

2012

President's Note

Howard Browsers

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local basis for our knowledge of Nebraska breeding birds. These two stations were operated by banders Betty Grenon, Craig Hensley and Rick Schmid. Volunteer assistance over 20 years included the following: Patty Albright, Elliott Bedows, Jim Beebe, Ruth Bentzinger, Sharon Draper, Bob Fuchs, Lois Inskeep, Anna Keenan, Marge Knutsen, Jason Krug, Tad Leeper, Lorinda Langner, Jessica Larson, Don Maas, Sue Mattix, Jay Parsons, Jay Schneider, Michelle Widhalm, , and Penny Zahurones. Thanks also go to Fontenelle

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Western Regional News and Comments

Western Bird Banding Association President's Note

Though I have officially been President of the Western Bird Banding Association (WBBA) for several months now, this is my first President's Note and an opportunity to introduce myself. Professionally, I have been a Wildlife Biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for 23 years. Currently, I am located at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in northern Utah. As a wildlife refuge biologist, my duties usually do not involve full-time banding; however, over the years I have banded ducks and geese and I ran a MAPS station for nine years. Banding is a remarkable tool that has provided data on many aspects of avian ecology.

As a member of WBBA, I have had the opportunity to meet many accomplished bird banders who are doing exciting things with banding data from all over the western United States (AK, HI, WA, OR, CA, AZ, NM, NV, ID, CO, WY, MT), Mexico, and Central and South America. Recent annual meetings have also truly been international with researchers presenting results of work they have done in countries such as Ethiopia, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey.

Our next meeting is scheduled for 12-14 Sep 2013 (Thursday to Saturday) in spectacular southeast Arizona hosted by the newly incorporated Sky Islands Bird Observatory. Banding and birding opportunities should be super. Please visit our website (<http://www.westernbirdbanding.org>) for more information. I encourage any and all to attend.

Howard Browers
President

Below are summaries of the two projects funded by the WBBA grants program in 2012. Every year, WBBA offers up to two \$1000 grants for research and monitoring projects that involve banding.

Research Grant:

Carl G. Lundblad, M.S. Student, University of Arizona, School of Natural Resources and the Environment, *Elucidating the causes of partial migration in Yellow-eyed Juncos using a marked population*

Despite a century of research on avian migration, the phenomenon's underlying causes are still debated. One approach to understanding the evolution of migratory behavior is to study partial migration systems, in which migratory tendency varies among individuals within the same population. Few previous studies have used uniquely marked populations to investigate the condition-dependent determinants of partial and facultative migration.

We are utilizing a color-banded population of Yellow-eyed Juncos (*Junco phaeonotus*) to understand which factors are associated with different migratory decisions in this short distance, partially migratory species. We banded over 850 juncos on their breeding territories at five sites spanning the species' elevational breeding range in the Santa Catalina Mountains of Arizona. Sites are surveyed every two weeks during two winters to determine which individuals reside on their breeding grounds and which migrate.

We are testing the thermal tolerance, fasting endurance, dominance, and arrival time hypotheses to explain variation in migratory behavior, using the migratory status of individual juncos and a suite of correlative and experimental tests. We measure various size indices and condition of each captured bird in order to determine whether migratory status is associated with body size or condition. We collect temperature, snow cover, and snow depth

data to determine which, if any, weather variables are associated with winter-occupancy of juncos. We simulate territorial incursions at active nests using a taxidermy junco mount to determine whether territorial aggression is related to migratory status. We monitor nest success, productivity, and nestling growth-rate to test the arrival time hypothesis's prediction that residents reap quantifiable reproductive benefits that compensate for the risks of high-elevation residency.

By understanding the traits, risks, and benefits associated with different migratory decisions, we can gain insight into the evolution of migratory behavior in general. In addition, because migration is driven by seasonal cycles, an improved understanding of its causes will be necessary to manage migratory wildlife under changing climate regimes.

Monitoring Grant:

Luis E. Morales, San Pancho Bird Observatory, *Promoting economic and community development through bird conservation science, education and capacity building in western Mexico*

The San Pancho Bird Observatory (SPBO) is a non-profit, grassroots organization based in San Francisco, Nayarit, Mexico. SPBO is an organization dedicated to the habitat conservation of tropical and migratory bird species with a special focus on endangered and threatened Mexican residents, the habitats they require, and the migratory birds that share these habitats during the winter. SPBO's programs are dedicated to providing education, long-term and locally based bird monitoring programs that incorporate land conservation, ecological research, environmental education, capacity-building and income generation. These programs aim to achieve the goals of community-based biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction in the Nayarit and Jalisco coast in western Mexico.

With the support of the Western Bird Banding Association, SPBO is in the process of incorporating a long-term bird banding program in collaboration with the Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO; based in Ashland, Oregon, USA) and Environment Canada (British Columbia section). SPBO is also planning to provide a bird-banding workshop in coordination with KBO and other organizations and institutions in western Mexico.

This banding program is especially valuable since it will enable us to start creating a knowledge basis for western tropical residents and migrants, enabling us to measure bird population changes and other demographic parameters which will provide valuable information for decision makers in habitat management, restoration and conservation. Socially and economically, this program will translate into education and employment opportunities for local, regional and international professionals and students; it will inform hundreds of villagers, natural-resource decision makers as well as national and international tourists through its community outreach and ecotourism component, thus creating an appropriate social and economic environment for decisions oriented towards habitat restoration and conservation.

WBBA Annual Banding Summary

There were 185 Master Banders reporting 170,713 banded birds. Compared to 2010, we had more banders (n=164) reporting fewer birds (n=177,108). There were 495 taxa (including BBL-recognized subspecies, races, and hybrids) banded, about the same as in 2010 (n=497). New birds are typically birds from Mexico. Every year I also get a report or two of birds banded in far flung locations in the Indo-Pacific. This year, we had four Black Noddies banded in Guam.

Some personal highlights include 6929 Tricolored Blackbirds banded (and color banded) by Robert Meese, a researcher at UCDavis, and Manual Grosselett in Oxaca, Mexico, whose banders banded 16,542 birds in 185 taxa.

Keeping up with the changing taxonomy of lumping and splitting as well as what is accepted by different ornithological entities (BBL, AOU, field guides, as well as the banders themselves) has been a challenge. The BBL is admittedly behind in keeping up with taxonomic changes; the AOU does not recognize hybrids that the BBL and banders do. The AOU publishes changes once a year, and field guide changes appear with each new edition. And the banders see similarities and differences first hand. Thus, the spreadsheet that accompanies request for banding reports lists birds by common name, alpha codes, AOU#'s, allowing the bander to sort; however, here I present common names and alpha codes to save space.

Last, I thank H. Williams for perusing this long list for errors and anomalies. For example, the Aplamado Falcons seem odd for ID, but they were captive bred birds released within their range in AZ-NM-TX. I guess at issue is whether these birds should be reported for AZ-NM-TX or ID, something that I have not resolved. As always, all errata are still my responsibility.

Walter H. Sakai

2011 WBBA annual summary compiler.

