



NEWSLETTER

The Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Bird Banding Association will be held on February 28 and 29, 2004 at Bird Studies Canada's Headquarters in Port Rowan, ON

As per the pattern set last year, a two-day event is scheduled with the format of the Saturday agenda following that of previous years. Winter banding, workshops and practical presentations will be the focus of the Sunday sessions.

Registration Fee

There will be a registration fee of \$4.00 for members and \$5.00 for non-members.

Lunch Arrangements

Coffee, tea and donuts will be served. There are several restaurants in Port Rowan or food will be ordered in for those who request it at registration time. Cost not available at this time.

Evening Social

On the Saturday there will be a social evening at the home of Audrey Heagy and David Okines. Directions will be available at the meeting. Food will be ordered in at cost to those attending.

Accommodations

There are several Bed and Breakfast places in and around Port Rowan. Information on many of these is available at: <http://www.bbcanada.com/associations/southcoast/>. Or contact Audrey Heagy, ahagy@kwic.com, 1-519-586-9464 for more information.

Bucket Raffle

As in previous years a bucket raffle will be held. Any member wishing to donate a prize should bring it to the meeting or if they prefer contact any board member.

Inside

Membership Note	3
Hummer Roundup	4
Editor's Notes.....	7
Banding Highlights	7
Your Board.....	8

Practical Sessions on Sunday

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the practical sessions on Sunday. The ground trapping and banding session at the home of David Okines and Audrey Heagy is weather dependent (will be cancelled if raining). For the “**Show and Tell**” session, you are invited to bring a few slides, photos, traps, banding tips, research results, etc. to share with other banders. For the “**Nest Box Banding Workshop**” we need examples of bander-friendly nest box designs (for any species), information on cooperative nest box projects, or examples of nest box projects by individual banders. The “**Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Workshop**” will cover banding equipment and methods, and ideas for developing a cooperative research project.

OBBA AGM AGENDA FEBRUARY 28 & 29, 2004.

Location: Bird Studies Canada Headquarters, 115 Front Street, Port Rowan, Ontario

Saturday, February 28, 2004

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|----------------|---|
| 09:00 to 09:30 | Registration |
| 09:30 to 10:00 | <u>Business Meeting</u>
Introductions - Audrey Heagy
President's Report – Audrey Heagy
Treasurer's Report – Joanne Dewey
Election of an Auditor – Joanne Dewey
Nominations & Election of 2004 Executive – John Miles |
| 10:00 to 10:30 | Bird (slides and specimens) Quiz |
| 10:30 to 11:00 | Coffee Break |
| 11:00 to 12:00 | <u>Station Reports</u>
Long Point Bird Observatory
Pelee Island Bird Observatory
Report from Banding Office |
| 12:00 to 13:30 | Lunch |
| 13:30 to 14:00 | Speaker – Stu McKenzie
“Productivity of Prothonotary Warblers in Canada: a comparison of natural cavities and nest boxes” |
| 14:00 to 14:15 | Presentation of the Janette Dean Award |
| 14:15 to 14:30 | Coffee Break |
| 14:30 to 15:00 | Results of the Bird Quiz |
| 15:00 to 15:30 | Speaker – Debbie Badzinski
“Studies of Hooded Warblers in St. Williams” |

- 15:30 to 15:45 Bucket Raffle Draw
- 15:45 to 16:15 Speaker –David Okines and Jon McCracken
“Loggerhead Shrike banding in Ontario”
- 16:15 Close of general meeting. Following the meeting, everyone is invited to the home of David Okines and Audrey Heagy, near St. Williams, ON for a social evening. Food will be ordered in at cost to those attending. Directions will be available at the meeting.

