



# NEWSLETTER

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## OBBA NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Are you looking for a challenge? Filled with ideas for newsletter articles? Want to see a new newsletter format? The OBBA Board is looking for a Newsletter Editor to start following the 2010 AGM. Anyone who is interested should contact a member of the Board.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

For the past ten years, I have been editor for the Ontario Bird Banding Association Newsletter. I have enjoyed the interesting articles and information that members have contributed, the positive feedback following so many issues, and the challenges of finding new ideas that would interest our diverse membership. It has been a great experience!

2010 has been declared the "International Year of Biodiversity" and a new organization is being launched in the Bruce and Grey area. The Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation Centre will educate the public on issues related to biodiversity and the environment, support local research, and preserve local knowledge. OBBA members may be interested in contributing banding information and field notes from their past or future visits to the area.

I am very excited about spearheading this new project! Unfortunately, it means that I will not be able to continue as the OBBA Newsletter Editor. The Winter 2010 Newsletter will be my last issue. I will miss all the informative emails and phone calls that I have received from people over the past ten years. *Cindy*

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## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Renew your membership – January 1**

**Deadline for submissions for the Winter 2010 issue - January 16**

**OBBA Annual General Meeting at Port Rowan - February 27/28**

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## **TABULAR PYLE – A SHORT COMMENTARY**

**David Lamble**

Several years ago, I had the good fortune to have a lengthy conversation with Merrill Woods, the author of an age-sex guide for banders for some selected species of passerines. I remember asking him if he was the author of the guide and I could hear his voice fall – expecting, I am certain, some criticism of one species or another. After I said I was impressed at his courage at writing such a volume, his tone brightened and our conversation turned to a lively chat about banding in general.

I mention this conversation because I often hear great criticism about the Pyle Manual. Usually someone outlines some mistake or other in the manual, real or imagined, even though Pyle himself suggests this is not a finished work, but rather a work in progress requiring banders to add to the base document. As a result, I am loathe to make a critical comment about Pyle's work. There is so much useful information present as well as suggestions about future studies. However, I do think that it is not easy to glean the information, especially in the field.

Two authors, Walter Sakai of Santa Monica College, California and C. John Ralph of Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory in Arcata California have also found Pyle difficult to use and have put together a **Tabular Pyle**. This work simply takes each species represented in Pyle and makes the data into a table. Often the species account comprises two pages of tabular material, complete with diagrams. I have been using it for over a year now and find it simple to use, much like the dichotomous key system of Merrill Woods. It is particularly useful for those species I do not regularly band and particularly helpful for apprentices trying to learn the subtleties of banding.

There are some difficulties using the volume however. The first is the size of the volume. It is on stock 8.5 x 11 inch paper and contains all the species listed in Pyle which, of course, includes birds we do not see in Ontario. However, I find that I can photocopy some selected pages and take them into the field with me. For example, there is a splendid tabular summary for the Empidonax Flycatcher group (see examples on next page). A copy of this makes the identification of each species much easier.

However, aside from that one small criticism, I would highly recommend that each bander get a copy. The cost is \$45.00 (US) plus postage, depending on the exchange rate, which is currently around \$55.00 (Canadian). It can be ordered from Klamath Bird Observatory, Box 758, Ashland, Oregon, 97520, USA. They do take phone orders (541-201-0866) and the young lady that does the shipping is more than helpful, trying to get the least expensive shipping method. You also may be able to order on line (but I do not know for certain) at [www.KlamathBird.org](http://www.KlamathBird.org).

