North American Bird Bander

Volume 39 | Issue 3 Article 9

2014

2014 OBBA/EBBA Annual Meeting Speaker Biographies and Abstracts

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Eastern Regional News

Eastern Bird Banding Association — Founded 1923

THE 2014 OBBA/EBBA ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES AND ABSTRACTS

FRIDAY EVENING OPENING SPEAKER

Dr. Christopher G. Guglielmo: The physiological ecology of migration in birds and bats

Migration is the most physiologically demanding time in the life of many birds and bats. Migratory flight requires very high intensity exercise to be sustained for long periods of time, and refueling between flights requires very high rates of fuel deposition. I use the unique hypobaric, climatic wind tunnel at the Advanced Facility for Avian Research to study fuel metabolism during migratory flight, and I use a variety of field approaches to study physiological and ecological aspects of refueling during stopover. In this presentation, I will discuss recent findings on: 1) what makes birds so good at using fat for exercise, 2) why birds break down muscles and organs during migratory flight, 3) factors that influence refueling rate during stopover, and 4) how bats use daytime torpor to reduce the need to refuel between nocturnal migratory flights.

Dr. Guglielmo is an Associate Professor of Biology and co-director of the Advanced Facility for Avian Research at Western University. He received his MSc in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his PhD in Biological Sciences from Simon Fraser University. He was an NSERC Post-doctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia and University of Ottawa, and an Assistant Professor at the University of Montana before moving to Western in 2005. He is the Editor for the Americas of the Journal of Ornithology, and a member of the National Science Advisory Council for Birds Studies Canada. At Western he has been named a Faculty Scholar and a Distinguished Research Professor. He has published over *85* scientific articles on avian physiological ecology and migration, and is considered one of the world's leading experts in these areas.

SATURDAY PAPER SESSIONS SPEAKERS

Ricky Dunn: Identifying the breeding grounds origins of migrant songbirds

Billions of migratory songbirds breed in Canada's boreal forest, which is increasingly being affected by humans. We know little of their population status, however, because monitoring programs are inadequate in the remote north and in Latin American wintering areas. The Canadian Migration Monitoring Network fills a gap by monitoring such species as they pass by during migration. However, any serious declines documented in migrants cannot lead to breeding ground conservation action unless it is known where the birds came from. This talk describes a cooperative, Canada-wide study that combined feather isotopes and band recovery data to delineate likely breeding ground origin of 22 species captured at 22 locations.

Dunn is an Emeritus Scientist for Environment Canada, where she used to work as Surveys Scientist. Her eclectic career has also included stints at Trent University, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Most of her work is study of bird population dynamics through analysis of citizen science data, including results from BBS, Christmas Bird Counts, bird observatories and Project FeederWatch (of which she was the founder).

Eve Iversen: Migration of the American Golden Plover-a proxy for the Eskimo Curlew

The American Golden-Plover *(Pluvialis dominica)* is a fairly common sight in the Canadian Atlantic coastal crowberry *(Empetrum nigrum)* patches during the fall migration. However, once they take off for their trans-Atlantic flight we know very little about their journey.

In the fall the American Golden-Plovers migrate along the same flyway as the critically endangered Eskimo Curlew *(Numenius borealis)*. They also have the same diet. The two species part company in the pampas of Argentina. The curlew continues south to Patagonia. In the spring, the two species are seen together again when they return to the United States and Canada. They continue together all the way to their breeding grounds in the Arctic.

The route of the America Golden-Plover and Eskimo Curlew in South America is poorly understood. Using museum specimens and hunting accounts, I have employed Geographic Information Systems to map an outline of their path. More data is needed and the best source is the Golden-Plover.

While the plover does not share all of its life history with the Eskimo Curlew, it is readily available for study.The plover can act as a proxy for the curlew to help gain insights into migratory rest areas and other critical habitat. A decade ago radio-tagged Pacific Golden-Plovers *(Pluvialis fulva)* revealed their non-stop migration from Alaska to Hawaii. Modern GPS tags will reveal the migration shared by the American Golden-Plover and the Eskimo Curlew.

Eve Iversen is a PhD student in Sustainable Agriculture working under Dr. Richard Schultz at Iowa State University. Her dissertation topic is the endangered Eskimo Curlew, a species that is on the brink of extinction. She has published extensively on the species.

