

2012

89th Annual Eastern Bird Banding Association Conference Paper Session 31 March 2012

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89th Annual Eastern Bird Banding Association Conference Paper Session 31 March 2012

Authors

David Mizrahi, Phillip Vasseur, Robert Yunick, Trudy Battaly, Jo Anna Lutmerding, Kim North, Tyler Christensen, Sean Graesser, Bracken Brown, Orion Weldon, S. Jacob Socolar, Dale Rosselet, and Kevin Karlson

Councilors 2015 Adrienne Leppold (first term)
 Betsy Brooks (first term)
 Tom Greg (first term)
 George Rowsom (first term)

David Hauber was appointed to a one-year term to fill Melanie Reichley's term as councilor, class of 2013. Nominations accepted as read. There were no nominations from the floor. It was moved by Bob Yunick, seconded and passed to have the Secretary cast a vote for the proposed slate of officers.

Publication & Membership:

Elaine Mease noted that there are 310 paid members this year and a list of six new members has been posted. Elaine also noted that we lost two long-time members this year: Mrs. David Lapham, and Bob McKinney. A motion was made by Bob Yunick to accept the new members. The motion was seconded and carried

Memorial Grant Committee:

Doris McGovern reported that 21 applications were submitted of which the following three were selected by the committee.

1. \$1,000 to *Kristen Covino*, "Transition between phases of the annual cycle: spring migration to breeding in Nearctic-Neotropical songbirds." Her research will be done in Louisiana, New York, and Maine. Kristen is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi.

2. \$1,000 to *Jill Gautreaux*, "Spring stopover of Nearctic-Neotropical migratory landbirds with an urbanized landscape along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico." Her research will be done in Mississippi. Jill is a graduate student at the University of Southern Mississippi.

3. \$500 to *Jared Wolfe*, "Measuring bird demographics to determine the ecological value of small nature preserves in Baton Rouge, LA." His research will be done in Louisiana. Jared is a Ph.D. student at Louisiana State University.

Net Committee:

Ted Hicks reported that net sales were up. He has been in contact with net manufacturers in China and hopes to place an order shortly.

NABC Delegate Report:

Anthony Hill reported that the spring meeting is later in April at Long Point and, therefore, he does not have a report. He did note that Braddock Bay has certified four at the bander level and two at the trainer level last year. There will be no training sessions at Braddock Bay this year and he knows of no other sessions scheduled to date. The manuals continue to be updated and revised. The website is also being updated.

New Business:

SORA will have volumes 25 thru 30 updated by May 1st.

Adjourn:

It was moved and seconded to adjourn. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 1408 hours.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gerald K. Lahr, Secretary

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List of Speakers and Papers Presented

David Mizrahi has been Vice-president for Research and Monitoring at New Jersey Audubon since 2000. He earned his Ph.D. with honors in Zoology from Clemson University in 1999. The focus of his dissertation research was the behavior and ecophysiology of Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers during spring migration stopovers in Delaware Bay. This work has been expanded at NJ Audubon to encompass the conservation of migratory shorebirds using the Delaware Bay stopover and on wintering grounds in northern South America. During his tenure at Clemson he worked with Dr. Sidney A. Gauthreaux, Jr., studying migration stopover ecology of landbirds using National Weather Service Doppler radar data. At New Jersey Audubon, he and his staff are using

National Weather Service Doppler radar data to identify critical stopover sites used by nocturnally migrating landbirds during passage through the mid-Atlantic region. Also, they have been involved in several projects using mobile marine radar systems to assess the potential impacts of tall structures on aerial vertebrates. Project locations include the mid-Atlantic Appalachian Mountains, the coastal plain of southern New Jersey, the Tug Hill Plateau region of New York and Block Island in Long Island Sound. Under his direction, NJA Research and Monitoring staff also work on a variety of other initiatives, such as "Assessing the effects of contaminants on birds breeding in urban landscapes," "Determining avian behavioral responses and productivity to grassland management on military and civilian airfields" and "Relationships between airfield habitat management and bird/aircraft strike hazards."