## EMPIDONAX CHARACTERISTICS IDENTIFICATION CHART

	Yellow-bellied	Acadian	"Western"	Willow/Alder	Least	Hammond	Dusky	Gray
Critical criteria to separate from most other empids	Plumage and leg color.  From ACFL by yellower underparts, shorter bill, wing and tail; and wing formula.  From WEFL by brighter upperparts, rounded eye ring, wing formula and wing-tail.	Green and yellow plumage and gray legs.  From YBFL & WEFL by plumage, mouth color larger size and wing formula.	Plumage, eye ring shape, yellow lower mandible, gray legs.  Juveniles: eye ring shape, legs, wing formula.  From ACFL by shorter wing and p6 emarg.  See YBFL	Plumage, leg color, lack of distinct eye ring, bill and lack of emarg. on p6.	From eastern spp by plumage, leg color, and smaller measurement.  From HAFL by longer wing tip, shorter wing, less notched tail, bill width and shape.	Plumage, leg color and wing formula.  See LEFL.  From DUFL and GRFL by larger wing-tail difference, shorter culmen, and wing formula, molt strategy (molt on breeding ground).	Plumage, leg color and wing formula.  See HAFL.  From HY GRFL with caution – shorter bill and wing-tail, p10-4, molt strategy (molt on winter ground).	Plumage, leg color, and bill measurement.  See DUFL.
Bill shape	 Yellow-bellied Western	 Acadian	 Yellow-bellied Western	 Willow Alder	 Least	 Hammond's	 Dusky	 Gray
Culmen	7.0 - 9.4	9.2 - 10.1	7.7 - 0.2	7.6 10.3	6.3 - 8.4	6.0 - 8.0	6.5 - 8.9	7.6 - 10.4
Bill width	4.8 - 5.6	5.3 - 6.3	5.0 - 5.8	5.0 - 6.1	4.4 - 5.1	4.0 - 4.6	4.2 - 5.3	4.4 - 5.8
Lower mandible	Completely pinkish or pinkish-yellow	almost entirely yellow-pink	entirely yellow	entirely or mostly yellow	variable, often dusky with yellow-orange base	dusky w/slightly pale base (AHY) to mostly orange (juv-HY)	variable, mostly dusky (AHY) to mostly yellow (juv-HY) oft yellowish w/ distinct dusky tip	pinkish to yellowish with well-defined dark tip.

	Yellow-bellied	Acadian	"Western"	Willow/Alder	Least	Hammond	Dusky	Gray
Eye ring	complete, narrow, round, yellowish	complete, whitish, rounded	broad, whitish-yellow, teardrop shaped	<b>absent or incomplete (ALFL = bolder)</b>	complete, whitish, slightly almond shaped	complete, whitish, slightly almond shaped	complete, white, rounded	complete, white, round
Culmen	7.0 - 9.4	9.2 - 10.1	7.7 - 0.2	7.6 10.3	6.3 - 8.4	6.0 - 8.0	6.5 - 8.9	7.6 - 10.4
Bill width	4.8 - 5.6	5.3 - 6.3	5.0 - 5.8	5.0 - 6.1	4.4 - 5.1	4.0 - 4.6	4.2 - 5.3	4.4 - 5.8
Lower mandible	Completely pinkish or pinkish-yellow	almost entirely yellow-pink	entirely yellow	entirely or mostly yellow	variable, often dusky with yellow-orange base	dusky w/slightly pale base (AHY) to mostly orange (juv-HY)	variable, mostly dusky (AHY) to mostly yellow (juv-HY) oft yellowish w/ distinct dusky tip	pinkish to yellowish with well-defined dark tip.
Bill shape								
Wing Chord	60-72	65-80	<b>56-72</b>	61-77	56-67	62-75	61-73	63-76
Tail length	46-55	52-62	50-63	52-66	51-58	52-62	57-68	56-66
Wing - Tail	12-19	13-21	3-14	7-17	4-12	7-16	<b>0-8</b>	6-13
p6 emargination	variable	no	yes	<b>no</b>	yes	yes	ys	yes
Wing formula	p10 > p5 p10 < p6 p8 - p6 < 5 mm	p10 ≥ p6 p8 - p6 > 5.5 mm	p10 ~ p5 p6 > p10 = 2.7-7.0 p9 > p5 = 3.4-7.8	Alder p10 > p5 Willow p10 ~ p5 p9 - p5 = 8-13mm	p10 ~ p5 p9 - p5 < 5 mm	p10 > p5 p9 - p5 > 5 mm	p10 < p5 p10 ~ p4 p9 - p6 < 5 mm	p10 ≤ p5 p10 > p4
Longest p - longest s	10.3 - 17.5	13.3 - 23.5	8.6-17.1	10.2-17.4	9.0-15.7	13.3-20.6	9.2-15.2	9.0-16.9
Longest p - p6	2.2-6.7	5.2 - 9.3	0.2 - 4.4	1.7 - 7.4	0.8 - 3.7	1.8 - 5.5	0.0 - 3.0	0.9 - 4.6
p6 - p10	1.9 - 6.3	-2.9 - 1.7	<b>4.7 - 9.8</b>	-1.4 - 7.0	2.7 - 7.0	<b>2.8 8.0</b>	6.0 - 10.8	4.1 - 8.1
p9 - p5	5.8 - 11.5	8.6 - 14.4	<b>2.8 - 9.8</b>	4.7 - 11.6	3.4 - 7.8	5.6 - 11.6	2.2 - 5.5	3.5 - 8.8
Leg color	dark grayish to brownish	gray	<b>gray</b>	blackish	blackish	blackish	blackish	blackish
Tail notch					slightly r6 - r1 < 2.5 mm	<b>markedly</b> r6-r1 ≥ 2.5 mm	slightly r6 - r1 ≤ 2 mm	slightly r6 - r1 ≤ 2 mm

