

ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



JUNE 1984

OBBA Membership dues

Those members who have not paid dues for 1984 will have a red dot on the envelope in which this newsletter is contained. Unless they renew this the last newsletter mailed to these members, due to the high cost of postage and printing. Thank-you to all those members that have already renewed for 1984, and to all of those that intend to. A tear-off renewal slip is attached at the end of this newsletter.

Call For New Newsletter Editor

As some of you may know, Chris Risley and I plan to move to Vancouver, British Columbia in October of this year. This move necessitates my giving up my tenure as OBBA newsletter editor. I would like to solicit a volunteer to take over this task, which involves collecting material, organizing and typing material (or finding a typist) and sending the newsletter to OBBA members three to four times a year. In general enough material comes in unsolicited so that the editor is not caught short. Anyone interested in more information about the job, please contact me. Erica Nol, 151 Ruggles Ave. Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 1Y3, (416) 883-4689.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 10 March 1984 — Anne Lambert

About 80 people attended this year's Annual Meeting which was held at the McLaughlin Planetarium Lecture Room.

Peter Lockhart, President, brought the meeting to order at 9:45 and welcomed members and guests. He asked everyone to introduce themselves. The minutes of the 1983 Annual Meeting (published in the June 1983 newsletter) were adopted as written.

In his opening remarks, Peter Lockhart noted that his term as President was ending, and thanked the Executive for making his job easy, in particular Chris Risley (who organized this year's meeting), Bruce Duncan, and Bob and Fran Hubert, who have borne much of the work of the organization.

Bob Hubert, Treasurer, presented the financial report, noting that 1983 was a difficult year financially for OBBA, but early renewals by members alleviated the situation. The bank balance as of 31 December 1983 was \$227.22. The financial statement was accepted on a motion by Don Fowler, seconded by John Miles.

Bruce Duncan, Editor of the journal, then addressed the meeting on the future of the journal. He brought up the possibility that as an alternative to continuing Ontario Bird Banding OBBA could discontinue the journal, and in association with the Eastern, Inland and Western Bird Banding Associations, receive the journal North American Bird Bander. Unofficial approval for this has been indicated by WBBA and IBBA, and official approval has been indicated by EBBA. Copies of North American Bird Bander were circulated for members to peruse at the meeting. The annual cost of the journal (4 issues per year) to OBBA would be about \$2200, including mailing, which would work out to \$11.00 per member if membership stood at 200. (Hence an increase in membership dues would be necessary). This would not be done before 1985 or 1986 at the earliest.

est. Meanwhile, Bruce asked members to consider this possibility and to make their views known to the Executive.

Peter Lockhart, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate of officers for 1984:

Président - Chris Risley

Vice-Presidents - John Miles

- Dave Shepherd

Treasurer and Membership Secretary - Bob and Fran Hubert

Recording Secretary - Anne Lambert

Members at Large - David Agro

- Wayne Ferguson

- Dave Lambie

- Martin McNicholl

- Peter Wigham

Ed Keith moved that the nominations be closed, Martin Wernaart seconded and the motion was carried.

Following a coffee break, the station reports were given. David Brewer reported on the efforts of the Guelph Banding Group, whose several permit-holders banded about 12,500 birds in 1983. Bob Hubert reported on the Hawk Cliff Raptor Banding Station, which banded over 1800 hawks in 1983, and Dave Shepherd reported that Long Point Bird Observatory had a good year with just under 16,000 birds of 136 species banded. Gary Henson reported that the Ottawa Banding Group banded about 13,000 birds with 5,600 of these being at Innis Point. Ed Keith indicated that the banding efforts of Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory were devoted to owls and waterfowl in 1983 with 410 owls banded. Toronto Bird Observatory had a relatively slow year (2500 bird of 87 species banded) and George Fairfield commented that there were many beginner banders visiting the station but rather few experienced banders available to train them. T.B.O. began using its new 8 x 16 foot trailer for banding at Mugg's Island.

The afternoon program consisted of a series of invited speakers. Jim and Kathy Bricker, two professional film-makers from Michigan, presented their film "A Bird in the Hand". This film on bird banding was made for a general audience and illustrated a variety of banding techniques.

During an interlude, draws for door prizes were held. A raffle for a framed poster of a Snow Bunting (donated by Rob Nisbet) was won by Linda Weseloh.

Richard Knaption then gave a presentation on the exponential growth of House Finches in the Niagara area during the last few years. A study by one of his graduate students has elucidated a number of aspects of the species' biology.

Brian Ratcliff described his field studies on the Burrowing Owl, aimed at determining this species' status in Manitoba. He illustrated his talk with a first rate set of slides of this interesting bird.

Len Simsen then described the program of bird banding that has been undertaken at the Royal Botanical Gardens, and at other locations near Hamilton, including a Black-crowned Night Heron and Bank Swallow colony.

After the meeting a social get-together was held at Locke House, the FON headquarters in Don Mills.