TITLE: Life on the Move: The Challenges of Conserving Migratory Birds

ABSTRACT: Life on the move: the challenges of conserving migratory shorebirds. David Mizrahi, Ph.D., Vice-president for Research and Monitoring, New Jersey Audubon Society/Cape May Bird Observatory. Sandpipers are among the most migratory animals on Earth. Many species migrate long distances between wintering grounds in the southern hemisphere and breeding areas in Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. Interspersed between bouts of migration are extended refueling and resting periods. Individuals arrive at staging areas with depleted energy reserves and at some sites increase body mass 80-100%, most of which is stored as fat. Few sites can provide the resources needed to fuel subsequent long distance migration bouts. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of individuals may concentrate at just a few key sites. This can result in large proportions of a species' population being in one place at the same time; thus, species viability can be at risk in the face of acute or chronic threats. Over the last 25 years, several species, like Red Knot and Semipalmated Sandpiper have declined dramatically. Some of this could be attributable to conditions at major staging areas, like Delaware Bay. However, in order to develop effective conservation strategies for

migratory shorebirds, it is essential to understand threats during the wintering, migration and breeding periods and develop a clear picture of spatial connectivity among populations throughout the annual cycle. Individual marking, stable isotopes and genetics are important tools that can be used to reveal spatial connections among populations. I will discuss New Jersey Audubon's international program to conserve Semipalmated Sandpiper, a once abundant, but rapidly declining species, and the various methods we are using to understand spatial connectivity and the threats that may be responsible for the apparent declines

Phillip Vasseur is a master's student in Dr. Paul Leberg's lab at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where he conducted his thesis research investigating the effects of habitat edges and nest-site characteristics on the reproductive success of Painted Buntings. Philip first became interested in avian ecology as an undergraduate at Louisiana State University. He has worked as an avian technician for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, and the University of Tennessee on their Golden-winged Warbler monitoring project. Before attending grad school, Phillip also worked as a USGS contractor at the National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette. He is currently a member of the American Bird Conservancy, the Louisiana Ornithological Society, the American Ornithologists' Union, and the Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists. After graduation he would like to continue doing songbird research in Louisiana.

TITLE: Effects of Habitat Edges and Nest Site Characteristics on Painted Bunting Nest Survival

ABSTRACT: Populations of many species of shrubland birds have been declining primarily due to loss of breeding habitat. Understanding habitat use and nesting success of these species is essential to conservation efforts in order to critically evaluate the relative suitability of shrubland habitats. We

investigated the factors associated with Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) nest survival from 2010 - 2011 at Indian Bayou Recreation Area in the Atchafalaya River Basin, LA and in 2011 at a private land site in south-central LA. We monitored a subset of nests in 2011 using video surveillance to accurately determine nest fate and identify causes of nest failure. We also collected vegetation measurements at nest sites and non-nest sites to quantify certain habitat characteristics. We hypothesized that nest success would be positively related to distance from habitat edge because brood parasites (cowbirds) and nest predators are more abundant along edges.

We monitored 41 Painted Bunting nests and used the logistic-exposure method to produce estimates of daily survival rates. Several predictor variables were modeled to compare certain nest-site, edge, parasitism, and temporal effects. We used an information-theoretic approach to evaluate support for different models and determined that two models were highly supported. Both models included the effects of parasitism, which had a strong negative effect on daily survival rates. Canopy cover was a factor important to nest success based on one top model. The other model indicated distance from habitat edge was an important factor. The overall daily survival rate was 0.944 and overall probability of survival was 0.251. Because we found strong support of a negative effect associated with cowbird parasitism and nest success, future studies should continue monitoring the daily survival rates of Painted Buntings, as well as other species that are parasitized by cowbirds in shrubland habitats so that interspecific comparisons can be made.

Robert Yunick is a retired organic chemist who started banding in 1950. To date he has banded over 203,000 birds of 203 species in seven US states and the Canadian Arctic.

Bob has served as vice president, president, and councilor of both EBBA and the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association (now the Association of Field Ornithologists) and is an Elective Member of the American Ornithologists' Union.

A co-author of the original 1987 Pyle *Identification Guide to North American Passerines*, Bob was among the very first class of certified Trainers and Banders on passerines at the North American Banding Council meeting in Ottumwa, Iowa, in 1999 and has participated for many years on EBBA's behalf in Certification Sessions for Banders and Trainers at Braddock Bay Observatory.

Bob was certified as a hummingbird bander in Silver City, New Mexico, in 2001. He has long been a backyard bander who dabbled in extracting data from the birds he bands. In this particular case, hummers from an Adirondack mountain retreat where he has spent many a moment with hummers and black flies; the latter the bane of these wonderful mountains.

TITLE: Results from a 21-year banding study on Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) at an Adirondack Mountain, New York, breeding area.

