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## A National Study of Individuals Who Handle Migratory Birds for Evidence of Avian and Swine-origin Influenza Virus Infections

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The third Rufous is more of a puzzle, although it is possible the immature male was returning to the species' traditional spring migration route, which is north along the Pacific Coast. The migration of Rufous from their breeding grounds to Mexico and back has been well documented (Phillips 1975, Healy and Calder 2006) with most birds following a southeast-west-northward elliptical path. Among Rufous wintering in the Southeast, Bassett and Cubie (2009) documented five birds that moved west in the late winter/early spring. These individuals were banded in Florida or Alabama and recaptured in Louisiana. There are no spring recaptures of Rufous moving north or northwest out of the southeastern US.

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- A national study of individuals who handle migratory birds for evidence of avian and swine-origin influenza virus infections. 2012. Shafir S.C., T. Fuller, T.B. Smith, and A.W. Rimoin. *Journal of Clinical Virology* 54:364-367.**

Prior to and during the time bird banders were taking cloacal swabs to test birds for avian influenza (AV), there was a concern that bird banders would contract AV. The authors tested 401 U.S. bird banders, who also worked at international sites, for the avian influenza virus (AIV). Demographically, most subject had banded for more than five years. The sex ratio was 50:50 and banders worked the four seasons with the summer having the most banding. Exposure was primarily from handling wild migratory birds, from bird banding and bleeding. The majority (85.79%) of handling were passerines. Most banders came from the eastern or inland U.S., and one-third of the banders had banded internationally.

The results were that only one individual tested positive (0.25%) for AIV, one for the particular virus H5N2 and none for H5N1. Transmission of AIV to humans who handle wild birds seems a relatively rare event, but still a real and dangerous possibility. The paper concludes by suggesting everyone handling wild birds follow the U.S. Ornithological Council published guidelines.

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