

ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

Observatories: Long Point Bird Observatory, Point Pelee Bird Observatory. Publication: Ontario Bird Banding.



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Please send articles to
David Lambie, editor,
4-64 Cedar Street,
Guelph, Ontario.
N1G 1C5

THE EDITOR GOOFED !!!

In the February 1985 issue of this newsletter, an error occurred which should be corrected. In an article, entitled **Unofficial Bird Bands** by Bruce Duncan, it was stated that the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) placed butt-end aluminum bands marked "GRCA Cambridge Ont", on pheasants, ducks and geese. This is not the case. This band type is placed on pheasants released from the Cambridge site but not on ducks and geese. This error was reported to the editor, by Bruce Duncan, as soon as he received his newsletter. Unfortunately, the editor forgot to place a correction in the next newsletter. I wish to apologize for my oversight and hope this has not put the GRCA banding programme in an unfavourable light.

FLUORESCENT PURPLE MARTINS

As most of you know, Environment Canada has sent around a notice that a Mr. Johan Dalgas Frisch, of the Brazilian Association for the Preservation of Wildlife, has directed a project of "spray-painting" some 300 000 Purple Martins in Brazil. The purpose is to learn more about the migratory movements of the species and to promote their conservation in Brazil.

The Purple Martins have been sprayed with one of 5 fluorescent colours. Thus people with Martins nesting on their property were asked to collect feathers shed by the birds and send them to Ottawa. There they were to be examined, using ultraviolet light, for the presence of the microtags. The feathers are to be sent to :

Purple Martin Project
Canadian Wildlife Service
Ottawa, Ontario.
K1A 0E7

The sender was asked to include their name and address and the name of the place (nearest town or city) where the feathers were collected.

MORE ON MASS MARKING -- from NATURE SOCIETY NEWS Vol 20 No. 7 July/85

Twelve marked Purple Martins -- ranging from Duncanville Texas to Vincentown, New Jersey -- have been identified from 240 wing sets and 115 live birds that have been checked. (Live birds are being checked by a team six licensed banders using special ultraviolet lamps supplied by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Kathy Klimklewicz, one of individuals checking the wing sets, emphasized that it is much too early to draw any important conclusions from the study. Many more wing sets and live birds are to be examined before she and others can even begin to evaluate the results.

However, one interesting fact has already emerged. Nine of the 12 discoveries are from Barretos (approximately 630 Km North West of Rio de Janeiro). That in itself may be insignificant, but what is interesting is the dispersal of the 9 birds. They have shown up in locations from Texas to the Missouri Valley to the Middle Atlantic states.

This does not prove anything about how any of these birds reached their destinations, but assuming all birds used the same migration route, it strongly suggests that birds using the Mexican land route do spread over a wide area. It suggests that at least some eastern birds use the Mexican route.

BLACKBIRDS ARE ALSO MARKED -- NATURE SOCIETY NEWS Vol 20 No. 7 July/85

** In 1982 and 1983 Ed Knittle performed from pioneering work in mass marking by working on Red-winged Blackbirds in Missouri. Mr. Knittle's work has led to the previously mentioned work on Purple Martins. The following is a very condensed summary of Mr. Knittle's work. **

The need to supplement leg-banding to expedite data collection to determine movement patterns of breeding/migrating male red-winged blackbirds has stimulated the development and subsequent use of a unique new mass-marking technique. Large numbers of roosting blackbirds can be aerially sprayed (by helicopter or fix-winged aircraft) at dusk with a liquid formulation which includes an inert fluorescent resin particle as a marker. Laboratory tests with marked red-wings confined in flight-pens indicated most birds would retain the markers, in varying degrees, for at least eight months or until feather molt.

The first operational use of this marking technique took place in mid-March, 1982, in Northwestern Missouri. Two cattail roosting marshes containing an estimated 15 million blackbirds (92 % male red-wings) were sprayed in about 3.5 hours of helicopter flighttime on two separate evenings; each roost was sprayed with a different colored marker.

Objectives were to:

1. determine the movements of redwings as they relate to sunflower damage in the Dakotas and Minnesota
2. map the overall distribution of these birds in a northerly direction from their wintering roosts
3. evaluate the operational use and practicality of the marker for blackbirds in a field situation

Male redwings collected in the vicinity of the marking sites, within two days after spray application indicated about 60 % of slightly more than 8 million had been marked. In May and June 1982, numerous cooperators from federal, state and Canadian wildlife agencies in 11 states and three provinces collected about 6400 territorial male redwings and mailed the wings and tail feathers to the Denver Wildlife Research Centre (DWRC) for examination.

