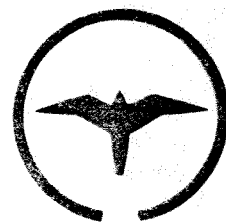


ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION



FEBRUARY - MARCH 1980 NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the OBBA will be held on Saturday March 8, 1980 in the Lecture Room of the McLaughlin Planetarium. The Planetarium is located just south of the Royal Ontario Museum at Avenue Road and Bloor Street, Toronto.

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 09:15 Registration (Fee \$1.00)
09:45 Introduction of members and visitors
10:00 Minutes of 1979 Annual General Meeting
10:10 President's Report
10:15 Treasurer's Report
10:20 Editor's Report
10:30 Banding Report
10:40 Election of Officers and Executive Committee for 1980
11:00 Station Reports
10:40 Long Point Bird Observatory
11:10 Toronto Bird Observatory
11:20 Hawk Cliff Raptor Banding Station
11:30 Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory
11:40 Guelph Banding Group
12:00 Adjourn for Lunch
12:00 - 13:30 The Bird Room at the R.O.M. will be open
13:45 Warran Lamb "Whitefish Point"
14:45 Coffee Break
15:05 Dr. A. Middleton "Analysis of Goldfinch Banding Recoveries"
15:20 Richard Knapton "Aspects of the Breeding Biology of the Clay - coloured Sparrow"
15:35 Michele Goossens "Spring and Summer at Prince Edward Point"
15:50 Dr. Chip Weseloh "Herring Gulls in the Great Lakes"
16:05 Charles Francis "Banding in the North-eastern Mexico"

There will be a social gathering in the evening after the Annual General Meeting.

JOINT EBBA - NEBBA MEETING

There will be a joint meeting of EBBA and NEBBA between April 25 and 27, 1980 at the Silver Bay Conference Centre, Lake George, New York, 12874. Further details can be obtained by contacting Valerie M. Freer, Eastern Bird Banding Association, RD #1, Box 21G, Ellenville, New York 12428.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TOUR

Don and Maureen Baldwin will be leading a birding tour to Trinidad and Tobago March 17-27. An eleven day itinerary which touches all the best birding spots and bases itself first at Asa Wrights Springhill Sanctuary and then at Turtle Beach on Tobago - near Eleanor Alefaunder's private sanctuary. This will be Don's fourth tour to Trinidad and Tobago.

In July (10th-26th) Don will lead the Scandinavian tour - Sweden and Norway - aided by local guides. An exciting itinerary which will travel the tour members widely and as far North as the North Cape. For prices and details contact Don at 401 Montrose Ave, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 3M2 (tel. 536-5542).

BANDING ERROR ? ?

Recently one of our members received a letter from Patuxent suggesting that he had used an incorrect "Status" number on a schedule. The bird had been found dead wearing a colour-band on its other leg. Yet our member had applied only a regular aluminum band. Did the finder read the number incorrectly? Or was the bird already wearing the colour-band when our member caught it? Or did someone apply a colour band at a later date? This incident should remind all of us to examine both legs of a captured bird and to follow the rules with scrupulous care.

SYMPOSIUM ON SCIENTIFIC STUDIES OF HUDSON AND JAMES BAY

The Department of Land Resource Science, University of Guelph will be sponsoring a Symposium on the Scientific Studies of Hudson Bay and James Bay. The objectives of the Symposium are to assess the current state of knowledge; report on research in the area; relate features and processes of this area to other similar arctic and sub-arctic zones; foster interdisciplinary interaction and determine needs for further research. The Symposium will be held between April 28-30 at the University of Guelph. For further information write to Professor I.P. Martini, Department of Land Resource Science, Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1.

READING PLEASURE

Most naturalists have read Aldo Leopolds "A Sand County Almanac". Who could resist re-reading it many times? Banders find pages 87-92 particularly delightful. Have you experimented to verify or refute his theories about the placement of your traps relative to the wind direction?

MEMBERSHIP DUES

We have not raised the fees! They still are:- Regular \$6.00, Family \$7.00, Student (under 18 years) \$2.00. If, unfortunately, you cannot attend the annual meeting where the membership secretary will be collecting, please mail fees at your earliest convenience to Harold Richards, Membership Secretary, 37 Killdeer Crescent, Toronto, Ontario, 4M6 2W7.

