

2012

A New Technique Hints at Yellow-billed Cuckoo's Wanderings

C. J. Ralph

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb>

Recommended Citation

Ralph, C. J. (2012) "A New Technique Hints at Yellow-billed Cuckoo's Wanderings," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 37 : Iss. 2 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol37/iss2/5>

This News Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in North American Bird Bander by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

previously banded mate had been seen on 16 Jun with a full tail, but was entirely tailless on 19 Jun, indicating the rapid molt as previously described (Acker and Garcia 2010, Forsman 1981). Fig. 1 is a photo of the tailless pair taken on 24 Jun. The female was captured on 18 Jul, a month after the initial observation, and her rectrices measured 160 mm. On this same date, the male had the start of a new tail but was noticeably behind in growth (Fig. 2). On 30 Jul, the female's rectrices were 205 mm, and, with the exception of blood in the quills indicative of a growing feather, appeared to be nearly complete. On 8 Aug, 51 days after initial observation, her tail was 215 mm with no blood in the quills.

The male was also captured on 8 Aug 2011. His tail was 208 mm with a visible sheath, indicating the rectrices were still growing in length. He was recaptured nine days later on 17 Aug, at which time his rectrices measured 224 mm. He had no visible blood in the quills, indicating no further growth. The period between initial observation when the male was observed tailless and the final rectrices measurement on 17 Aug, was 59 days.

For this pair, the period of time from loss of tail to a complete hardened set of rectrices was approximately 60 days. The average rectrices growth rate for the male, starting at the estimated date of loss, was 3.7 mm/day for the 60 day period.



Fig. 1. Photo of tailless pair taken 24 Jun 2011; female on left.
Photo by Rachel Acker.



Fig. 2. Photo of pair taken 18 Jul 2011, prior to capture; female on left. Note more advanced molt of female.

Photo by Rachel Acker.

Literature Cited

- Acker, J and D. Garcia. 2010. Notes on rectrix molt in Barred Owls (*Strix varia*). *North American Bird Bander* 35:61-68.
Forsman, E. 1981. Molt of the Spotted Owl. *Auk* 98:735-742.

Jamie Acker

14038 Farmview Ln.
Bainbridge Is., WA. 98110
email: Owler@sounddsl.com

Dawn Garcia

6372 Harvey Rd.
Paradise, CA 95969

A New Technique Hints at Yellow-billed Cuckoo's Wanderings

The new technologies of transmitters and data loggers give us the ability to track individual birds throughout the year, setting aside previously well-known "facts". Indeed, such a device placed on a single netted Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Sechrist et al. 2012) provided a shocking insight into a migration strategy that others had only barely suggested at (e.g., Hughes 1999). With admirable modesty, the authors said their work "hinted at a flexible migration strategy". While the female bred within a few kilometers in each of two years, in its first summer she traveled from her New Mexico breeding site, and moved over a thousand kilometers through Chihuahua and Sonora, then returned to the Rio Grande valley before migrating. Then in the winter, after migrating some 8,000 kilometers, far from imprinting on its wintering grounds, it traveled another thousand kilometers over several months in Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. This is a

far cry from the normal model that we have of a bird migrating between fixed wintering and breeding areas.

Literature Cited

Hughes, J.M. 1999. Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), the Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/418>

Sechrist, J. D., E.H. Paxton, D.D. Ahlers, R.H. Doster, and V.M. Ryan. 2012. One year of migration data for a Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo. *Western Birds* 43:2-11.

C.J. Ralph

USDA Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Research Station
1700 Bayview Drive
Arcata, CA 95521

Recent Literature

BANDING HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHIES

Obituaries Mitchell Durno Murray (1925-2009).

A. Leishman. 2009. *Corella* 33:45-46 & G. Smith. 2009. *Corella* 33:46. 4/101 Centaur St., Revesby Heights, NSW 2212, Australia (Two brief biographies of British-born Australian veterinarian, who was one of Australia's first licensed banders, banding albatrosses, petrels, giant-petrels, gulls, terns and monarchs and also banded in Antarctica. He published numerous papers on several birds, was the driving force behind the *Seabird Islands* series of *Australian Bird Bander* and *Corella*, a participant on the boards of several ornithological organizations and a recipient of significant awards.) MKM

EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

Preening behaviour of adult Gyrfalcons tagged with backpack transmitters. T.L. Booms, P.F. Schempf and M.R. Fuller. 2011. *Journal of Raptor Research* 45:264-267. Alaska Dept. Fish & Game, Wildl. Diversity Program, 1300 College Rd., Fairbanks, AK 99701 (After females at two nests in Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, AK, were captured with noose carpets and fitted with radio-transmitters, the time that they spent preening, feeding, sleeping and in other activities was documented in comparison with their mates, neither of which carried transmitters. Both females spent a greater proportion of time preening than their untagged males and one female that was observed both before and after being fitted with transmitters increased the amount of time preening. The females also ceased incubating for awhile after being fitted with transmitters, one for at least ten days.) MKM

IDENTIFICATION, MOLTS, PLUMAGES, WEIGHTS AND MEASUREMENTS

Footprinting of raptors for identification: a follow-up from 1982 to 2010. G. Tovar-Lopez, N. P. Finch and E.H. Stauber. 2011. *Journal of Raptor Research* 45:194-195. Dept. of Clinical Veterinary Medicine, Washington State Univ., Pullman, WA 99163-6610 (An examination of the scale pattern on the foot of one of 25 Red-tailed Hawks included in a 1984 study of the uniqueness of scale patterns on the feet of Red-tailed Hawks and Peregrine Falcons [E.H. Stauber. 1984. *Journal of Raptor Research* 18:67-71] indicated that most scales examined remained the same 28 years later, while the change on the others was too slight to affect the usefulness in foot pattern in identifying individuals.) MKM

Winter puffins wanted. M. Harris. 2011. *Seabird Group Newsletter* 118:10-11. Pyttenkerrie Cottage, Glassel, Banchory AB31 4DD, United Kingdom (Although primary molt in most Atlantic Puffins was believed to occur primarily in winter, many in Shetland, Orkney and Faeroe islands have recently been found flightless in October. Further study is needed to determine whether the timing of flightlessness is more variable than believed previously or has changed recently. Photographs of two dead puffins banded in 1988 and 2003 and shot in the Faeroes in Oct 2010 are included.) MKM

Yellow-nosed Albatross: new to Ontario. P.R. Martin and B.M. Di Labio. 2011. *Ontario Birds* 29:58-79. Dept. of Biol., Queen's Univ., Kingston, ON K7L 3N6 (Detailed description, with photographs, of adult "Atlantic" Yellow-nosed Albatross