## BANDING HIGHLIGHTS

**David Lamble** reports two interesting recoveries: One of his many **Snow Buntings** (ASY-M) banded Feb 23 near Arthur was sighted (through a spotting scope) on May 30 at Nuuk, Greenland. An **American Goldfinch** (SY-M) banded at Luther Marsh on May 4 was found dead in Calgary, Alberta June 3. David remarked “Never had a goldfinch do that before. I wonder what kind of drugs he got from the Nijer seed?”

Nick Escott reported that an ASY-M **Chestnut-collared Longspur** was captured in a ground trap, banded & released by **John Woodcock** at Thunder Cape Bird Observatory on May 30 2009.



Cindy Cartwright banded a HY-M **Rufous Hummingbird** on November 14, near Stirling, north of Belleville.

photos Margaret Gray



photo  
Bill Schmoker

## PINE SISKIN RECOVERY

**John Burger**

PISI band number 2580-06467 was banded as an AHY Male by myself near Seal Cove, Newfoundland located about 30 km SW of St. John's, on July 6, 2008. It was found dead 10 months later in Newport Center, Vermont on May 11, 2009 - about 100 km SE of Montreal and 1463 km SW of the banding site.

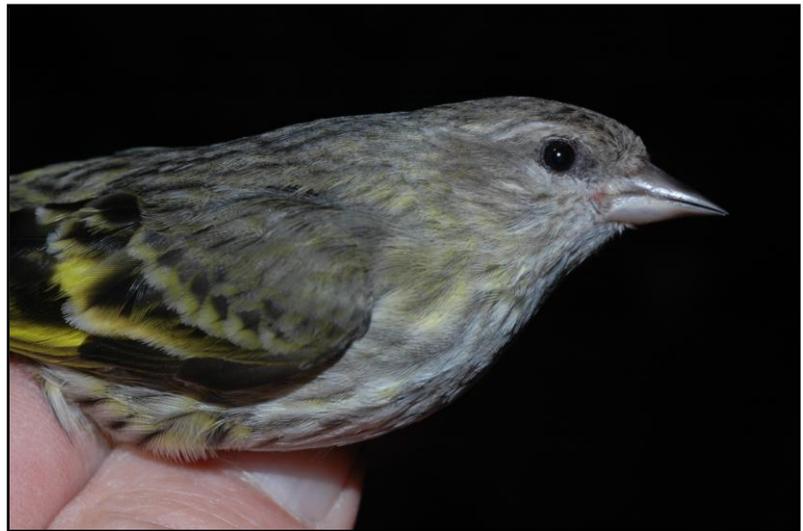


photo John Burger

It's interesting that in 2008 I banded only 12 PISI in Newfoundland of which this one was recovered. Whereas during the winter of 2008-2009, I banded 252 PISI at my home near Orton, Ontario, none of which have been reported recovered so far. This illustrates that even those who band a relatively small number of birds may have interesting recoveries.

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## PURPLE MARTIN RECAPTURE

**David Lamble**

On July 1, 2005, I banded a flightless young Purple Martin in Wallenstein (a small Mennonite community north of Elmira) – at the home of Mr. Ivan Martin, who boasts a Purple Martin colony of 100 nesting pairs. This was one of nearly 400 young birds banded that year.



photos David Lamble



On June 16, 2007 the bird was retrapped nesting as an adult male in High Cliff State Park in Wisconsin. The recapture was accomplished by Mr. Richard Nikolai, an employee of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, who has a colony of 250 nesting pairs. Even more pleasing, was the recapture of the bird in the same compartment in 2008. Hopefully, he will return for a third year – this year.

Mr. Nikolai is able to capture virtually 100% of his returning adults and reports that there is a 50% loss every year. So the colony actively recruits replacement adults (I have visions of army recruitment posters in Brazil inviting Purple Martins to the Wisconsin colony). He also reports that most of his “foreign” birds are males and suggests that the females return to their natal site but males disperse to new ones.

When you consider the observations in the recent Breeding Bird Atlas about the Purple Martin withdrawing from inland sites in Ontario, this recapture makes logical sense. Fewer and fewer recruitment sites in Ontario will force younger birds to move further and further away to find new breeding territories.

