ONTARIO Bird Banding

VOL 7, NO. 2 JUNE, 1971

ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

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The aims of the Ontario Bird Banding Association are the study of birds with emphasis on banding and other marking techniques, the promotion of ornithological investigations, the publication of scientific and educational papers pertaining to ornithology, and cooperation with organizations with similar objectives. Particular emphasis is placed on studies within the Province of Ontario. Focal points for field activities are the Long Point and Point Pelee Bird Observatories.

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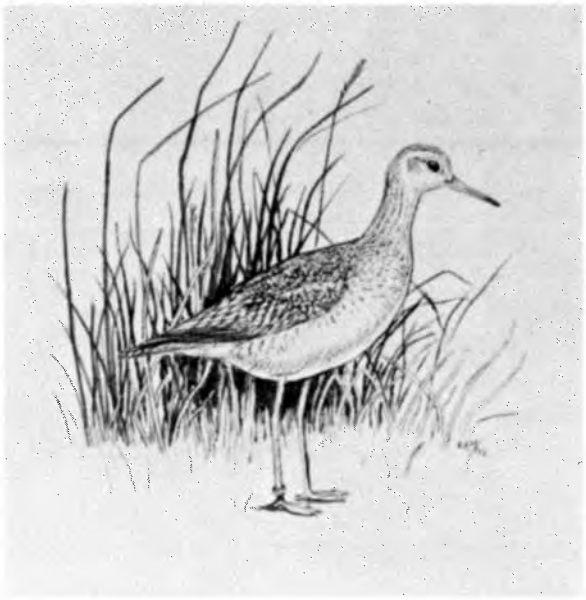
CONTENTS

RECENT BANDING RECOVERIES OF ONTARIO BIRDS

Some of the more interesting recoveries involving Ontario birds which have been submitted by members are summarized below. Also included are a couple of outstanding recoveries of birds banded in the North West Territories, which while not strictly within the scope of "Ontario Bird Banding", obviously merit publication.

The following banders contributed records; they are referred to by their initials. J.F. Anderson, G. Holroyd, P.H. Homann, J. Miles, W.J. Wasserfall.

No recoveries from the Bird Observatories are given, since these are summarized in separate reports.



Species	Band No.	Place and Date Banded			
Black Duck					
HY U	787-88926	Hamilton,	Ont.	28 Nov.	'68
HY U	787-88934	"	"	30 Nov.	'68
HY U	657-88982	"	"	30 Oct.	'69
Pintail					
HY M	496-30802	"	"	7 Oct.	'67
Blue Winged Teal					
HY F	585-81034	"	"	3 Sept.	'68
Wood Duck					
AHY M	496-30831	"	"	9 April	'68
AHY M	496-30844	"	"	18 "	'68
HY F	606-92311	"	"	25 Aug.	'70
L M	606-92315	"	"	26 Oct.	'70
HY F	606-92330	"	"	30 Aug.	'70
AHY M	716-03334	"	"	31 May	'67
HY M	726-56732	"	"	7 Sept.	'70
AHY M	726-56798	"	"	23 Oct.	'70
Ring-Necked Duck					
HY M	746-19508	Manitouwadge	Ont.	29 Sept.	'70
HY F	746-19513	"	"	29 "	'70
HY M	746-19525	"	"	1 Oct.	'70
HY F	746-19534	"	"	30 Oct.	'70
HY F	746-19565	"	"	8 Oct.	'70
Lesser Scaup					
HY U	746-19509	"	"	29 Sept.	'70
Eider					
AHY F	637-36905	Devon Is.,	NWT	10 July	'67
Upland Plover					
AHY U	813-10889	Alexandria,	Ont.	7 June	'68

