North American Bird Bander

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Recent Literature

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"zone of hybridization" from Alberta to British Columbia. (Remember the definition of a species is that it can not breed with a member of another species.)

So here we are in 2016, and the splitters have again separated this species, armed with DNA evidence. Actually, they are suggesting a split into three and possibly four species https://www.allaboutbirds.org/goodbye-yellow-rump-will-we-see-a-return-to-myrtle-and-audubons-warblers/.

Now, science is slow and methodical, so this will not be done instantaneously. The paper was written and published this year "suggesting" the split. Other researchers will confirm this split. The American Ornithologists' Union (AOU now the AOS = American Ornithological Society) Checklist Committee will review the body of evidence and render a judgement. This could come quickly or take several years. Then, from our perspective as bird banders, the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL and our "boss") will make a change. The BBL is usually a fair number of years behind in making changes; e.g. California and Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays are still lumped as Western Scrub-Jay.

Fortunately for us, the BBL separated Myrtle Warbler (MYWA) and Audubon Warbler (AUWA) early in the last century, and retained that separation, in spite of the lumping done the latter half of the last century. In fact, more recently, the BBL added Unidentified Yellow-rumped Warbler (UYWA), acknowledging the hybrids.

A more complete list of impending lumps and splits can be found in the American Birding Association's Oct 2016 *Birder's Guide* magazine.

Thanks to C. John Ralph for useful comments.

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Recent Literature

Compiled by C. John Ralph
(If you would like to help review articles of interest to banders, please contact cjr2 @ humboldt.edu, and feel free to mention if you have a particular journal or geographic area of interest).

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IDENTIFICATION, MOLTS, PLUMAGE, WEIGHTS, AND MEASUREMENTS

Determination of Sex Using Morphometrics in the Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) and Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*). K. M. Covino. 2015. *The Wilson Journal of Ornithology* 127(4):706-711.

With genetically sexed birds, she found that wing chord values can be used to determine sex with 95% confidence. This information would allow field researchers to determine sex of 58% of Northern Waterthrushes and 33% of Swainson's Thrushes with 95% confidence of correct assignment. If age is taken into account, the proportion of individuals for which sex can be determined increases to 62% and 38%, respectively. **CJR**

NORTH AMERICAN BANDING RESULTS

Wintering locations of Ontario-banded Great Egrets: New Jersey to the Caribbean. D.V.C. Weseloh, D. Moore, and T. Knezevic. 2014. *Ontario Birds* 32(1): 2-11.

In 2001-2012, a total of 1900 young flightless Great Egrets (*Ardea alba*) were banded at four nesting locations in Ontario. Alpha-numeric red plastic leg bands were placed on 1,280 of them between 2001 and 2010, colored alpha-numeric laminated PVC wing tags were placed on 711 egrets from 2010-2012, and nine had no auxiliary markers. Encounters were filtered to exclude months and locations unlikely to pertain to wintering individuals. The 34 resulting winter encounters were from eight U.S. states [NC, SC, FL, NJ, TN, AL, GA, VA] and four Caribbean islands [Cuba, Virgin Islands, Jamaica, and Dominican Republic], with the center of distribution being North and South Carolina. **ATC**

Influence of bottom-up trophic dynamics on Northern Saw-whet Owl irruptions revealed by small-scale banding data in Central Ontario. 2015. S. Henry, E. Nol, and W. Wehtje. *Ontario Birds* 33(3):122-133.

Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) were banded at the James McLean Oliver Ecological Centre, Trent University, Ontario from 1999-2014. Data were divided into year-class and sex, and proportions calculated out of the total number of owls banded. This data was compared with the annual winter seed crop abundance in central Ontario published by R. Pittaway [Ron Pittaway's Past Years' Winter Finch Forecasts. 2015. *NeilyWorld*. <http://www.neily-world.com/neilyworld/pittaway-old.htm>] as a food source of prey species of the owl. The proportion of hatch-year birds and second-year birds banded each year appeared to track the forest primary production scale used to rank seed crop abundance. There was a significant positive relationship between forest seed crop in the winter before breeding and the number of hatch-year owls banded in the following fall. **ATC**

Pre-season duck banding in Ontario, 1918-2014 and distribution of hunter recoveries. S.W. Meyer and C.M. Sharp. 2016. *Ontario Birds* 34(1):24-41.