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# NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL SPECIAL PROJECT

Scott Weidensaul



The cooperation of banders in eastern and central North America is sought in connection with a study of Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWO) using light-sensitive geolocators, conducted by the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art in Pennsylvania.

In October and November 2009, approximately 200 NSWOs will be fitted with 2.3g geolocators in central Pennsylvania; the units, mounted with a backpack harness, are encased in clear epoxy and resemble a radio-transmitter, but have a short, 2.5cm epoxy stem instead of an antenna.

photo Cindy Cartwright

Because the geolocators record up to two years' data, timing is critical. Banders who encounter a tagged owl in 2009 are asked to *leave the logger in place* and release the bird after normal processing.

Those encountering tagged owls **beginning in spring 2010** migration and thereafter are asked to remove the geocator and to contact Weidensaul (scottweidensaul@verizon.net, 778 Schwartz Valley Rd., Schuylkill Haven PA 17972 USA) to make arrangements to have it returned. Likewise, anyone learning of the recovery of a dead owl wearing a geocator should also attempt to retrieve and return the logger.

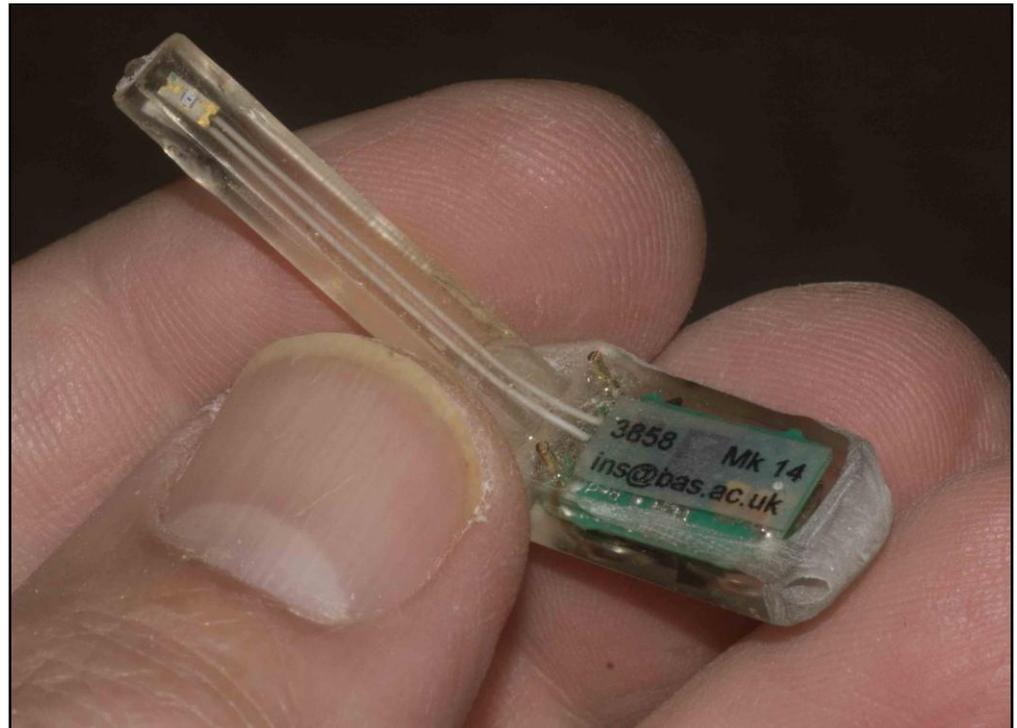


photo Scott Weidensaul

*Editor's Note:*

*Please share this information with any Canadian owl banders who are not members of OBBA.*

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## **2010 Membership Application or Renewal**

Membership fees are due in January

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate below if you would prefer to receive an “electronic only subscription” and save OBBA the postage costs. Membership dues still apply (but no mailing surcharge for overseas members).

**Electronic only subscription** (You will receive an e-mail notification when new issues of the newsletter and Journal are available).

### **Membership Category:**

- Life Member (\$400), tax receipt issued**
- Individual/Family/Household (\$20)**
- Student (\$10)**
- Mailing Surcharge outside of Canada and United States (\$10)**  
(No surcharge for electronic only subscription)

**Additional Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_, tax receipt issued if \$10 or more.**

Make cheque payable to: **Ontario Bird Banding Association**

Mail to: **Audrey Heagy, OBBA, 273 Charlotteville Road 2,  
RR # 2, St. Williams, ON N0E 1P0**

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