Place and Date Recovered			Bander
Smithland, Ky.	9 Jan.	'70	JFA
Westport River, Mass.	28 Jan.	'70	JFA
Woodland Beach, Del.	25 Nov.	'70	JFA
3m. E. Stuttgart, Ark.	30 Dec.	'70	JFA
Riohacha, Colombia	6 Jan.	'70	JM
Eufala, Ala.	9 Jan.	'71	JFA
Aucilla WMA, Fla.	24 Dec.	'71	JFA
8m. SW Wilminton, N.C.	24 Dec.	'70	JFA
Kenosha, Wisc.	15 April	'71	JFA
Edline, Ala.	Dec.	'70	JFA
Rayville, La.	27 Dec.	'70	JFA
Lady's Is., S.C.	11 Dec.	'70	JFA
Live Oak, Fla.	1 Dec.	'70	JFA
Lake Miccosukee, Fla.	12 Dec.	'70	JM
Peelfoot Lake, Tenn.	14 Dec.	'70	JM
La Crescent, Minn.	25 Oct.	'70	JM
Fond du Lac, Wisc.	17 Oct.	'70	JM
Des Allemands, La.	15 Nov.	'70	JM
Cache Bay, Ont.	15 Oct.	'70	JM
Kangatsiak, Greenland	5 April	'70	GH
Quixada Ceara, Brazil (recovery letter dated Feb.		'69)	GH

Species	Band No.	Place and Date Banded
Ring-billed Gull		
L U	585-28314	Dunnville, Ont. 19 June '66
L U	585-28576	" " 10 June '67
L U	585-28740	" " 10 June '67
Arctic Tern		
L U	813-10873	Devon Is., NWT. 7 Aug. '67
Saw-whet Owl		
AHY U	653-20012	Toronto, Ont. 19 April '67
Red-winged Blackbird		
ASY M	542-19126	Hamilton, Ont. 30 May '64
ASY M	542-19234	" " 7 June '64
Starling		
AHY M	692-11017	" " 13 March '66

BIRDS BANDED ELSEWHERE AND RECOVERED IN ONTARIO

American Goldfinch		
HY U	750-92697	Tallahassee,Fla. 10 Nov. '68
Snow Bunting		
AHY M	Danish 812603	Gothaab, Greenland 26 April '70

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NOTES

637-36905. So far as we know, this is the first recovery of a Canadian-banded Eider in Greenland.

813-10873. The bander reports that this bird was about four days old when banded. Allowing for the usual fledging period of the Arctic Tern, together with a further week or so during which the juvenile is fed by the adults in the vicinity of the

Place and Date Recovered		Bander
Milford Point, Conn.	20 Aug. '70	WJW
Great Bridge, Va.	15 Feb. '69	WJW
Ponchatrain Lake, La.	22 March '70	WJW
Bourgneuf Bay, France	4 Oct. '67	GH
Oswegachie, N.Y.	24 June '70	GH
12m. N Mullins, SC	13 Jan. '69	JM
Hemingway, SC	(recovery letter dated Feb. '69)	JM
Cincinnati, Ohio	23 Feb. '70	JM
Fort Erie, Ont.	6 July '69	PHH
Toronto, Ont.	11 Jan. '71	

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nesting area, it seems that the journey from Devon Island to France was accomplished in less than a month.

812603. This bird was found dead on the undercarriage of a railway car in Toronto; the exact location of recovery is therefore somewhat uncertain.