Of the 548,974 ducks banded between 1918 and 2014, 82,220 individuals [~15%] of 19 species and one hybrid, were reported as hunter recoveries. Of these, 41.4% were in Canada with 91.9% and 2.5% of those occurring in Ontario and Quebec respectively. Outside Canada, 31.9% were from the Mississippi Flyway, 24.2% from the Atlantic Flyway, and 1.3% from the Central Flyway. Much smaller numbers were recovered from the Pacific Flyway [0.08%], Alaska [0.002%], the Caribbean [0.6%], and Central America [0.04%]. Two Northern Pintails (*Anas acuta*) were recovered in Russia and one Blue-winged Teal (*A. discors*) was recovered in Europe. The top five species reported by hunters were Mallard, (*A. platyrhynchos*) American Black Duck (*A. rubripes*), Blue-winged Teal (*Adiscors*), American Green-winged Teal(*A. carolinensis*), and Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*). Details of the banding locations, number and species banded, and large scale trends in the distribution of hunter recoveries are also discussed. **ATC**

James Bay Shorebird Project and Motus Wildlife Tracking. C. Friis. 2015. *OFO [Ontario Field Ornithologists] News* 33(2):1-4.

The Motus Wildlife Tracking System comprises a network of coordinated automated radio telemetry towers that track the movements of small organisms in real time using very high frequency [VHF] radio telemetry throughout terrestrial environments. Results of the 2014 season show the length of time shorebirds stage on James Bay, with tagged birds spending over two weeks within the study area. Tagged Semipalmated (*Calidris pusilla*) and White-rumped (*C. fuscicollis*) sandpipers staged for up to 35 days, while tagged Red Knots (*C. canutus*) staged for up to 20 days. Notes: A summary of this project was originally published in 2013 (Flight Times and Abundance of Three Shorebird Species Staging near Chickney Channel, James Bay, Ontario, Summer 2012, 2013. C. Friis, K.G. Burrell, and S. Mackenzie. *Ontario Birds* 31(1):10-23.), available at <www.ofo.ca/site/download/id/2>. Parts of this article were also originally published in the Fall 2014 issue of *BirdWatch Canada*. **ATC**

North American longevity record for the Northern Goshawk from Michigan. 2015. S. Postupalsky and J.B. Holt, Jr. *Michigan Birds and Natural History* 22(1):54-56.

A nestling female goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) banded on 27 Jun 1995 approximately 1.6 km northwest of Hancock, Houghton County, Michigan, was found dead about 3.2 km northeast of Calumet, Houghton County, Michigan on 14 Jan 2013. This is a distance of approximately 20 km northeast of the banding site, and an age of 17 yr 7 mo, is the oldest Northern Goshawk banded in North America according to the BBL's on-line "longevity records" list. The previous record was 16 yr 5 mo from New York state, a record that stood for 24 years. **ATC**

Sharp-shinned Hawks migrate northward on islands in Lake Michigan and southward along the Wisconsin shore. 2015. W.C. Scharf. *Michigan Birds and Natural History* 22(2):99-100.

As part of a broader bird banding effort on seven Lake Michigan islands from 1968-1998, eight sharp-shins (*Accipiter striatus*) were banded at Lighthouse Point on South Manitou Island during northward spring migrations. Two of these, both males by wing chord measurement, were subsequently recaptured in southward fall migration at Cedar Grove Ornithological Station, along the western shore of Lake Michigan, in northeastern Wisconsin. One banded on 10 May 1980 (as ASY) at South Manitou Island was recaptured on 19 Oct 1980 at Cedar Grove. The other

banded on 17 May 1991 (as SY) at South Manitou was recaptured on 12 Oct 1992 at Cedar Grove. This data provides guidance for the placement of proposed wind turbines in and near the Great Lakes. **ATC**

Michigan's First Costa's Hummingbird: Onekama, Manistee County. 2015. B. Allen. *Michigan Birds and Natural History* 22(3):228-231.

A narrative of Michigan's first Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*), present from early Oct until 18 Nov 2014, includes banding data and in-hand observations allowing a hybrid Anna's (*C. anna*) X Costa's Hummingbird to be ruled out. **ATC**

Stopover biology of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) during autumn migration. T.J. Zenzal and F. R. Moore. 2016. *The Auk* 133(2): 237-250. Department of Biological Sciences, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

The authors provide basic information on the migration and stopover biology along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico during autumn, including phenology, stopover duration, fuel deposition rate, arrival mass, and estimated flight ranges. They used an impressive array of tools, including banding data, passive integrated transponder tags, radio telemetry, and color marking at a long-term migration station. Their data provide strong evidence for a differential migration of age classes, and only weak evidence for a differential of the sexes in migration. Older birds arrived earlier, had larger fuel loads, and had shorter stopover durations than younger birds. In younger birds, no effect of sex on deposition rate, arrival mass, stopover duration, or phenology were found. Older males arrived with larger fuel loads than females. Using flight simulation software to estimate that males and older birds were capable of longer potential flight ranges than either females or younger birds. **CJR**

Long-term climate impacts on breeding bird phenology in Pennsylvania, USA. M.E. McDermott and L.W. DeGroote. 2016. John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Global Change Biology, doi: 10.1111/gcb.13363. Powdermill Nature Reserve, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Rector, PA.

