

ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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Issued quarterly by the Ontario Bird Banding Assoc.

From the Editor's Desk

Beginning with this issue the OBBA Newsletter will appear quarterly - in January, April, July and October. In the interim short notices will be sent out as the need arises. Articles, like the one in this issue by Fred Helleiner, are needed. It will help if they are typed single-spaced, on 8½" x 11" paper. Line drawings or outline maps may be used to illustrate the article. Suggestions as to what you would like to see in the Newsletter will be welcome. Send all 'members news' to the Sec.-Treas. Bill Wasserfall.

W. Wasserfall - Co-Editor of THE RING

Bill Wasserfall has been appointed a regional co-editor of the international banding bulletin, THE RING. He will be sending regular reports of banding activity in Canada to this quarterly publication. Members are asked to send him reports of their special projects and any long-distance or unusual recoveries.

In the November, 1957 issue there was an article, by Bill, outlining the organization and accomplishments of the OBBA.

Subscription to THE RING costs 16 shillings or 2.50 U. S. dollars, and may be obtained from Dr. W. Ryzdzewski, 1 Altyre Road, Croydon, Surrey, England.

Bird Night - Royal Ontario Museum

On Dec. 13, 1957 the Dept. of Birds, of the ROM held an open night featuring 'Arctic Birds'. The OBBA was invited to take part and set up a display of banding equipment. Bill Wasserfall, Frank Lovesy and Jim Woodford undertook this project and by opening time on Friday the 13th had a reasonable display - featuring a Mist-Net, woodpecker trap, bands, banding literature, excellent photographs by Doug. Dow and Bill Carrick and a live Long-eared Owl and Pine Grosbeak. Over 400 people attended the open house and quite a number of these received a personal lecture on banding.

The Journal 'BIRD-BANDING'

One of the finest ornithological journals published in North America is BIRD-BANDING. It is of particular interest to banders, because as its name suggests it is devoted mainly to papers and notes on banding. It also has an excellent review section which abstracts all the important papers and notes written on birds throughout the world. Titles of some of the papers which have appeared recently may give banders a better idea of its value - Mist-Nets versus Heligoland Traps, Banding with Mist-Nets, Leg Sizes and Band Sizes, Migration Sampling by Trapping: a Brief Review, and so on. All OBBA members are urged to subscribe to this important and useful journal. Subscriptions are \$5.00 per year and may be obtained from - Mr. Roland C. Clement, 40 Bowen Street, Providence 3, Rhode Island.

MEMBERS NEWS

27 members have filed their 1956-57 banding totals. How about you?!!

Ruth Brown, Toronto, reports banding 271 shorebirds of 10 species at Presqu'ile last fall, among them a Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

Les Grey, Hamilton, has also concentrated on shorebirds at the Dundas Marsh and reports 136 of 10 species including a Wilson's Phalarope. He reports heavy concentrations of birds during the fall and would like other banders to cooperate with him.

Russ Rutter, Huntsville, was introduced to some of his first warbler banding during the fall and records 11 species, Myrtles (64), the most common.

Cy. Wolfling, our newlywed, has introduced his wife to Tern banding and has her assistance on his trips. He is engaged in house building and hopes to finish before June this year.

Neil Kelley, Detroit, is also settled in a new home but hasn't yet transferred the birds to the new station.

Howard Krug, Chesley, has done mostly colony banding and lists 51 Caspian Tern amongst those banded.

Jim Bayly, Brockville, now has a farm and is interested in establishing a Heligoland Trap.

Willie McKay, Toronto, trapped and banded a Hybrid Yellow shafted Red shafted Flicker which was photographed before release.

Tom Anderson, New Liskeard, although handicapped by illness, has continued with his banding and lists some of his Evening Grosbeak returns.

Helen Quilliam, Kingston, is retrapping Tree Sparrows banded by her in previous years.

Marshall Field, St. Thomas, had very good results with Chipping Sparrows in a patch of millet that he planted.

Jim Woodford and Frank Lovesy have had a short article on weights and measurements of warblers accepted for publication by 'BIRD BANDING'.

BANDING IN ONTARIO'S NORTHLAND

by

Frederick M. Helleiner

Most members of the Ontario Bird Banders' Association, in fact, most North American banders, have banding stations so located geographically that a very high percentage of their captured birds are transients which breed farther north. Hence a foreign return of one of these birds would yield information on only a part of the bird's migration route. In order to learn the complete route followed by it, we must either band it on its breeding grounds and recapture it on its wintering grounds, or vice versa. For this purpose my banding area near Kirkland Lake or Swastika is excellently situated, being in the breeding range of many species.

I can find almost as many breeding birds here on a day in June as there are migrants here on a day in May. If a bander can brave the hordes of decidedly carnivorous insects long enough, he will be rewarded with nesting warblers in a score of different species as well as thrushes, sparrows, flycatchers, swallows, and a few typically northern species.

Despite the preponderance of nesting birds, I nevertheless caught and banded more migrant sparrows, etc. than any other classification. In April and October tree sparrows and juncos descend in droves. The white-throated and white-crowned sparrows seldom appear until May and usually leave before the other two fringillids mentioned above.

Winter banding must necessarily be restricted to a very few species, but there often are sizable flocks of redpolls, grosbeaks, and crossbills to work on. For those unfamiliar with the species, the ease with which Canada jays may be caught will seem surprising.