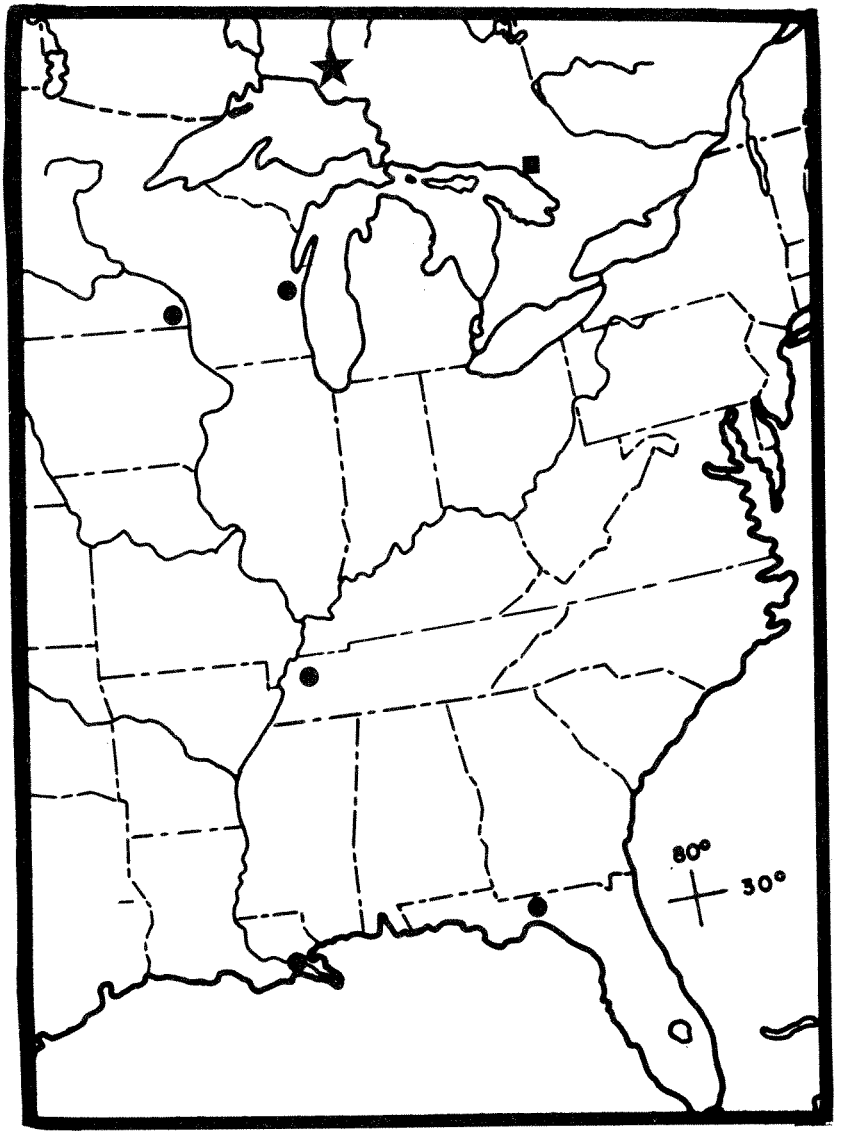


Fig. I. Recovery locations of Ring-necked Ducks● and Lesser Scaup ■ banded at Manitouwadge, Ontario ★ .

Fig. II. Recovery locations of Wood Ducks ■ Black Ducks ● and Pintail ▼ banded at Dundas, Ontario ★

