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2009 Shorebird Research on Sandusky Bay, Ohio

In the summer of 2006, we began a shorebird banding research project at Winous Point Shooting Club on Sandusky Bay. The purpose of the study was three fold. The first was to see what species were using northwest Ohio during fall migration and in what numbers. The second was to see how long they were staying in the area. And the third was, hopefully, to add samples to an avian flu study from shorebirds.

During the fall migration of 2006, 226 shorebirds of 10 species plus an additional 10 individuals which were not shorebirds were banded. Banding occurred on a total of eight days, with 213.5 net-hours of effort, and with a respectable 1.11 b/nh recorded. During the fall migration of 2007, the effort was repeated at Winous Point. For the 2007 season, 281 shorebirds of 12 species plus an additional 23 individuals which were not shorebirds were banded. Banding occurred on 11 days, with 379.5 net-hours of effort, and 0.80 b/nh recorded.

At the beginning of the 2008 fall migration banding began again at Winous Point. However, early into the season, Doug Brewer, the refuge manager at Ottawa NWR, requested Ottawa NWR be added to the study and with the attempt to collect some avian flu data there as well. The refuge would supply an intern, John Siekierski, to assist our efforts and collect avian flu samples. The research was expanded.

For the fall of 2008, there were 40 banding days, 1404.5 net-hours of effort, and 1.21 b/nh and 1593 shorebirds of 16 species plus 106 non-shorebirds of 14 species were banded. All total, 1699 individual birds were banded this season of 30 species. Several hundred avian flu samples were collected during the process.

Over the three seasons, 18 species of shorebirds of 2100 individuals have been banded. In addition, 132 individual birds were recaptured in the 2008 season, 14 of which were recaptured multiple times.

The average length of time between banding and recapture was 8.3 days. Four individual Least Sandpipers, however, were recaptured more than 20 days later and two Semipalmated Plovers more than 14 days later. These data will give an idea of the importance of both sites as stopover and refueling locations for migrant shorebirds. Two Semipalmated Sandpipers which were banded in 2006 and two Semipalmated Sandpipers which were banded in 2007 were recaptured. All had been banded at Winous Point but one was recaptured at Ottawa NWR. In addition, several hundred avian flu samples were collected and given to Richard Slemons of Ohio State University. All samples were negative for the dangerous strains of avian flu, but several less dangerous strains were found.

Beginning 13 Jul 2009, the shorebird research program continued into its fourth season. Again, support of money, personnel, and facilities were supplied by Winous Point Shooting Club/Winous Point Conservancy and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. Winous Point supplied banding sites, funding for new nets, a scale for weighing larger birds, and personnel for setup and moving nets. Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge supplied banding sites, funding for nets, equipment, and personnel. In addition to intern John Siekierski, several other summer interns were supplied at peak times to assist in the capture, sampling, and banding of shorebirds. Again this year John Siekierski collected hundreds of samples from shorebirds for the avian flu study database for Richard Slemons at Ohio State University. And for the fourth year of sampling shorebirds, no positive results of avian flu was found.

In addition, this year a new banding site was started. It was felt that a third site was necessary due to the unavailability of banding at Winous Point during duck hunting season and at Ottawa NWR because of water levels (lack of mudflat). The new site, the property of William and Lena McClure, is in Rice Township, Section 30 of Sandusky County, about a mile south of the Winous Point properties. Our recapture data shows that the shorebirds are interacting between all three sites.

Species	Year				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
American Golden-Plover	-	-	-	1	1
Semipalmated Plover	6	1	52	39	98
Killdeer	4	1	115	114	234
Spotted Sandpiper	-	3	16	13	32
Solitary Sandpiper	-	-	13	13	26
Greater Yellowlegs	-	1	1	1	3
Lesser Yellowlegs	5	17	45	84	151
Marbled Godwit	-	-	1	1	2
Red Knot	1	-	-	-	1
Semipalmated Sandpiper	40	73	538	515	1166
Western Sandpiper	-	-	2	4	6
Least Sandpiper	25	82	557	467	1131
White-rumped Sandpiper	-	-	3	2	5
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	19	112	127	259
Dunlin	-	-	5	100	195
Stilt Sandpiper	1	1	24	33	59
Short-billed Dowitcher	142	75	106	128	451
Long-billed Dowitcher	-	2	-	4	6
Wilson's Snipe	1	6	3	12	22
Wilson's Phalarope	-	-	-	1	1
Red-necked Phalarope	-	-	-	2	2
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	226	281	1593	1661	3761
TOTAL SPECIES	10	12	16	20	21
BANDING DAYS	8	11	40	51	110
NET HOURS	213.5	379.5	1404.5	1808	3805.5
SHOREBIRDS/NH	1.06	0.74	1.13	0.92	0.99

The 2009 banding project continued to improve as it has for each of the years of the study. This year banding occurred on 51 days with several of those days at two sites at the same time. Net hours of banding effort also increased to 1808. This brings the total banding days to 110 days over four years and 3805.5 net-hours of effort. This year, 1661 shorebirds of 20 species were banded. Of the twenty species of shorebirds, seven species are of note.

Ohio's first American Golden-Plover and Ohio's first Red-necked Phalaropes were banded. Five other species which are rarely banded in Ohio were Greater Yellowlegs, Marbled Godwit, Western Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Wilson's Phalarope.

In addition, 262 non-shorebirds of 26 species were banded. Unusual among these were Hooded

Merganser and Peregrine Falcon. The total number of birds banded in 2009 was 1923. 81 individual recaptures, six escape/released individuals, and 12 casualties were recorded. Of the recaptured birds, 13 were banded in 2008. One bird, an American Goldfinch, had been banded by Black Swamp Bird Observatory on 6 May 2009 during its passerine banding study. The average length of time between banding and recapture was 7.6 days with a range of 1 to 33 days and an average weight gain of 7.15%. Of the recaptured individuals, 69% showed a weight gain at recapture, 25.5% showed a weight loss at recapture, and 5.5% show no change in weight at recapture. Those individuals with a

weight gain showed a gain of 17% and those with a weight loss, showed a loss of 10%. The casualty rate was a very good 0.59%. All casualties were deposited at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

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Founded in 1925

Western Regional News

**WBBA TO MEET ON
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RANCH**

Please use inserted Registration Form.

The Western Bird Banding Association will meet at the peak of landbird migration for their 2010 annual meeting at the lovely Starr Ranch Bird Observatory, **September 30 to October 3, 2010**. SRBO is within the Starr Ranch Sanctuary (<http://www.starranch.org/>), a 4,000-acre National Audubon Society preserve in the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains, in the mild and semiarid Mediterranean climate of southeastern Orange County, approximately 60 miles southeast of Los Angeles. The meeting is not to be missed and will have exciting demonstrations and workshops of banding, data management, and analysis of banding data. Located at a long-running banding station in a riparian corridor amongst the unique California coastal sage scrub, the historic ranch boasts an old orange grove, offers shady trees for camping and some limited bunk space, as well as outdoor cooking facilities and nearby motels. Paper and poster presentations can reflect original research, summarize existing information, or address the use of banding as a tool in avian research and monitoring. Mist nets will be operated for the first time at Starr Ranch during fall migration. An NABC certification for banders and trainers is also planned. Please submit abstracts for papers or workshops electronically **by 15 August** to C. J. Ralph (EM: cjr2@humboldt.edu), specifying workshop, paper, or poster. For additional information on abstract submission and about WBBA's 2010 meeting, please visit the WBBA website (URL: <http://www.westernbirdbanding.org/next-meetings.html>), or contact C.J. at 707 499-9707.