ABSTRACT: From 1991 through 2011, 688 adult (36 % male, 64 % female) Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were banded at Jenny Lake near Corinth, NY. Banding commenced in May as birds arrived from their wintering area and lasted through September when they departed. Forty-four adult males (19% of those banded) produced a total of 81 return captures, none exceeding four years after banding; while 136 adult females (34% of those banded) produced a total of 352 return captures out to eight years after banding or at least nine years old. Banded immatures, 1999-2011, totaled 202 (49% male, 51% female) from which 19 immature males (25%) were captured as returns a total of 23 times, none beyond three years; and 17 immature females (27%) were captured as returns a total of 35 times out to eight years of age.

Total numbers of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds captured varied from 20 to 185 per year and yearly fluctuations in abundance were similar to annual fluctuations in sugar water consumption. After the first eight years, during which time the numbers of return captures increased, returns for the 13 years thereafter constituted 24% to 43% of the birds captured annually.

Drew Panko retired from Roosevelt High School in Yonkers, NY, where he taught both physics and ecology. Drew founded the Fire Island Hawk Watch in 1982 and has served as coordinator ever since. He currently serves on the Board of the Northeast Hawk Watch and has been a Northern Saw-whet Owl bander since 2003.

Trudy Battaly, formerly a high school math and biology teacher, is now an Adjunct Math Faculty member at Westchester Community College. Trudy is Coordinator of the Hook Mountain Hawk Watch and also serves on the Northeast Hawk Watch Board of Directors. She has been a Northern Saw-whet Owl bander since 2003.

Her web pages can be found:

Banding pages:

<http://www.battaly.com/banding>

Web pages on bird song:

<http://www.birdsongid.com>

TITLE: Comparison of Gender Proportions of Northern Saw-whet Owls Captured by Two Different Methods in Southeastern NY

ABSTRACT: Seventy-four percent of the Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) we have captured in southeastern New York state are female. To determine if this proportion represents the true proportion of females in our area or is a consequence of capture bias, we compared the gender distribution using two capture methods. One method is the traditional attraction of owls into mist nets using an audio-lure. The other method is direct capture from a roost site.

Jo Anna Lutmerding has been at the BBL for 4 ½ years as a biologist managing the band encounter section. This includes managing the federal band encounter database that has over 4.5 million records and receives ~85,000 new records annually. Her other duties include managing the BBL website, maintaining and developing www.reportband.gov, and a call center that receives reports via a toll free line. She also helps run the passerine migration

station at the Patuxent Research Refuge and regularly participates in assisting with banding other groups of birds.

**TITLE: Morning: Update from the US Bird Banding Laboratory
Afternoon: BANDIT workshop**

Kim Korth has been working with the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) since November 2002, where she established and implemented the Landowner Incentive Program for New Jersey, which resulted in the management of over 3500 acres of grassland habitat. Currently, Kim is working on several projects including the central Bald Eagle, the grassland bird project coordinator, and is the Pinelands biologist. She has a Bachelor's degree in business administration from George Washington University, a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Management from the University of Rhode Island, and a Master's degree in biology from Virginia Commonwealth University. She also has a 10 year-old budding biologist!

TITLE: Bald Eagles in NJ - Life after (Federal) Delisting

ABSTRACT: The Bald Eagle population has rebounded in New Jersey. In 1970, New Jersey had only one pair of nesting Bald Eagles. Today ENSP monitors over 100 nesting pairs across the state. The process of securing New Jersey's eagle population included hacking young and an aggressive reintroduction program. Although the federal government delisted the Bald Eagle in 2007, it is listed as endangered in New Jersey and is protected by state and federal law. The growth of the Bald Eagle population in New Jersey presents ENSP with new challenges and demonstrates the need for a recovery or management plan.

Tyler Christensen's first introduction to the world of birds was during a family vacation to Costa Rica. Three years later he began training with Hannah Suthers at Featherbed Lane banding station, taking particular interest in the subtleties of molt. Last year, Tyler launched BandersResource.com, a website

designed to make these subtleties more accessible to students and researchers. Tyler now works for the Mercer County Park Commission in central New Jersey and attends Mercer County Community College.

Sean Graesser, another graduate of the Hannah Suthers school of banding, has been studying molt since 2006 through banding operations in New Jersey, Connecticut, and Panama.

TITLE: Nicoya Peninsula Avian Research Station

ABSTRACT: Tyler Christensen and Sean Graesser are the directors of a newly initiated banding project on the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica. The two coordinators summarize the project's pilot season. The presentation will include their efforts to study molt patterns and aging criteria in Central American species and their encounters with familiar Neotropical migrants.