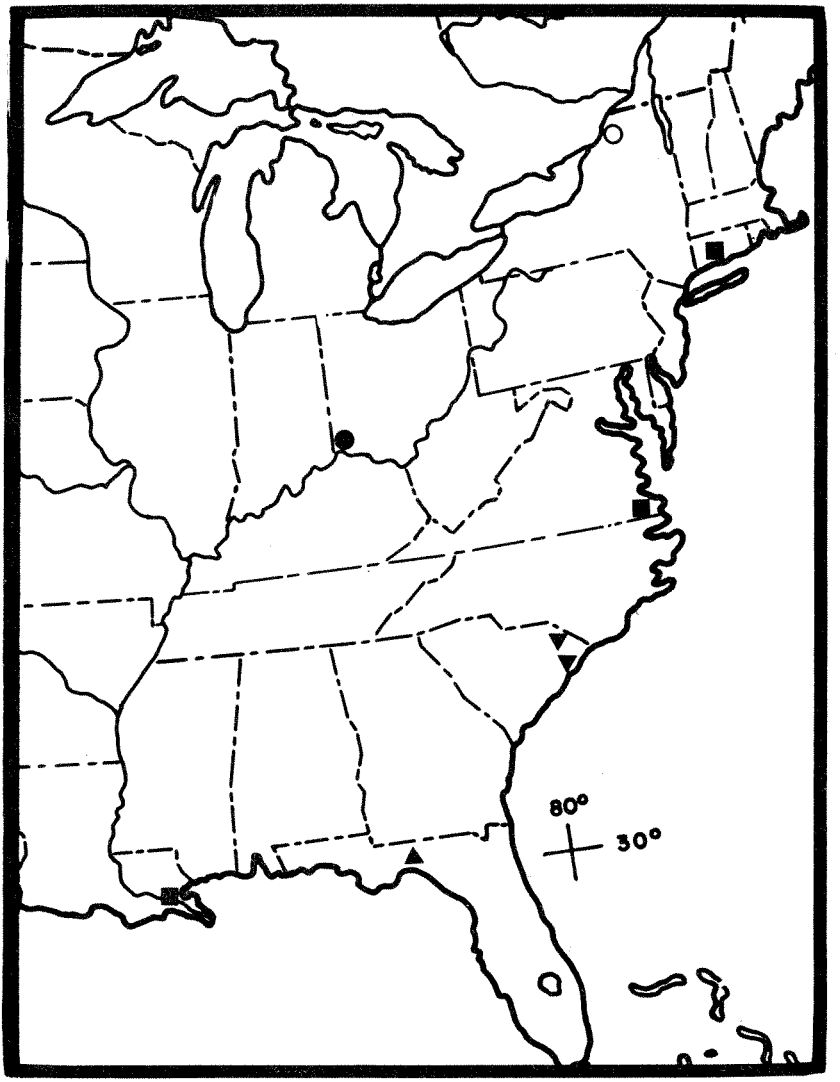


Fig. III. Recovery locations of Ring-billed Gulls ■ , Saw-whet Owl ○ , Red-winged Blackbirds ▼ , and Starling ● . Banding location of American Goldfinch recovered at Fort Erie, Ontario ▲ .

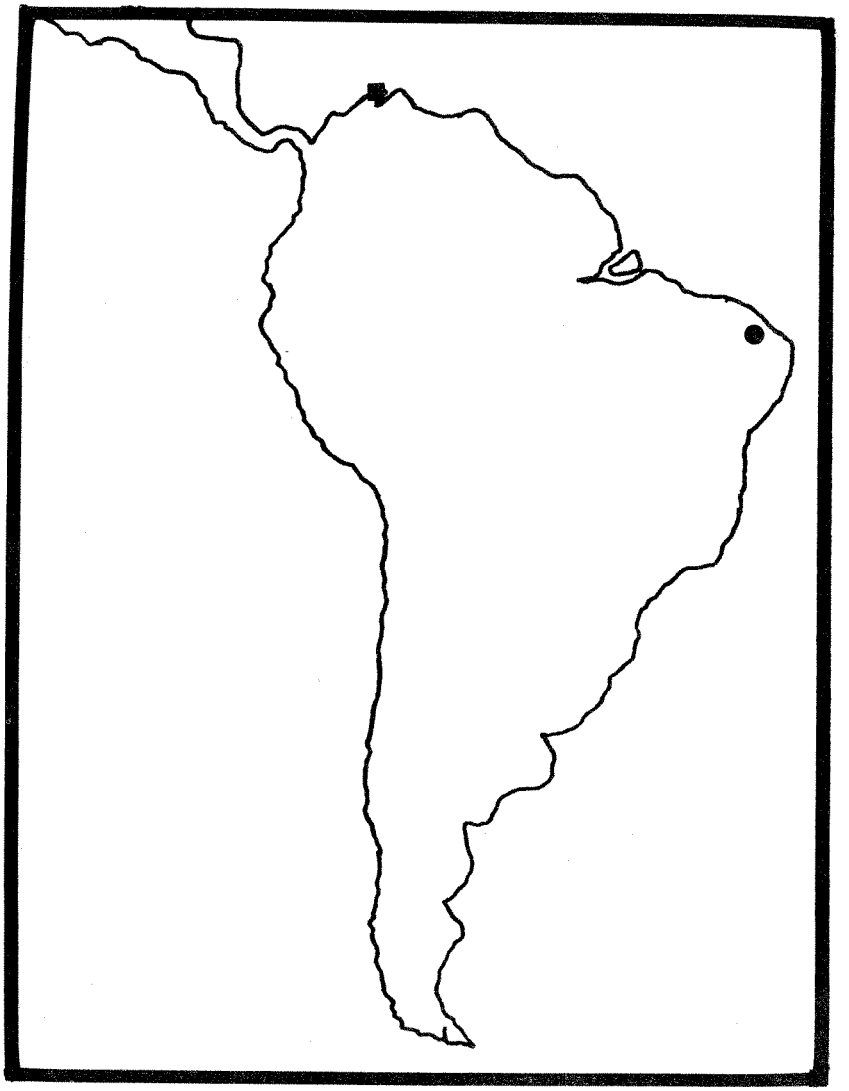


Fig. IV. Recovery location of Upland Plover ● and Blue-winged Teal ■ .