February 29, 2004 (all events at BSC HQ except as noted)

- 07:00 to 09:30 Ground Trapping and Banding (weather permitting)
(Home of D. Okines & A. Heagy, near St. Williams, ON 519-586-9464)
- 09:30 to 10:00 Travel to BSC HQ (15 minute travel time)
- 10:00 to 12:00 Coffee, Mingle and **“Show and Tell”**
(Bring a few photos, slides, traps, ideas, etc to demonstrate or discuss)
- 12:00 to 13:00 Free time, lunch
- 13:00 to 14:00 **Nest Box Banding Workshop:** a general discussion on bander-friendly nest box designs, and individual or cooperative nest box banding projects. *Please bring sample box designs and/or plans for any species.*
- 14:00 to 14:15 Coffee
- 14:15 to 15:15 **Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Workshop:** a general discussion of saw-whet owl capture techniques, ageing/sexing methods, and potential cooperative projects.
- 15:15 End of Conference.

Membership Renewals

Many of you have already renewed your memberships for 2004, so you can ignore the rest of this message. If you are not sure if you have renewed then please check your address label. The year in the top right corner is the year that you have paid for. If 2004 does not appear then please use the application renewal form enclosed in the previous newsletter or renew at the AGM to ensure that you continue to receive our literature. If there are any questions then please do not hesitate to ask. Thank you.

Joanne Dewey, RR 8, 642 Elmbrook Rd., Picton, Ont. K0K 2T0 or dewey@reach.net

RUBY-THROATED ROUNDUP

Carl A. Pascoe

If anyone had ever told me that there was a place where the sounds of little clicks, clacks, squeaks of feeding and Ruby-throated Hummingbird wings, would eclipse all other sounds I would have told them they were nuts. Bob Hall-Brooks, Allen Chartier and I can all attest that such a magical place exists. Thanks to our friend, mentor and Passerine/Hummingbird bander extraordinaire Allen, Bob and I were invited to participate in this quest for the Mythical Land of HUMMM.

The secret location of this legendary hidden valley is eastern West Virginia. I will not reveal the exact address in consideration of the homeowner. She does welcome visitors; however, she does not want to be overrun with people that may disturb her wonderful setup. Should anyone wish to make a pilgrimage to this hotspot of flying emerald jewels you can get in touch with Allen or me and we will contact the homeowner to make arrangements. Keep in mind that we may require a blood oath to not reveal the exact location and we may make you have to drive the last 10 miles blindfolded. (Just kidding)

The homeowner has been actively feeding Hummingbirds in her yard since about 1997. She began with a few feeders and is now up to 20 or more. She is on "Hummernet" which is a list server dedicated to people interested in Hummingbirds and she used this forum to request hummingbird banders to come and band her birds. As there are no resident hummingbird banders in West Virginia, the task was taken up by a combination of some of the best banders on Hummernet.

Bob Sargent, who is the world authority on Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, and his wife Martha became involved and requested help from Allen and Scott Weidensaul (Pulitzer Prize nominated author of *Living on the Wind* and a Pennsylvania Hummingbird bander). Gerry (the home owner) indicated that she thought she may have 1 or 2 **hundred** Hummingbirds at her home in late July when she goes through about 1 gallon of sugar water a day and by mid-August goes up to an amazing 2 and 1/2 gallons per day. Let me just say here that she profoundly underestimated the number of birds.

Allen asked Bob Hall-Brooks and me if we would be interested in going along to help out and get some training on the art of hummingbird banding. We both jumped at the chance to see this many hummers in one place and to spend some time learning from Allen, Bob Sargent, Martha Sargent and Scott Weidensaul. Special hummingbird banding and color marking permits for West Virginia were obtained by Allen, Bob S. and Scott and arrangement made with Gerry to come the last week in July.

Bob H-B and I set off on July 27th for the trip. According to Map Quest it was a 7 hour and 67 minute drive to the town nearest the fabled land of HUMMM. Allen had gone down the day before to look at the area. Upon arrival at Gerry's home, her set-up amazed us. She had about 20 feeders under a roofed area on her deck and another 6 feeders set up in her front yard. The hummingbirds were swarming around the feeders like sharks at a feeding frenzy.