News of Banding Publications — Martin McNicholl

Readers of North American Bird Bander (NABB) will be well aware that the journal has been very late recently — the latest issue as of the end of April was 8(3), 1983, although 8(4) was ready for printing on 18 April. The boards of the Inland, Eastern and Western Bird Banding Associations which publish the journal jointly, have been discussing a number of agreements and policy statements which collectively are intended to get NABB back on schedule without loss of quality. A 'summit' meeting was held at Alviso, California on 19 April, with EBBA's incoming President, Walter Protzman and IBBA's President, Terrence Ingram, joining the Western board in discussing ways of resolving the situation. NABB will be printed by a new printer in 1984 (Vol. 9), with a 32 pp./issue volume. Regular size should be resumed at Vol. 10, and negotiations on the various agreements will be ongoing through the year. OBBA members who have material suitable for NABB are urged to submit it.

WBBA will soon be publishing a manuscript on weights of North American birds, compiled from published and unpublished data by John B Dunning, Jr., and intended as both a reference source and as an indication of where data gaps exist. The manuscript is now at the printer, and details on availability will be announced soon.

Another important publication that will soon be ready is a workshop manual on statistics for banders, under preparation by EBBA. The anticipated publication date was the end of April 1984, so an announcement should be out soon.

Atlassing Through Banding — Anne Lambert

If you have ever banded a bird with a brood patch, a nestling, or any bird in suitable breeding habitat during the breeding season, are you aware that this represents valuable data that can be used for the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas?!

Now in its fourth, penultimate year, the Atlas project has gone much of the way toward its aim of documenting the detailed breeding distribution of every breeding species in Ontario, but much work remains! The help of all birders/ornithologists in Ontario is needed during the last two years of the Atlas to achieve 'complete coverage' of all 10 km squares in Southern Ontario (and 100 km 'blocks' in Northern Ontario).

As for the information that banders can contribute, I would like to make the following points:

1. If you have not been assigned an Atlas Square of your own, do not assume that the square in which you are banding or birding has been assigned to someone else, that any breeding data you obtain is superfluous. The chances are very good that if you are banding (or birding) during the breeding season, you will find species that have not yet been recorded or stronger evidence of breeding for species that have been recorded. Even if your observations only involve a few species, the information is worth submitting.

2. Various kinds of breeding evidence (defined for Atlas purposes in the Atlas "Guide for Participants") are grouped into four categories: 'Observed' (no evidence of breeding), 'Possible', 'Probable', and 'Confirmed'. Much of

atlassing is aimed at upgrading breeding evidence to the highest possible category. However any level of breeding evidence is useful, particularly for uncommon or rare species. Thus, a single bird in breeding habitat in the species' breeding season (Possible breeding) constitutes an Atlas record.

3. A bird with a brood patch, or cloacal protuberance constitutes evidence of Probable breeding. However caution must be used to ensure that the brood patch is fully developed and edematous, rather than developing or regressing (which is occasionally observed on migrants or post-breeding wanderers), and similarly the cloacal protuberance must be a prominent one.

4. If you band at breeding colonies you have valuable information to calculate the 'Abundance Code' of the species in the square(s) concerned.

5. Banding birds at nest boxes is a good way to obtain Confirmed breeding evidence (e.g. nest with eggs or young). Other evidence of Confirmed breeding which you might casually observe, include: adults carrying fecal sacs or food for young; distraction displays or injury feigning, and adults leaving or entering nest sites in circumstances indicating an occupied nest.

How To Get Involved:

First, find out who the Regional Coordinator is in your area. The Atlas brochure "How To Participate" which lists names and addresses of Regional Coordinators, is available from:

Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas
P.O.N. Conservation Centre
355 Lesmill Road
Don Mills, Ont.
M3B 2W8
(416) 444-8419

Then contact your Regional Coordinator, who will provide you with a Guide for Participants, Atlas Data Cards and further guidance. In many regions there are yet unassigned squares, so there is still the opportunity to take on a square of your own. One square may be 'adequately covered' in just a few weekends by an experienced birder, so the task of atlassing a square is not too daunting.

The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas is a very important project which will benefit all of us once completed. Already, the potential of Atlas data for a variety of uses, including those related to protection of rare species, has been demonstrated. Let's make sure we, as banders are giving it what assistance we can.

Co-coordinator and volunteer banders sought for House Finch project —Erica Dunn

The rapid spread of House Finches through southern Ontario is already well documented through records of nesting, Christmas Bird counts, the Ontario Bird Feeder Survey, and "American Birds" sightings. It is not known, however, which birds are doing the dispersing. Is it primarily young of the year, or could adults be moving large distances between nesting? Are there sexual

differences?

I am interested in starting an OBBA winter banding project to answer some of these questions. My plan is to place notices with naturalists' clubs and local newspapers asking for locations of bird feeders with good numbers of House Finches regularly attending (say, more than 10). Banders could then be dispatched to those places to trap and band, putting colour bands on to indicate year and age. Further publicity would ask people to report sighting of banded birds. If there is enough interest, House Finches could also be banded at nests.

