locations. Both species made rapid spring migrations, with one Purple Martin migrating 7,500 km from central Brazil to Pennsylvania in 13 days. Most Wood Thrushes made the migration from their Central American wintering grounds to Pennsylvania in 13-15 days. Both species migrated across the Gulf of Mexico, and several individuals stopped for periods of time on the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. Geolocators hold much promise for tracking other species of small migratory birds.

Project Owlnet: Coordinated monitoring of Northern Saw-whet Owl populations using migration data.

David F. Brinker - Maryland Department of Natural Resources, 1200 Frederick Rd., Catonsville, MD 21228, ***Scott Weidensaul*** - 778 Schwartz Valley Rd., Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972 and ***J. Steve Huy*** - 915 North Market St., Frederick, MD 21701.

Trends in Northern Saw-whet Owl *(Aegolius acadicus)* populations are not monitored by national or continental monitoring schemes, such as the Breeding Bird Survey. Project Owlnet was started in 1994 to expand the network of banding stations focused on netting migrant owls. Project Owlnet has grown from a small group of unorganized and loosely communicating stations to just over 100 stations with an internet-based communication network. Project Owlnet provides a web site, list server, access to migration monitoring protocols, references pertinent to Northern Saw-whet Owls, aging and sexing information, lure vocalizations, and audiolure design details. As Project Owlnet continues to grow additional services will be provided to participating banding stations. Project Owlnet may become the core of the North American Raptor Monitoring Strategy's (NARMS) approach to documenting trends in continental and regional populations of Northern Saw-whet Owls.

Proximate Causes of Population Trends in Migratory Landbirds

James F. Saracco, D. F. DeSante, and ***D. Kaschube*** - The Institute for Bird Populations, Point Reyes Station, CA. Presented by Danielle Kaschube

We assessed demographic contributions to BCR-scale spatial variation in MAPS population trends for 28 species of migratory landbirds. We estimated trends (time-constant lambda), adult apparent survival rates, and recruitment rates from capture-recapture models; and indexed productivity from constant-effort mist-netting data. Productivity appeared to be important in driving recruitment and trend for just nine species, while recruitment appeared to be the major driver of trends for 25 species, implicating the major importance of first-year survival. Adult survival appeared to be important for driving trends for nine species. Species for which first-year survival was important in explaining spatial variation in, trends tended to have *declining* populations, species for which adult survival was important tended to have stable trends, and species for which productivity was important tended to have stable or positive trends. Results indicate that (1) enhancing survival (especially the

first year) will be important for slowing declines and stabilizing populations, (2) enhancing productivity may be necessary to recover populations whose declines have been arrested, and (3) identifying relationships between vital rates and winter habitat and weather will be critical for migratory bird conservation.

We also evaluate the MAPS program's ability to meet landbird demographic monitoring needs in the northeastern United States. Many of the 183 MAPS stations that have operated in the Northeast were established opportunistically with little coordination among agencies or individual station operators. We believe that development of a specific plan for MAPS improvement and growth will improve the ability of the program to provide critical demographic data for Northeast landbirds.

Status Monitoring of a Color-banded Population of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Virginia

Michael D. Wilson and ***Bryan D. Watts*** - Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary and Virginia Commonwealth University, Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker *(Picoides borealis)* is a federally endangered species that has disappeared completely from the northern portion of its breeding range. Virginia supports the only population north of the Carolinas where breeding has continued to the present time. However, both the number of sites and the population of birds has declined dramatically over the past 40 years and the species remains in imminent danger of extinction within Virginia. Dramatic habitat management, population monitoring, and translocation of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers into the population have been ongoing since 2000 and are beginning to show promising results.All individuals contained within or moved into this last remaining population in Virginia have been color-banded as either adults or nestlings to allow tracking of all individuals. Over the past nine years we have been able to document breeding patterns, lineages, within-population movements and fates of 117 individual woodpeckers.