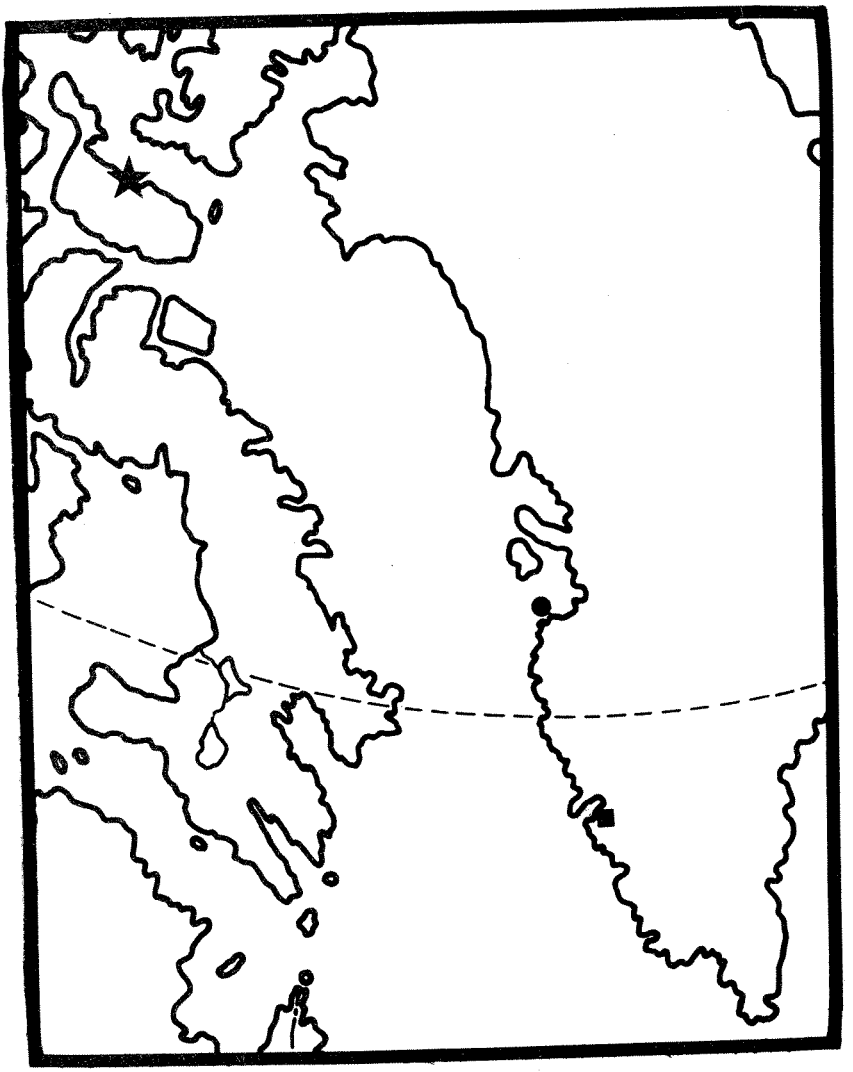


Fig. V. Banding location of Snow Bunting recovered in Toronto ■ . Banding location of Arctic Tern recovered in France and Eider ★ Recovery location of Eider ● .

TREE SWALLOWS ACTING AS FOSTER PARENTS TO BLUEBIRDS

Marshall Field

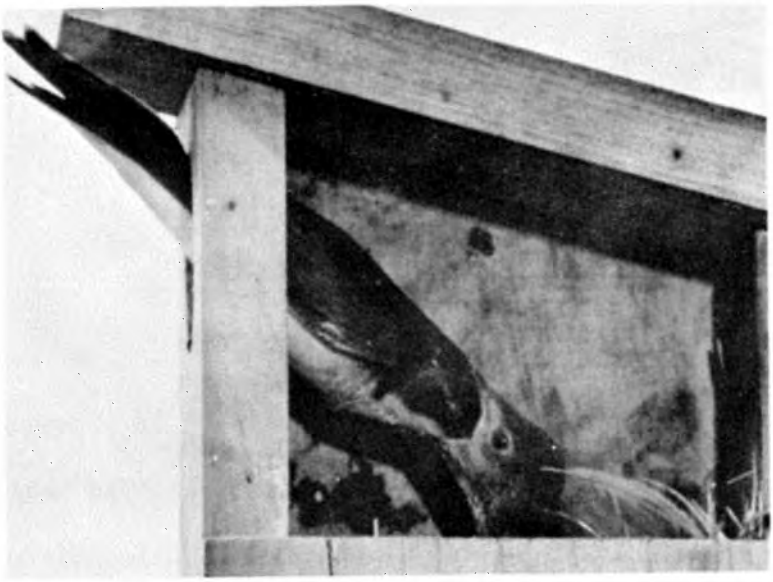
89 ELM STREET
ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO.