I am willing to do the necessary publicity, get permits, collect reports of sightings and analyze results, but I would like to find someone else to organize the actual banding. This would involve finding banders to assign to locations reporting House Finches, seeing that ground traps are loaned to banders needing them, and compiling records of what has been banded where.

Anyone interested in participating as a bander or coordinator, or just wanting further information, please write during the next month to: Erica H. Dunn, 30 Davidson Rd. Aurora, Ont. L4G 2B1. Please indicate the general geographic area in which you would be willing to band, and whether you are interested in banding nestlings.

Society of Canadian Ornithologists formed — Erica Dunn

Canada has long been the only country in the world with a large number of amateur and professional ornithologists but no national body to represent them. This has been remedied with the formation of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (SCO), an informal group whose purpose is to further ornithology in Canada. A \$5.00 membership brings a bi- or tri-annual newsletter, with information on local meetings of interest and information on what ornithologists across the country are doing. Incorporation as a charitable organization is underway, and future plans include establishing an annual award for distinguished contributions to Canadian ornithology and perhaps grants for students to travel to meetings. SCO expects to be involved in planning the 1986 International Ornithological Congress in Ottawa, and the newsletter will contain up-to-date information on this. No general meetings or journal are to be undertaken in the foreseeable future to avoid overlap with the American Ornithologists' Union or other groups, but it is hoped that the activities of the Society will foster a sense of community and better communication among Canadian ornithologists.

To join the Society, send a cheque for \$5.00 to Dr. Ralph Morris, Department of Biological Sciences, Brock University, St. Catherines, Ontario. L2S 3A1. Founding memberships (\$50.00) are also still available. (About 1/3 of the 150 members are in this category).

Ottawa Banding Group Formed — Gary Henson

The Ottawa Banding Group (OBG) was formed in February, 1982 at a meeting involving its four co-founders: Janette Dean, Colin Griffiths, Richard Poulin, and Steve Wendt. Its objectives include documentation, training, coordination, public interest, and liaison functions, as well as the operation of a bird observatory in the Ottawa area. Much work was accomplished concerning the latter objective in 1982 (primarily through the efforts of Janette Dean) with Innis Point, located on the south shore of the Ottawa River 15 km west of the Peace Tower, chosen as the prospective site.

In 1983, the OBG banded 13,364 birds of 129 species overall. At present are three main components to our activities: the Innis Point operation run year-round; Richard Poulin's work, which centres on a banding station at Ottawa International Airport during the spring and fall migrations; and banding endeavors headed by Janette Dean and Mickey Narraway, concentrating on winter birds at feeders. Specialized work includes the banding of owls, kestrels, and rehabilitated young and injured birds depending on the time of year.

The Group hopes to maintain the 1984 banding effort at the high level set during the past two years, with more emphasis concentrated at Innis Point in doing research on breeding species of interest to us, such as the Yellow Warbler, Red-winged Blackbird, and Black-capped Chickadee.

To help solve our twin problems of finding interested manpower and consistent funding, the OBG has decided to go public and reorganize itself in the form of a paying membership headed by an elected Board of Directors. The individual membership fee is \$10.00, which among other things helps pay for a three-yearly newsletter. Further information on the OBG can be obtained by writing the following address: Ottawa Banding Group, P.O. Box 3633, Postal Station C, Ottawa, ONT K1Y 4J7

Donations in the name of Harold Richards

The executive of the OBBA would like to thank all those who made donations to the organization in memory of Harold Richards, a long-time bander and friend of the OBBA who died in the fall of 1983. At a recent OBBA Executive Meeting, Gene Richards was made a Life Member of the OBBA in recognition of her and Harold's many years of service to the organization.

Birdathon Sponsored Birder

Chris Risley, and Bruce Duncan counted birds during the Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Count for the OBBA. Together they raised over \$400 of which the OBBA will receive 25%.

Upcoming Events

A summer banding outing will be held on Sunday, July 8 at 8am at Mountsberg Conservation Area near Campbellville. The outing will aim at banding some birds nesting in the area including Tree Swallows. Everyone is welcome to attend. For more information, contact David Brewer (519) 824-4342 or David Lambie (519) 821-2549.

The annual fall Band-out is also scheduled for Mountsberg Conservation Area. This year it takes place on the weekend of Sept 15-16. It should be an especially interesting event because of the large amount of banding that occurs at Mountsberg and the variety of traps that are used. Contact Martin Wernaart (416) 854-2431 for more information.

Bander Needed For Demonstration

The FON is holding a summer day camp at Dorset during the first week of July and is looking for a bander who would be interested in demonstrating banding to the teenaged campers for a morning. Accommodation is available and an honorarium may also be available. Anyone interested should contact Pamela Hickman at the FON at (416) 449-2553 as soon as possible.