I made an attempt to count the birds at the feeders on the deck counting just those at and around the feeders and then those that came into the area from the left side only and in about 1 minute I counted 47 birds. About this same time Allen counted about 20 at the feeders in the yard. We were all amazed and could not remove the huge grins plastered to our faces as this unbelievable spectacle unfolded before our eyes. When we could finally stop laughing and giggling we began to set up for banding the next day.

A Russell Trap was set up out in the yard around the feeders. This is a 6-meter mist net that surrounds the feeders on 3 sides and has a mist net top. One end is left open to let in both the birds and banders. When a bird is perched on a feeder one of us nuts rushes the opening waving our arms and looking downright silly. The birds are then flushed to the back of net and become caught by the mist net. Personally I don't think we frighten the birds, I think they fall off the perches due to laughter and just begin to fly to keep from falling to the ground in side-splitting amusement.

Allen had also brought along several specially designed cage traps that we set up among the feeders on the deck. We erected a covered area for shade and protection on the lawn for our banding station. We were set up and ready to go for the next morning.

July 28th was overcast with the threat of rain but your intrepid hummingbird banders opened up the Russell Trap and set the cage traps at about 7am. At Holiday Beach it is always a time of excitement when we get a hummingbird in our Russell Trap and often the mad dash to flush the bird into the mist net looks like an outtake from an old silent movie. After just a couple of these mad dashes at this location it soon became a much more leisurely stroll to the trap because there were so many birds at one time. Quite often there would be 6 to 10 birds in the trap at one time and if a few escaped it was no big deal because they would soon be back.

Allen had brought along 12 hummingbird bags and they were all quickly filled. Allen was banding and processing the birds as Bob H-B and I assisted with data recording and some measurements. Allen used this time to aid in our training by showing us tips and double checking measurements to be sure we were being consistent and accurate. Every time we got down to a few hummers left in the bags Bob H-B or I would stroll back into the Russell Trap and replenish our supply.



The day alternated with periods of light rain and sun so we would have to close the Russell Trap at times to keep the birds safe. This did not slow us down, as the rains would usually stop about the time we completed processing the birds we had in the bags. We would then reopen the Russell Trap and begin refilling our bags with the precious flying jewels. Then in the early afternoon the clouds opened up with wind, lightening and thunder. Here we are sitting under this 10 foot by 10 foot shelter supported by metal poles in a lightning storm. As the winds whipped up and the time between the flashes of lightning and rumble of thunder became shorter we were down to the last bird in a bag.

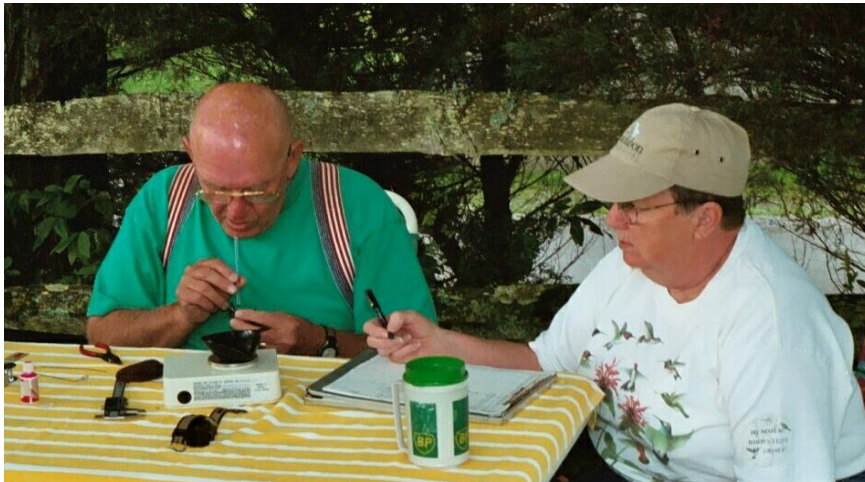
Allen hands the bag to Bob H-B and says, "You band this one.". This was the first hummingbird that Bob H-B had applied the band and processed from beginning to end. (I have had a chance to band a few birds with Allen in Michigan and had already done a few more that day.) No pressure Bob. In spite of the

flashes of lightning, claps of thunder and the shelter almost falling down around us he completed the task with admirable cool attention to detail and safety of the bird as highest priority.