TRAVELS OF A GANNET - DAVID BREWER

The bander who confines himself to small passerines is fated to get only a minute fraction of his birds back as recoveries; furthermore, the life-span of small songbirds is typically so short that the vast majority of recoveries occur within a year or so of banding, and if the bander has not "heard" from his birds by then his chances get progressively even slimmer. By contrast, large seabirds give very respectable rates of recovery, and are very long-lived.

In the 1960's I banded up to a thousand Gannets each year on the colony of Ailsa Graig in the Firth of Clyde, Scotland. Ailsa is a massive, sugar-loaf shaped hunk of rock rising 1400 feet out of the sea, eight miles West of Girvan, Ayrshire. To curlers, it is known worldwide as the source of a special, unchippable granite much used for curling stones; to bird-watchers it is famous for being the site of one of the largest colonies of Gannets in the Eastern Atlantic.

My recoveries showed that the young Gannets moved down the Western seabord of Europe in their first winter, reaching typically as far south as the borders of Morocco and Mauritania. Rather more rarely they entered the Mediterranean, giving recoveries on the coast of North Africa, usually Morocco and Algeria, but one bird turned up in Tunisia. This recovery was the furthest east I had had at that time, and also involved a remarkable coincidence; the bird was found dead on a beach near Bizesta by a friend of mine who happened to be spending a year in Tunisia teaching. After that I had two Italian recoveries, one in Sicily and the other on the "heel" of Italy near Taranto. Since the Gannet does not occur with any regularity in the Eastern Mediterranean, my next good recovery, at Ashdod in southern Israel, was a complete surprise. Apart from one recovery (of a Bass Rock Bird - not one of mine) in Southern Turkey, this was the only occurrence of a banded Gannet east of Italy. However, I have just received notification of a very remarkable double recovery of a bird I banded in 1966.

In Britain (unlike Bonaventure Island) the Gannet has been doing rather well for a good many years. Several of the major colonies have doubled in numbers in the last twenty years. For a colonial seabird, the Gannet requires quite a good space to rest; each bird viciously defends an area around its nest, delineated by the distance it can lunge with its powerful, razor-sharp bill while seated on the next site. Consequently, a number of colonies are now becoming physically full up: there simply is no more room for new arrivals to build a nest. The Gannet does not become mature until five years old, and usually returns, specifically to its natal colony, in the spring of the fourth year, and attempts to nest the following spring. However, with the overcrowding at the established colonies, it is not surprising that several new colonies have been established in the last decade or so, and it was equally to be anticipated that some of the young birds I had banded would be involved. What did surprise me was the site of the new colony; Skarvklakken, at the northern end of the Lofoten Islands on the coast of Norway, about two hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle. A more logical source of colonists for a northern site like this would have been some of the Gannet colonies in Shetland or the Faeroes. Despite this in the summer of 1970 a Norwegian biologist was able to read, through binoculars, the number 1047512 on the band on a four year old Gannet, showing it to be a bird I had banded on Ailsa Craig in 1966. The following year the bird was actually recaptured at the same site. This was in itself rather a nice recovery, but since 1047512 was by now, as it were, sunk into a state of comfortable Scandinavian domesticity I did not anticipate hearing any more from it other than, perhaps, a few more retraps. I was therefore very surprised recently to receive notification that 1047512 had ended its days on the coast of Libya, about forty miles east of Tripoli, in November 1978. This constitutes the first recovery of a Gannet in Libya.

Gannets which survive the first few traumatic months of life (when they have to find their way, in a flightless condition, from their cliff ledges to the sea several hundred feet below, then teach themselves to fish, then find their way to the wintering grounds, all without parental instruction of any kind), tend to live to a ripe old age. They have essentially no predators, now that man has largely given up eating them; aside from the odd oiling incident. Probably the most important cause of mortality are odd bits of fishing net, in which they delight in getting tangled. Many Gannets have been recovered two decades and more after banding. I find it an interesting thought that, fifteen years after I was last observed dangling on a rope over the cliffs of Ailsa Craig, there are still, probably, several hundred of my bands floating around in the area bounded by Finisterre, Fastnet, Malta and the Canaries.