Chris Davies: Ontario's 2013 Duck Banding Project

Unfortunately, Chris Davies is unable to attend the meeting; David Okines and Barb Campbell will give the presentation for him.

The MNR has been running the duck banding program since 1996. The primary purpose of this program is to collect movement data and population trends on waterfowl. The data collected is also used to help set the harvest rates for hunters. The use of an airboat at night allows us to increase the capture rates of some species of waterfowl that are not easily caught in regular methods, e.g., duck traps. Water bodies at 27 different sites in eastern Ontario are sampled between early August and early September before the waterfowl hunting season opens, in order to catch locally bred ducks. Up to 4000 ducks a year are caught and up to 400 in a night is possible, the presentation also shows where some of these birds are recovered.

David Okines has been banding for 40 years in many countries and is an NABC certified Waterfowl Trainer. Although he has been banding waterfowl on and off all his banding years, he is now becoming more involved in waterfowl banding, including helping to run the annual MNR waterfowl banding workshops and associated NABC waterfowl certification sessions. He has done banding of Snow, Ross's, Cackling and Brant geese in the arctic for the MNR and has been out with the MNR airboat duck-banding crew several times over the last few years. He has also helped Long Point Waterfowl with the capture of Long-tailed Ducks, Lesser Scaup and Wood Ducks for satellite or local transmitter work.

Barb Campbell has worked for the Canadian Wildlife Service for 38 years. She is a migratory

birds technician and has banded waterfowl throughout her career with CWS. She has banded Brant and Snow Geese in the High Arctic and Canada Geese in the wilds of Toronto. She is a certified Waterfowl Trainer with NABC and helps to run the annual waterfowl banding workshops sponsored by MNR and NABC. Barb has participated in the MNR airboat program and enjoys banding ducks in all seasons. Occasionally you can find her using netbiasters and cannon nets to assist her in her catch.

Rick Ludkin: Ontario's Snow Bunting project

As well as having a long career in Children's Mental Health, I have always been interested in birds and began bird banding in the mid-1970s. In the Fall of 1995 I started (and continue to run) a Canadian Migration Monitoring Station at Ruthven Park National Historic Site just outside of Cayuga.

A few years prior to my retirement in 2010, I began to do bird-based field work in the Canadian Arctic. I spent part of one summer on Devon Island (studying Northern Fulmars and Snow Buntings) and four summers on Southampton Island (studying Common Eiders and Snow Buntings). After that, I spent two summers in Svalbard (studying Thick-billed Murres, Black-legged Kittiwakes and Dovekies).

In January/February of both 2013 and 2014, I have lived in a small village in rural western Kenya. This was the beginning of what I hope will be a long-term project. Using donated guide books and binoculars, I worked initially with 6,7 & 8 grade students and then with the larger community teaching them how to watch/identify, monitor and then band the birds in their area with a view, in the long run, to develop an expertise that they can use to participate in research and or the growing eco-tourism business.

But it was my love of (and respect for) Snow Buntings that lead to collaboration with Dr. Oliver Love and Christie Macdonald to form and develop the Canadian Snow Bunting Network–to better monitor and understand these hardy, dynamic little birds. This presentation will let you know what we are finding out about these gems from the north.

Tina Intini: Trumpeter Swans *(Cygnus buccinator)* in Ontario

This presentation will include a look at the history of Trumpeter Swans in Ontario, and the reintroduction efforts that have been made since the 1980s. As well as looking at the current banding program and examples of the sighting data we are receiving from the general public spotting the patagial tags.

Tina Intini began working with the Ontario Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program in 2007, when she met Beverly and Ray Kingdon who were banding Trumpeter Swans at La Salle Park in Burlington. At that time, Tina was completing an Honors Bachelor of Science, Biodiversity Specialization at McMaster University. She has continued to work with the program since then, learning to catch, band and monitor the movements of the swans, keeping records of sightings and earning her banding license. Previously Kyna completed the Veterinary Technology course at Ridgetown College, University of Guelph, and became a Registered Veterinary Technician.

Dave Brinker: Project SNOWstorm - How big can a snowball grow?