Bracken Brown is a recent graduate of Bryn Athyn College. He grew up working on a family farm beneath Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. His love of birds led to many years of volunteering at Hawk Mountain, helping with the American Kestrel study and fall migration counts. Bracken was the lead vulture trapper at Hawk Mountain from 2010-2011, before going on to act as an avian technician for environmental impact assessment agencies. He is currently looking to broaden his ornithological exposures before pursuing a doctorate.

TITLE: On Trapping a Scavenger: Hawk Mountain Sanctuary's New World Vulture Study

ABSTRACT: The Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) is the most widely distributed, as well as the most abundant, of all scavenging birds of prey. The species, which occurs only in the new World, can be seen as far north as southern Canada and as far south as Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America. The scientific name for Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*, translates as "breezy cleanser," most likely a reflection of its soaring and scavenging life style. In

the spring of 2003, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary initiated a long-term study of summer dispersal and winter migration behavior of Turkey Vultures in an effort to learn more about the movement ecology of this extremely successful raptor, which seems to have one of the most flexible of all avian migration systems. To date, scientists at the sanctuary and its collaborators have placed tiny radio tags, monitored by satellite, on 21 Turkey Vultures in an effort to follow their migrations. Five of the satellite-tracked birds also had a data logger surgically implanted in their body cavities. The loggers record both core body temperature and heart rate. The Sanctuary and its collaborators also placed red, yellow, or light blue numbered wing tags on Turkey Vultures in Canada, Venezuela, and the United States as an economical means of tracking the movements of individual birds. Being scavengers, vultures act as bioindicators of the health of an ecosystem, so Hawk Mountain has also initiated testing birds for the presence of heavy metal pollutants. Our plan is to lay the groundwork for a long-term monitoring effort that will track regional and continental population trends in hopes of avoiding catastrophic declines, similar to those of Old World Vultures in many parts of Africa and southern Asia. A second goal of our research is to provide the general public, including school children, with the ability to track the daily movements and whereabouts of these important scavengers across North and South America. Although often maligned, Turkey Vultures are great natural ambassadors and teachers. This "everywhere bird" is quickly becoming "everyone's bird," as these "sanitation engineers" bring continent-wide awareness, both ecologically and sociologically.

Orion Weldon is a Ph.D. candidate in the Ecology and Evolution Program at Rutgers University. An avid outdoor and wildlife enthusiast, his first passion was coral reef systems, which led him to obtain a B.S. in Marine Biology. After discovering the world of birds, his focus shifted to forest and landscape dynamics.

TITLE: Landscape scale analysis of vegetation structure preference by early successional and mature forest breeding birds using LIDAR

ABSTRACT: Forest breeding birds are a highly

threatened group in the Northeast US, with many species, such as Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) and Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*) suffering from habitat loss. Conservation and restoration efforts have been hindered by our poor understanding of the forest structure and composition required by these species. Previously, exploring such relationships at a landscape scale would have required a prohibitively large data collection effort. I will be combining vegetation structure metrics extracted from LIDAR data that were collected across northern New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania with abundance data for 12 species from the Breeding Bird Survey. Of these, six species are early successional breeding birds, and six are mature forest breeding birds. LIDAR data will allow us to define forest vegetation structure in much greater detail than would have been possible from the available coarse land-use land-cover maps. LIDAR-based habitat descriptions will likely result in substantially improved habitat models for several species with respect to structural resolution and spatial extent. These results will provide specific guidance on ways that landowners might manage forest characteristics to benefit threatened forest breeding bird species.

S. Jacob Socolar began birding as a young child in the woods and fields near his North Carolina home. By the end of high school, his interests focused on the Neotropics. He spent time in Peru each summer during his undergraduate years at Swarthmore College, where his honors thesis focused on the bird communities of bamboo die-offs in Manu National Park. He is now in the first year of a Ph.D. program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Princeton University, with plans to continue studying the hyperdiverse bird communities of the Neotropics.

TITLE: Detecting Range Shifts with Mist Nets: Elevational Ranges of Birds on a Tropical Montane Gradient Lag Behind Warming Temperatures.