The following account of a pair of tree swallows hatching and successfully raising young bluebirds, could be helpful to anyone conducting bluebird nesting box studies.

The bluebird box in question was one of seventeen erected in a study area north of St. Thomas by Mr. and Mrs. George Leverton and their five young children.

On May 9, 1971, there were two bluebird eggs in this box, which was attached to a small dead elm tree. When it was checked again on May 13, evidence indicated that the nest and eggs had been totally disrupted by some climbing predator. The nest within the box had been tipped forward, but three of the eggs had become buried under the nesting material and were still intact. There was one broken shell on the ground below the box.

I learned of this unfortunate incident, and immediately made arrangements to transfer the three undamaged eggs to a tree swallow that was incubating five eggs in a nesting box at the Hawk Cliff Banding Station, near Lake Erie, south of St. Thomas.



The date of the transfer was May 14. Two of the tree swallow eggs in the transplant nest were removed and placed in a second incubating tree swallow box nearby. Neither of the females showed any concern for this juggling of eggs.

On May 29, two of the bluebird eggs hatched, but the third egg was infertile. Two days later the three remaining tree swallow eggs hatched. The nest now contained three tree swallows and two bluebirds.

I pondered the outcome of this nest when all of the youngsters were fully fledged and ready to leave. Realizing that the tree swallows may abandon the bluebirds when they had their own young on the wing, I transferred the young tree swallows to another box.

The two young bluebirds were banded on June 10. On June 12, I removed the side of the box and with a bit of patience was able to photograph the parent tree swallow feeding the young bluebird. It was interesting to note that the swallow would always come in through the entrance hole but would depart through the open side of the box. The young bluebirds would raise their heads with open mouths in response to the chatter of the foster parent tree swallows, as they perched on a nearby dead tree. I played a recording of the distress call of young bluebirds to the parent tree swallows but there was no response from them.

The nest box was checked on June 15 and 16. The young bluebirds had not left. On the evening of June 16, the box was empty. I saw one of the young bluebirds flying quite strongly about one hundred feet from the nest site. One of the parent tree swallows was perched nearby. The family was never sighted again so we can only assume that all went well.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS EATING FROG

H. J. M. Barnett

DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGICAL SCIENCES,
VICTORIA HOSPITAL, LONDON 15, ONT.

A. D. Brewer

277 ARTHUR STREET N.,
GUELPH, ONTARIO.

On September 26th, 1971, at Long Point, Ontario, we were watching a pair of Greater Yellowlegs (Totanus melanoleucos) feeding in shallow water. Suddenly one bird seized a frog, probably a Green Frog (Rana clamitans melanota); the frog had a body little shorter than the length of the Yellowleg's bill, which is 2" - 2 1/3" (Stout, 1967), and with hind legs outstretched probably measured about 4½". The Yellowlegs shook the frog violently for awhile, sometimes holding it by a leg and sometimes around the body, and after several attempts swallowed it head first. A visible bulge passed down its neck as it did so. It then immediately resumed feeding.

Although the Greater Yellowlegs is known to eat minnows (Bartsch, 1899) and other small fish (Bent, 1927), we can find no record in the literature of this species taking such bulky vertebrate prey as the frog described above.

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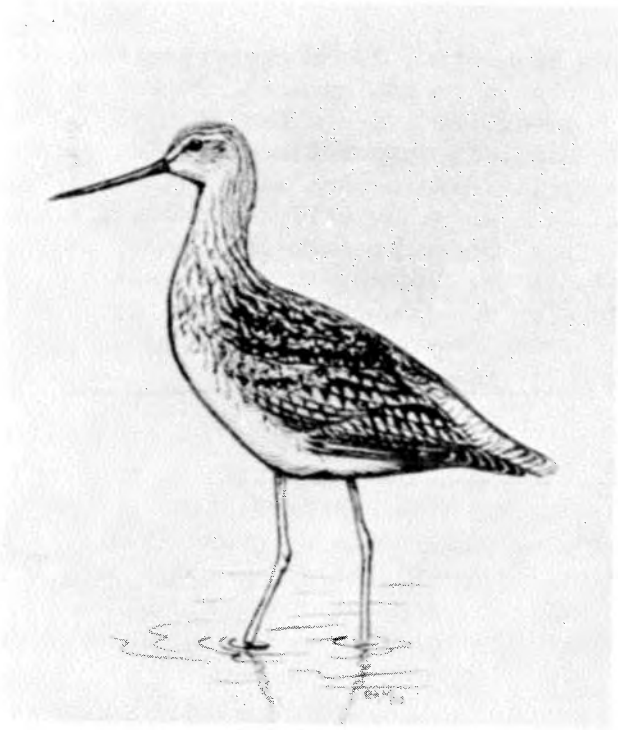