Until recently my only method of capture was the mist net or the wire noose on the end of a pole. With the ground frozen solid for six months of the year, erecting the supporting poles for a mist net sometimes becomes a problem. Even where the snow is quite deep, it is much fluffier than the slushy type in southern Ontario, and will not provide a firm anchor for the poles.

There are one or two locations which I have favoured as banding sites since my acquisition of a permit last April. One of these is in the garden of a most co-operative naturalist couple who feed birds all year round. These people are sensible enough not to become sentimental about "their" birds and welcome rather than resent my exploitation of the artificially large bird population there which results from their intensive feeding operations. This is borne out by their attitude towards an unfortunate incident (from a banding viewpoint) which occurred to-day. A white-throat, which has been wintering there and has been guarded solicitously as a child of the family during anxious months of snowstorms and sub-zero winds, was caught and banded two days ago. While somewhat apprehensive about the bird's likelihood of staying in the vicinity after being caught, the hosts never-

theless were delighted that it could be banded, and went to considerable trouble to assist me in preparing the trap. (Another white-throat wintered there five years ago and speculation was frequent on whether the birds were one and the same individual.) To-day a shrike picked off their pet. The poor lady's grief when she phoned me about it, was more over the failure of the banding project than over the bird's death.

With this sort of co-operation from feeding station operators in two or three places nearby, banding continues to be an enjoyable pastime. Furthermore, there are always enough birds available, even in the deep of winter, to maintain an active interest in banding.

POINT PELEE FALL BANDING 1957

Fall banding this year produced an increase of 22 species and 364 individuals over the Sept. 1956 totals.

Sharp-shinned Hawks as usual dominated the scene from the 12th. Sept. on and reached a peak on the 19 - 20th. The first adult bird ever taken there dispelled the banders theory that only the immature birds were unwary enough to be trapped.

Shore birds, trapped both during the night and day showed better results with the 8th Sept. the most successful period.

One of the purposes of the Oct. banding was to discover to what extent the Saw Whet Owl occurred at the Point during migration. This species in the past has been taken mainly in the Toronto area but some of the older records pointed to a similar concentration at Pelee. As the Toronto movement was in full swing by Oct. 12th it was assumed that similar conditions could possibly be found at the Point but exhaustive searching turned up only one bird.

The early movement of "winter" birds was shown by the trapping of 2 Red-breasted Nuthatch at the end of Aug.

Grey-cheeked Thrush showed a marked increase over the previous fall building up in numbers towards the end of the month. Olive-backed Thrush repeated the '56 wave again on the 14th along with Black-poll Warbler.

Warblers appeared to be fewer although the same number of species were taken but of different variety. Black polled and Myrtle constituted the major part of the total.

Although Blue Jays were present in large numbers trapping was found to be difficult as the birds tended to stay in the taller trees. This possibly could be overcome by baiting a certain area.

The Oct. banding shows great promise and should be explored. The increase in Fringillidae could be a repetition of the conditions found in April whilst the one Saw-Whet is hardly conclusive.

17 Banders and 8 co-operators combined to cover the station for the year 1957, smoothing out some of the faults and trying to overcome new ones. Sleeping accommodation provided was fairly satisfactory but the need for better working facilities became more apparent.

Public interest is increasing rapidly and the need for some form of liaison becomes more urgent. It is obvious that banders concentrating on their work find it impossible to take the time to provide information for interested spectators. Tentative plans are being made for the 1958 operation of this station. If you are interested in participating in banding and scientific study at Pelee contact Doug. Dow, 30 Brookside Street, London, Ontario.

POINT PEEPEE FALL BANDING SUMMARY - 1957

	JULY			AUG.			SEPT.			OCT.			Total											
	27	28	31	1	2	8	12	13	14	15	16	17		18	19	20	21	22	28	29	12	13		
English Sparrow																		1				1	2	
Red-winged Blackbird		5							1														1	6
Orchard Oriole		1																						1
Baltimore Oriole		1																						1
Crow Blackbird					1				1															2
Cardinal					1																			1
Rose-breasted Grosbeak							3																	11
Indigo Bunting																								1
American Goldfinch									2															3
Purple Finch																								1
Eastern Towhee																								2
Slate-colored Junco																								1
Chipping Sparrow																								8
Field Sparrow									1															1
White-crowned Sparrow																								6
White-throated Sparrow									2															12
Fox Sparrow																								5
Lincoln's Sparrow																								3
Song Sparrow	1	1	1	1																				1
Swamp Sparrow			2																					12
Empidonax Flycatcher			2	10	1		1		8															17
DAILY TOTALS	2	24	28	45	5	38	11	29	229	38	26	42	13	32	56	63	93	89	40	65	87	1055	24	

TOTAL SPECIES BANDED 88
 TOTAL BIRDS BANDED 1055
 TOTAL TRAPPING DAYS 21

BANDERS: Doug. Dow, London, July - Aug. - Sept. - Oct.
 Marshall Field, St. Thomas, Sept.
 Neil Kelley, Detroit, Sept.
 Lou Lenz, Detroit, Sept.
 Frank Lovesy, Toronto, Sept.
 Willie Mackay, Toronto, Sept.
 Ralph O'Reilly, Detroit, Sept.
 Bill Williams, Toronto, Sept.
 Jim Woodford, Toronto, Aug. - Sept.

CO-OPERATORS: Bob Taylor, Toronto
 Doug. Larkin, Detroit