We moved under the shelter of another section of the deck for the rest of the day and used the cage trap we had set up under the covered area of the deck. The total for the day was 77 RTHU.

The following day we resumed banding and were rewarded with an overflowing Russell Trap. We kept the bags full all day and churned out banded and marked hummers. In the early afternoon Bob Sargent and his wife Martha arrived and observed our operation as we happily banded away, discussed the site and talked about Ruby-throats. A local newspaper sent a reporter/photographer and she interviewed us all for an article to be printed the following Saturday. We banded an additional 124 birds this day.

Day 3 began at about 7am. Allen had an appointment at another site in Ohio and could only stay a few hours and we had to decide to go with him or stay in the Mythical Land of HUMMM. It was not hard to decide to stay and “learn from the master” Bob Sargent.



Bob H-B and I helped with scribing data and removing birds from the traps for most of the morning. Then Bob S asked us if we would like to band some birds. Under his astute tutelage we began banding and processing hummers. His knowledge, patience and helpful hints from his years of banding made this experience one never to be forgotten. Bob H-B Banded 20 and banded 18 that day. Things began to slow down a bit and we were at last beginning to

get marked birds in the traps by about 4 that afternoon, so we closed for the day. I don't have the total number of birds for that day for all of the banders.

The morning of the 4th day we opened about 7am again and Bob H-B and I started banding. He got in another 10 and I added 12 for a total of 30 birds each for the day and a half spent with Bob S. We had to leave about noon that day for the drive back, so with sugar water tears in our eyes we said goodbye to the Mythical Land of HUMMM. We will miss the sounds, sights and wonderful company of birds, banders, visitors and Gerry; The High Priestess of HUMMM.

We checked the number banded when we left at noon and the total for our 3½ days was an incredible 415 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds banded. We hope to return to assist with this project next year. Note - we banded only a handful of hatch-year (newly fledged) birds so a few weeks later there could have been hundreds of more hummingbirds.

Good birding to all and to all a good flight.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Our ranks are growing! Welcome to new members Carl Pascoe and Rachel Powless. Carl recently received a sub-permit to band passerines and raptors at Holiday Beach Migration Observatory along with Bob Hall-Brooks.

Congratulations to Terri Groh and Martin Wernaart on the birth of their second child – Frederick Nathan. A new brother to help Benjamin pull strings in the hawk blinds.

Cindy Cartwright has received her master permit to band hummingbirds, passerines and raptors. This will replace the sub-permit that she held under the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory.

Articles for publication, with a preferred maximum length of two pages in font 12, should be submitted in a Word document as an email attachment of on a diskette. Photos in .jpg and drawing would be appreciated as well as banding highlights, milestones, special events, etc.

BANDING HIGHLIGHTS

NSWO (HY-F) banded on Oct. 22 /03 by Cindy Cartwright at the Institute for Outdoor Education and Environmental Studies near Oliphant was recaptured at Long Point on Nov. 6/03. 165 miles ATCF (as the crow flies) in 15 days.

NSWO banded Oct. 23/03 at the Long Point Bird Observatory's Old Cut station was recaptured at Selkirk Nov. 5/03. This bird in 2 weeks had gone NE about 40km ATCF???

COGR banded May 12/01 at the Long Point Bird Observatory's Tip station was recaptured at Selkirk June 6/03.

Selkirk also had 87 recaptured birds in the fall of 2003 which were returns from previous years.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Haldimand Bird Observatory AGM	February 21
Ontario Bird Banding Association AGM	February 28/29
Renew your membership (renewal form in last issue)	due now
Deadline for submissions for July 2004 issue	July 1