FALL MIGRATION OF THE SPOTTED SANDPIPER

Anthony J. Erskine

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE
400 LAURIER AVENUE WEST, OTTAWA 4.

Most published dates of fall migration of the Spotted Sandpiper Actitis macularia are misleading. Faunal lists usually give only the mean and/or extreme departure dates for summer resident species, and most published dates for Spotted Sandpipers are in October: e.g. Nova Scotia, 19 October (Tufts, 1962); New Brunswick, 29 October (Squires, 1952); Quebec, 12 October, and Ontario, 30 October (Bent, 1929). However, Peters and Burleigh (1951) stated that most had left Newfoundland by mid-September; and Mousley (1916)said that most left southeastern Quebec in late July and early August, with only a few immatures lingering into September. Although actual counts are lacking in most areas (cf. Bailey, 1955), Mousley's account seems essentially correct. I have assembled some weights of banded Spotted Sandpipers and of museum specimens in an attempt to demonstrate the main period of migration.

Several Spotted Sandpipers were drowned in our merganser traps on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. Adults weighed from 37 to 67 grams (gm), the heavier birds being extremely fat. One 65 gm male bird contained a layer of fat, weighing 15 gm, on the inside of the skin, and lumps of fat from among the viscera

weighed 4 gm. Organic solvents could doubtless have extracted still more fat. Such fat deposits can only be interpreted as migration fuel. Spotted Sandpipers weighing over 60 gm can probably fly at least 1,500 miles without refueling (McNeil, 1969). The extreme weights represent birds ready to depart on migration.

Most Spotted Sandpipers weighed between 37 and 48 gm in the summer (Fig. 1). Two females, taken in May and June, weighed 55 gm each; but they may have contained well-developed eggs which would add about 10 gm to the total weight, since newly hatched young weigh 6.7-7.4 gm (Nelson, 1930). The dotted arrows in Figure 1 show the effect of reducing these weights by 10 gm. In the second half of July, many more adults approached or exceeded 50 gm, and several attained weights of 63-69 gm.

Spotted Sandpiper young hatch from late June (my earliest record in the Maritimes was 22 June 1960, at Debert, N.S.), and fly from mid July (my earliest record was 14 July 1961, near Margaree Forks, N.S.), but they are not fully feathered for at least two more weeks. Most immatures weighed 25-37 gm during July (Fig. 1), and no immature exceeded 50 gm until 12 August. The departure of immatures probably extends into September - e.g. a 60 gm. bird on 18 September, since the span of hatching dates is apparently about a month (unpublished data in Maritimes Nest Records Scheme).

Overwater flights of 2,000 miles, from the Maritimes to the West Indies or South America, have been postulated for many shore birds. However, extremely heavy Spotted Sandpipers have been obtained in Ontario as well as in Nova Scotia, and such weights may be normal for this species during fall migration in all areas.

