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2012 Shorebird Research Program Report

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News, Notes, Comments

Correction / Addition to NABB Vol. 38 No.2

Addition: The authors would like to make the following addition to the Acknowledgments Section of their manuscript, Orange-crowned Warbler Cap Grades, on page 67: "William Gilbert and George West wish to thank Western Bird Banding Editor Walter Saki for his tireless and very helpful review of our manuscript on Orange-crowned Warbler Cap Grades that appeared in issue 2 of Vol. 38."

Correction: The Production Manager apologizes for leaving off the following Literature Cited entry due to a formatting error of the Orange-crowned Warbler manuscript which appeared in NABB 38(2). On page 68, please insert "Wilson, R.E. and K.G. McCracken. 2008. Specimen shrinkage in Cinnamon Teal. *Wilson Journal of Ornithology* 120:390-392."

2012 Shorebird Research Program Report

2012 was the seventh year of this project begun in 2006. Keith Norris, Ohio State University graduate student, was still on board and leading the charge. We have been supported by Winous Point, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, the Ohio Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, Black Swamp Bird Observatory, The Ohio State University, and Willie and Terri McClure. Through the first six years the project has gone from a study of which shorebirds were using the marshes, to an avian flu study, and now a more in-depth study of how the shorebird migrants are using the marshes. Through the first six years, 27 species of shorebirds representing 6415 individuals were banded. In those six years, banding occurred over 205 days in the fall seasons. A total of 7581 net-hr of effort was expended, resulting in 0.85 shorebirds/net-hr.

2012 marked the first attempt at banding of spring shorebird migrants. Kendra Carter, an intern from New York, was hired to assist Keith in this study. During the spring study, Tom Bartlett and Tom Kashmer had little time to help, so Keith and Kendra did most of the work. Over the course of the spring migration, banding was conducted over 29 days with 736.5 net-hr effort. A total of 12 species were banded, represented by 359 individuals for 0.49 shorebirds/net-hr. This is somewhat below a typical fall season average and we are not sure why the numbers are low. In addition, there were only four shorebirds recaptured during the spring season. This may be due to the fact that birds are moving through the area faster in the spring than in the fall and do not spend as much time in the area. As with the 2011 protocol, several of the more common migrants were color-marked to aid in sighting them.

The fall season began the first week of July and ended on 6 Nov, with a total of 54 banding days. Tech Justin Bosler was added to the fall season team and Kendra moved on. Justin worked out very well. As has been the case in past years, the end of the season was very slow. July, August, and early September seem to be the peak times for banding. Weather seems to have a major effect later in the fall, with winds picking up and preventing net setup. Unfortunately, this misses much of the Dunlin migration. Banding was conducted 15 d in Jul, 21 d in Aug, 10 d in Sep, 6 d in Oct, and 2 d in Nov. For the season, 18 species and 1603 individuals of shorebirds were banded. With a record 1843.75 net-hr of effort, we had 0.87 shorebirds/net-hr. In addition, we banded 19 species and 116 individuals of non-shorebirds. There was a total of 213 recaptured shorebirds, 84 individuals released or escaped (mostly non-shorebirds), and eight casualties. In all, 2024 birds were handled by the team this fall migration season. The 1603 shorebirds banded represented our second highest season (1661 in 2009) and the 1843.75 net-hr was the second most greatest effort for a season (2067.5 net-hr in 2011). The 0.87

shorebirds/net-hr is about average for the seven years of this study (average per fall = 0.85 shorebirds/net-hr). Of the 18 species of shorebirds banded this fall, one species was new for the study. On 30 Jul, Tom Kashmer captured and banded a Ruddy Turnstone in the Metzger Unit of Winous Point. This was our 28th species of shorebirds banded in seven years. Six species of shorebirds were banded in record numbers this fall. They were Killdeer (177), Solitary Sandpiper (27), Great Yellowlegs (7), Lesser Yellowlegs (135), Pectoral Sandpiper (324), and Wilson's Phalarope (2). Only one species was banded at a low number and that was Stilt Sandpiper (3). The average for Stilt Sandpiper over the seven years is 13 individuals banded.

One of the major purposes of this study is to look at stopover time and weight change. Keith's work will look into this in much greater detail and be published at the end of his tenure with the study. But this year we had numerous recaptures of note. First the foreign recoveries which are significant. A Short-billed Dowitcher banded on 21 Jul 2008 was recovered near Fort Myers, FL, on 22 Dec 2011. A Semipalmated Sandpiper banded on 20 Jul 2008 was recaptured by a bander twice, 23 Jan 2012 and 25 Jan 2012 near the Bay of Turiacu, Maranhao, Brazil. A Hudsonian Godwit observed at the mouth of Crane Creek on the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge with a green band over a metal band on one leg and a red flag on the other leg was banded on 21 Jan 2010 near Chiloe Island, Chile! A Dunlin banded by us on 27 Oct 2009 was killed by an airplane at an army base near Beaufort, SC, on 8 Nov 2012. And finally, a Wilson's Snipe banded by us on 29 Aug 2012 was collected near Reidsville, GA, on 8 Dec 2012. In addition, we recaptured 16 shorebirds banded by us in previous years. Sixteen Semipalmated Sandpipers from previous seasons were recaptured (one twice). Three were from 2008, five from 2009, four from 2010, and four from 2011. A Least Sandpiper from 2011 was also recaptured.

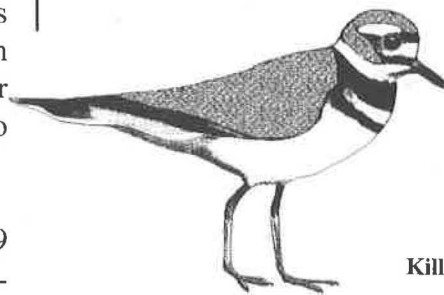
Of the shorebirds banded this season, we had 199 recaptures of 158 individuals. From the individu-

als, the average time between banding and recapture was 7 d and the average weight change was a +2.4 g. They represented nine species: Semipalmated Plover (5 individuals), Killdeer (9 individuals), Spotted Sandpiper (1 individual), Solitary Sandpiper (1 individual), Lesser Yellowlegs (2 individuals), Semipalmated Sandpiper (55 individuals), Least Sandpiper (66 individuals), Pectoral Sandpiper (18 individuals), and Dunlin (1 individual). Numbers that may be significant are for Semipalmated Sandpiper of average stay 5.9 d and average weight change of +2.7 g, Least Sandpiper of average stay 7.9 d and average weight change of +1.7 g, and Pectoral Sandpiper of average stay 7.3 d and average weight change of +4.9 g. Again, Keith will do a much more in-depth look at the data at the end of the study.

We try to keep observational records of the species observed at the study sites. 2012 appeared to be a down year for species diversity and numbers. As was done last year, several species were color marked at the time of banding or were recaptured in order to study better the movements of the birds while they are in the area. Keith will have a report of those results as well. This year we recorded only 22 species of shorebirds at our banding locations. In the past we have regularly recorded closer to 30. The lack of shorebird diversity at the sites this season is unknown. The color-marking of shorebirds is showing that there is greater mobility between the various shorebird sites than we realized.

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Thomas Kashmer and Keith Norris



Killdeer by George West