ABSTRACT: German Forero-Medina¹, John Terborgh^{1,2}, S. Jacob Socolar³, Stuart L. Pimm¹

¹ Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University, Durham, NC

² Center for Tropical Conservation, Duke University, Durham, NC

³ Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

Species may respond to a warming climate by moving to higher latitudes or elevations. In the tropics, latitudinal temperature gradients are shallow; the only escape for species may be to move to higher elevations. The study of this possibility is complicated by the paucity of good baseline data on intact montane gradients. In 1969, a mist-net census of birds on the Cerros del Sira, Peru, provided a quantitative baseline for the elevational ranges of birds along a tropical montane gradient. Because human disturbance on this transect has been minimal, a resurvey provides an opportunity to examine potential impacts of climate change on bird distribution. We repeated the historical transect in 2010 and find an average upward shift of 49 m for 55 bird species over the 41-year interval. This shift is significantly upward, but also significantly smaller than the 152 m one expects from warming in the region. The range shifts in elevation were similar across different trophic guilds. Endothermy may provide birds with some flexibility to temperature changes and allow them to move less than expected. Instead of being directly dependent on temperature, birds may be responding to gradual changes in the nature of the habitat or availability of food resources and presence of competitors. If so, this has important implications for estimates of mountaintop extinctions from climate change.

Dale Rosselet is a New Jersey native who grew up near the Great Swamp in northern New Jersey, and now resides in Cape May County with her husband, Kevin Karison. Dale is the Vice-president for Education for New Jersey Audubon and has been leading domestic and foreign tours for organization for the last 20 years.

Dale is co-author of New Jersey Audubon's teacher education curriculum guides: *Bridges to the Natural World*; *New Jersey Waters: Watershed Approach*

to *Teaching the Ecology of Regional Systems*, and the Society's newest book *Wild Journeys: Migration in New Jersey*. She has written for New Jersey Audubon magazine as well as co-authoring articles with Kevin Karison. Dale is Kevin's coauthor on the upcoming book "*Birding by Impression*", which will be published in the Roger Tory Peterson Reference Series at Houghton Mifflin Co.

Kevin Karlson is an accomplished birder, professional tour leader, and wildlife photographer who has published numerous articles on bird identification and natural history for an assortment of magazines, books, and journals. A former photo editor for *North American Birds*, he currently writes the Birder's ID column for *Wild Bird Magazine*. Kevin is a co-author of *The Shorebird Guide* (Houghton Mifflin Co. 2006) and is currently completing a new book for the Roger Tory Peterson Reference series at Houghton Mifflin Co. called *Birding by Impression*. He is the author and photographer of a book titled *The Birds of Cape May* (Schiffer Publishing, 2010), which celebrates the birds of this special location through the four seasons, and he just submitted the text and photos for a new nature photography book called *Visions: Earth's Elements in Bird and Nature Photography*, which will be released in June, 2012.

As the sole ornithologist for Cornell Lab of Ornithology's DVD *Birds of North America*, Kevin prepared photos and wrote captions for over 2600 bird images, including over 800 of his own. He is a regular presence at numerous Bird and Nature festivals around North America, where he gives keynote presentations and workshops on bird identification and natural history, and leads field trips to a variety of locations. Kevin also leads a limited number of photography tours.

Birds of Cape May Keynote Presentation:

Come take a journey through the four seasons with Kevin Karison and Dale Rosselet as they pay tribute to the magic of Cape May, NJ, with the birds, other wildlife, and people that make this special location one of the best birding and natural history locations in North America. This short trip through the Looking Glass is a visual and musical celebration of Kevin and Dale's 29-year relationship with Cape May, and includes engaging photos from Kevin's book, *Birds of Cape May* (July, 2010, Schiffer Publishing). (45 minutes)

Copies of *Birds of Cape May* will be available for purchase and signing by Kevin Karison.

EBBA Memorial Fund

Over 50 years ago EBBA established a Memorial Fund in memory of deceased members with income from the fund to be used to support student research in the field of ornithology using bird banding. The Fund consists of memorial contributions, dues from Life Memberships and other contributions members may make.

Many grants from this Fund have been made to worthwhile students through the years. Student interest in applying for an EBBA Memorial Grant has grown to record levels. This past year there was a record 27 applications for which EBBA made three grants. We need more funding to support this worthwhile effort.

If you would like to support EBBA's quest for supporting more student research in ornithology, please consider a tax-deductible contribution or bequest to either the Memorial Fund or to next year's budget for 2013 awards by contacting EBBA's treasurer, Don Mease at his address in this journal.

EBBA's 2012 Memorial Fund Research Grants can be found in this issue under EBBA's annual meeting minutes, page 66.