Banding and Science: The Crucial Role of Bird Banding in the Recovery of the Delaware Bay Migratory Bird Stopover

Larry Niles - Conserve Wildlife Foundation, Bordentown, NJ

The Delaware Bay was once one of the nation's most important bird stopovers. Sadly, now it is much diminished– a victim of a poorly regulated commercial fishery harvest, another consequence of inadequate government oversight of which both humans and other animals now fall prey. With little help from established funding sources and agencies, we built a scientifically sound banding effort that is uncommon in the US, but commonplace in other areas of the world. Ironically this mostly volunteer banding operation that pioneered the use of unique inscribed leg flags, is now the heart of a multi-agency state and federal scientific program that will decide the future of the Delaware Bay Stopover—clear evidence of the need for long-term bird banding programs. My talk will focus on our effort to save the stopover and our banding program focusing on the Red Knot. I will also take this occasion to announce a new online site to report individually marked shorebirds, that will immediately return to the user a Google map with original banding location and any subsequent resightings. We developed this site to accommodate any uniquely color marked bird.

POSTER

The Blue-winged Warbler Complex of Central New Jersey

Hannah Bonsey Suthers - 4 View Point Drive, Hopewell, NJ 08525, (hsuthers@princeton.edu) and ***Sean Patrick Graesser*** - 37 East Broad Street, Hopewell, NJ 08525

We summarized 31 years of Blue-winged Warbler (BWWA) banding data at Featherbed Lane Bird Banding and Research Station in Hopewell Township, Mercer County, NJ. Babson (1901) noted BWWA breeding in Princeton township; Golden-winged Warbler only as a migrant. The

breeding bird atlas (Walsh et al. 1999) indicated BWWA nesting in 98% of blocks in the Highlands, 80% of blocks north of the Coastal Plain. Over 98% GWWA range was in the Highlands; none in central NJ. Reports of hybrids have been sparse.

Seven territorial males first colonized 43 ha of successional old fields at Featherbed Lane in 1977, peaked at 54 by 1992, declined noticeably by 1996, as habitat succeeded to second growth forest. Presently eight are on 10 ha suitable habitat. Banding 1978 - 2008 yielded 737 encounters, 554 new; 112 returns = 20% ; 486 new adults, 251 chicks; 397 males, 244 females, 96 sex unknown; 38 known pairs; 5 families; 36 chick & dad; 12 chick & mom; 14 sibling sets. Oldest BWWA–after-nine-years; oldest Lawrence's variant, after-five-years.

Heterozygous BWWA phenotypes were detectable in 1980. Appearances of Brewster's were in 1984, 1988, 2002; Lawrence's in 1984, 1985, 2008, with variants in 1984 and 1990. The sequence of observed phenotypes and variants appears to be cyclical. Observations and Punnett Squares analyses demonstrate how, in this predominantly heterozygous BWWA population, a small remnant of the GWWA genotype can be recovered.

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region 1 (Northeast) – Fall 2008 Report

***Sue Finnegan*, Coordinator**
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Five banding stations sent in their reports for 2008. SW-Laurentian, Atlantic Bird Observatory, and Joppa Flats Banding Station were unable to report this year for various reasons.

Weather conditions seemed favorable for the most part this fall. Appledore noted the poorest fall season for birds per 100 net hours (b/100nh) on record, while Manomet had a higher above-average record of banded b/100nh.

Results were down from 2007 at all stations except Wing Island. Largest daily catch dates occurred between 7 and 17 Oct, excluding Appledore, who had to close down early for the fall season.

Highlights from the region included a confirmed breeding record for Tufted Titmouse at St. Andrews banding station and two new species banded: Hooded Warbler and White-winged Crossbill. While no new species were recorded at Appledore, they did enjoy banding both cuckoo species, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Hooded Warbler. A very late Blackpoll Warbler on 12 Nov proved an exciting recapture at Manomet as it could be a late record. New fall species at Wing Island consisted of a Hooded and a Lawrence's warbler and two Red-bellied Woodpeckers. Exciting captures at Island Beach were a Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Hairy Woodpecker, not previously banded in the fall.

Thanks very much to all the banding stations who take time out of their busy schedules to submit these reports.

Hairy Woodpecker by George West