In a model that should be used at other banding stations, they assessed how climate affected passerine reproductive timing and productivity at a constant-effort mist-netting station in western Pennsylvania using a model-comparison approach. They found several lines of evidence pointing to the sensitivity of 21 breeding passerines to climate change over five decades. In general, warm springs were associated with earlier captures of juveniles and higher rainfall was usually associated with later appearance of juveniles and later occurrence of breeding condition in females. More mixed was productivity, with temperature and precipitation both positively and negatively related to productivity. Although there were no clear relationships between life history traits and breeding phenology, the species-speci c responses to climate found in this study provide novel insights into phenological flexibility in songbirds. As they say, "Our research underscores the value of long-term monitoring studies and the importance of continuing constant-effort sampling in the face of climate change." We all agree. **CJR**

Band recoveries reveal alternative migration strategies in American Robins. D. Brown and G. Miller. 2016. *Animal Migration* 3:35–47.

They used 80 years (1934-2014) of band recovery data (N = 1,057) to describe spatial and temporal patterns in the migration behavior of robins (*Turdus migratorius*).They found a distribution of recoveries suggests strong continental scale connectivity with distinct separation between eastern and western North America recoveries, with less connectivity between these regions. They also found little evidence of differential migration between males and females. In contrast to previous studies they found no northward shift of winter distribution over years. They found that a good proportion of robins are resident, spending the winter near their breeding grounds and did find a trend for increased frequency of local recoveries in more recent decades. **CJR**

Annual survival rates of migratory shore and upland game birds. T.W. Arnold, C.N. De Sobrino and H.M. Specht. 2016. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 40(3):470–476. Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN.

As has been done with hunted species, they successfully used long-term (1950–2010) band-recovery data from the United States and Canada to estimate average survival and recovery rates for juvenile and adult Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*), American Coots (*Fulica americana*), Clapper Rails (*Rallus longirostris*), and Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*). Banding data were typically sparse but their calculated recovery rates had surprisingly small error rates. They concluded that band-recovery models can be successfully applied to small data sets (e.g., 300–3,000 total recoveries in their analyses), juvenile survival estimates lacked precision and annual variation was inestimable for most species, leading to considerable uncertainty for population modeling efforts. Such models could likely be used in smaller species of landbirds. **CJR**

NON-NORTH AMERICAN BANDING RESULTS

Prioritizing tropical habitats for long-distance migratory songbirds: an assessment of habitat quality at a stopover site in Colombia. N.J. Bayly, C. Gómez, K.A. Hobson, and K. V. Rosenberg. 2016. *Avian Conservation and Ecology* 11(2):5. http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ACE-00873-110205. Investigación para la Conservación en el Neotropico Diagonal 42A No. 20-37, Bogota DC, Colombia.

This is an important paper, as these investigators used constant-effort mist-netting stations to investigate critical conservation needs through assessing stopover habitat quality. They considered that this method is very efficient and cost-effective. This was under the reasoning that fuel deposition rates directly influence stopover duration, departure fuel load, and subsequent speed of migration. They expected that constant effort mist-netting would provide a direct measure of habitat quality and have the advantage of being measurable through body-mass changes. They examined seven potential indicators of quality, including body-mass change, for two ecologically distinct Neotropical migratory landbirds on stopover in shade-coffee plantations and tropical humid premontane forest during spring migration in Colombia: (1) rate of body-mass change; (2) foraging rate; (3) recapture rate; (4) density; (5) flock size; (6) age and sex ratios; and (7) body-mass distribution. They found higher rates of mass change in premontane forest than in shade-coffee in Tennessee Warbler (*Oreothlypis peregrine),* a difference that was mirrored in higher densities and body masses in the forest.In Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus),* a lack of recaptures in shade-coffee and higher densities in forest, also suggested that forest provided superior fueling conditions. For a reliable assessment of habitat quality, they recommend using a suite of indicators, taking into account each species' ecology and methodological considerations. Their results also imply that birds stopping over in lower quality habitats may spend a longer time migrating and require more stopovers, potentially leading to important carryover effects on reproductive fitness. Evaluating habitat quality is, therefore, imperative prior to defining the conservation value of newly identified stopover regions. **CJR**