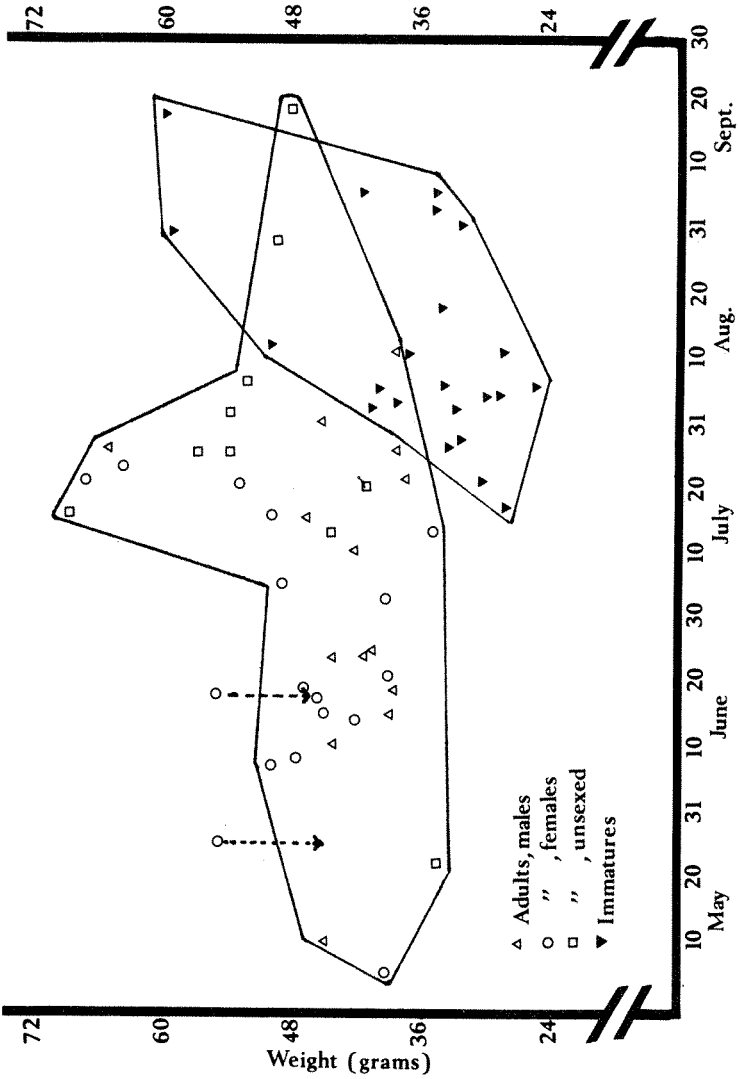

Figure 1. Weights of Spotted Sandpipers, to show fat deposition before fall migration.

SUMMARY

These relatively meagre data suggest that most adult Spotted Sandpipers leave eastern Canada in the latter half of July, while immatures depart between mid August and mid September.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Jon Barlow, Royal Ontario Museum; Henri Ouellet, National Museum of Natural Sciences; and Raymond McNeil, Université de Montréal; for access to weights of specimens in their charge; and Jean Burton and Antonio Salvadori, for the use of data obtained in banding operations of the Université de Montréal and the Long Point Bird Observatory, respectively.

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SEVERE FOOT-POX IN COMMON GRACKLE AND RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS

Kenneth W. Prescott

15 TIMBERLANE DRIVE,
PENNINGTON, NEW JERSEY 08534.

In a previous article (Prescott/Bird-Banding, 42: 47-48), I discussed incidence of foot-pox in passerine birds as recorded in the literature. The note called attention to the recovery from foot-pox by an adult male Red-winged Blackbird (Agelaius phoenicus) and that it was, apparently, the second record of foot-pox for this species. The previous report (Auk, 69: 90-91) was of an Arkansas Red-wing trapped by John R. Olive and Vincent Schultz.

In May of this year, I trapped two male Red-wings, each bird having severe cases of foot-pox on both legs, including all toes and extending up the tibiotarsus to the juncture of the feathered portion of the femur. Thus the entire exposed scaly areas of the feet and legs of both birds were covered with profusely swollen pox lesions. So enlarged were the legs that it was only with difficulty that I was able to band the birds with a large 3A band. The smaller approved size 2 band went only partially around the leg and could not have been closed without passing through the swollen soft poxy mass which bled easily.

The Red-wings were banded and recorded as:
19-05-71, ASY-M, 973-58082
31-05-71, ASY-M, 973-58093

Later in the year, 25-07-71, an AHY-M Common Grackle (Quiscalus quiscula) which I trapped was similarly infected on both feet and legs. It too required an oversized band 3A, No. 673-78331, to fit around the much swollen and enlarged leg. As with the Red-wings, the infection was characterized by soft, fleshy, blood-rich enlarged areas. Herman, Locke and Clark (Bird-Banding, 33: 191-198) reported the occurrence of foot-pox infections in natural populations of the Common Grackle at Patuxent Research Refuge.

All three birds appeared otherwise healthy and were trapped with others of the same species which had no evidence of foot-pox. They flew strongly when released and have not been recaptured at my Pennington station to date, October 16, 1971.

ONTARIO BIRD BANDING

EDITOR

Dr. A. D. Brewer
277 Arthur St. N.,
Guelph, Ontario. 824-4342

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