David F. Brinker, Maryland Natural Heritage Program, Maryland DNR, Annapolis, MD and Scott Weidensaul, Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art, Millersburg, PA.

Project SNOWstorm started on 3 Dec 2013 when Brinker and Weidensaul made the decision to get Project Owlnet involved in studying the 2013-2014 irruption of Snowy Owls *(Bubo scandiacus)*. In less than four weeks Project SNOWstorm became a multifaceted effort to better understand the dynamics of a major Snowy Owl irruption. Project SNOWstorm is an example of a growing number of citizen-science efforts energized by the rapid communication and coordination facilitated by the internet and the growth of social media. Collaborative banding related research is at the core of the concept of Project Owlnet, and following that

model, Project SNOWstorm attracted a wide array of partners capitalizing on the diverse array of talents these partners brought to the project. There are four major components to Project SNOWstorm: coordinated region-wide banding of Snowy Owls; cutting-edge GPS-GSM telemetry to document owl movements; gathering images to regionally document the pattern of sex and possibly age distribution; and collaborative efforts by the wildlife veterinary medical community to assess the health of the owls and their various fates that resulted in the death of Snowy Owls through the range of the irruption. The progress and results of Project SNOWstorm through mid March will be presented.

Dave Brinker has been employed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources since 1990 where he is currently a Regional Ecologist with the Natural Heritage Program working on biodiversity conservation. He first began assisting with bird banding in 1975 at the Little Suamico Ornithological Station, a raptor migration observation and banding station near Green Bay, Wisconsin. In 1979, Dave obtained a subpermit so that he could conduct independent studies in Northeastern Wisconsin and has been actively banding raptors and waterbirds ever since. His raptor work focuses on Broad-winged Hawks, Northern Goshawks, Northern Saw-whet Owls and, most recently, on Snowy Owls. Much of his work at Maryland DNR focuses on colonial nesting waterbirds where, in cooperation with John Weske, Dave, colleagues from DNR, and many volunteers have banded over 25,000 Brown Pelicans. In 1994, Dave began the central Appalachian Goshawk Project that monitors adult nest site tenacity, survival and reproductive success in Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia, Maryland and the Alleghany National Forest in northwest Pennsylvania. Dave started Project Owlnet in 1994 and the most recent expansion of this collaborative concept is Project SNOWstorm.

SATURDAY EVENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Chip Weseloh: Where do Ontario-banded Great Egrets spend the winter and who else is there?

We are all familiar with Great Egrets in the spring, summer and autumn. We see them breeding in mixed colonies with Great Blue Herons, Black-crowned Night Herons and Double-crested Cormorants, and foraging in various wetlands. But where do they go in the winter? Since 2001, 1900 Great Egrets have been banded in Ontario by the Canadian Wildlife Service with field readable bands/markers. To date, more than 1200 encounter records have been reported, 34 of these define the wintering grounds of Ontario's egrets, extending from New Jersey to the Lesser Antilles. Also, it is well known that the summering population of Great Egrets in the Caribbean is greatly augmented by individuals from mainland North America in the winter but where, exactly, do these birds come from? The banding office provided 78 records of Great Egrets encountered in the Caribbean banded anywhere. These records came from 15 state and provincial jurisdictions east of the Mississippi River. Hunting played an interesting and diminishing role in obtaining nearly half of these records.

Dr. Weseloh started work with the Canadian Wildlife Service at Burlington in 1978 after receiving a PhD (Local movements of gulls at Calgary, Alberta) from the University of Calgary and a two-year stint as Curator of Ornithology at the Provincial Museum of Alberta. At CWS, he was the lead field biologist of the Herring Gull Egg Monitoring Program–an ongoing 40-year study to monitor contaminant levels in wildlife (fish-eating birds) on the Great Lakes. In addition to his contaminants work, he and his staff were instrumental in tracking population changes and color-banding (>19,000 birds) of Double-crested Cormorants on the Great Lakes over the last 30 years. Since 2000, he has had an active program of censusing, individually banding (1900 birds) and tracking the dispersal, roosting and migration of Great Egrets from Lakes Huron and Erie. To date, he and his staff have banded over 29,000 birds of 17 species, primarily waterbirds. Dr. Weseloh retired from CWS in 2013 but maintains an Emeritus status.