SUMMARY OF DATA FOR 1982

STATE/PROVINCE	NO. COLLECTED	NO. MARKED	Z MARKED
Manitoba	121	34	28.1
North Dakota	2570	408	15.9
South Dakota	652	59	9.0
Alberta	56	5	8.9
Minnesota	813	68	8.4
Montana	173	9	5.2
Missouri	208	9	4.3
Iowa	452	17	3.8
Ontario	68	2	2.4
Wisconsin	458	4	0.9
Nebraska	338	2	0.6
Illinois	146	0	0.0
Kansas	297	0	0.0
Michigan	60	0	0.0
TOTALS	6412	617	MEAN 9.6

These data show that while any contemplated control measures conducted at these pre-dispersal roosts/marketing sites would have a probable impact on breeding populations in several states and Canadian provinces, such measures could affect populations NOT involved in sunflower damage in the north-central U.S. Subsequent studies are being conducted to further identify damaging redwing populations.

This technique proved feasible, useful and efficient for marking large numbers of roosting blackbirds and for determining their dispersal patterns over a wide area. From this study, more movement information was collected with a minimum of marking effort than provided by almost 20 years of banding and tagging of redwings by DWRC biologists. **However, this technique is not designed for, nor will it replace banding to determine blackbird longevity and mortality information.**

INTEREST IN AMERICAN ROBIN PLUMAGE

Hopefully, many of you have had the privilege of meeting Reverend R. Charles Long, a lifelong student of the American Robin. Reverend Long is currently making a careful study of Robin plummages. He hopes that banders might be able to assist him in his study.

Under Reverend Long's direction, I have made up a check sheet for his plumage study. We hope that such a sheet will be easily filled out by banders that encounter Robins in their banding. A copy of this sheet has been included on the next page. Hopefully, those that encounter large numbers of Robins can duplicate the page and assist Rev. Long.

OBBA MEMBER HONOURED

Dr. Sandy Middleton, a professor of Zoology at the University of Guelph and a long-time member of OBBA has recently won a highly prestigious teaching award. Sandy has received an Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations teaching award.

For those who know Dr. Middleton, this award certainly is well deserved. There are many in OBBA who have asked Sandy a question and received a patient and thoughtful response. Sandy has a rare gift to deal with all people as equals in a search for knowledge. This dedication to learning at any level extends to his university course work. Well done Sandy !!!!

DID YOU KNOW BILL GUNN? -- Martin K. McNicholl

I have been asked to prepare a biography on Bill Gunn for **Ontario Bird Banding**. As biographies have already been prepared for the **Auk** and **Canadian Field Naturalist** by W. John Richardson and the **New Canadian Encyclopedia** by myself, I wish to emphasize Gunn's role in banding and activities associated with OBBA. I have access to plenty of published material, so am primarily interested in unpublished anecdotes from anyone who knew him. These need not relate to banding, but banding incidents would be especially helpful. Many of us knew Bill either for a brief part of his career or in relation to one aspect of his varied life, and I am sure that I am just one of many who would like to hear more about other aspects of this stimulating naturalist. Please send information to me at :

Long Point Bird Observatory,
P.O. Box 160,
Port Rowan, Ontario. NOE 1M0.

BLACK DUCKS ANYONE ????

Bruce Duncan received a letter in May from the Ministry of Natural Resources, from D.W. Simkin. A Dr. John Harcus of the Ministry is interested in a co-operative banding effort on waterfowl -- with a particular emphasis on the Black Duck. If anyone is interested, they could contact Dr. Harcus through the Ministry or contact him by phone at his office : 1-416-965-4252.

Plumages

American Robin

AMRO

Date _____ time _____

Head Colour	Distinct from back	Similar to back	inter Scapular forming V
			Partial Distinct

Back Colour	
Gray	Black

Tail Spot	length from inner most point of white to termination of tail
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Wing	Length in mm (flattened)
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Breast Colour		
Orange	Brick-red	White Edging
		Gray Breast Band

Bill Colour		
horn (imm. & winter)	dull yellow base + horn (I nup.)	Bright Yellow (M)

Culmen	Length in mm
--------	--------------

Wing Coverts		
reduced	extensive	whitish
		buff orange centered

Moult					
Primary		Secondary			
Present	Absent	Growing	Present	Absent	Growing
					Head
					Other

Comments

sex

Band no.

WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF "DRIPS" -- Dave Shepherd

An ambiguous heading maybe, but let me explain. We're talking about the concept of moving water as an attractant to birds and I don't mean Dippers and Harlequin Ducks! A small pond with a water container above it producing a regular flow of drops on to the water surface, thus rippling it, has a mesmerising effect on birds, not only in hot weather. If this "drip" is positioned in front of a net, in the mouth of a Heliogoland trap or inside a house or Jay trap, it will usually attract birds and, on occasions, work wonders.

We started using them at Long Point Bird Observatory last fall and the results were dramatic. Those sultry August days when all the warblers lurked in the vines at tree-top height, were transformed into quite busy days. Just this morning, at our Lighthouse Crescent field station, I found 15 birds in a net by a drip including 5 of this year's Red-breasted Nuthatch invasion -- and we check our nets regularly every 30 minutes.

The best site seems to be a fairly sheltered one (not least so the drops hit the pond and don't get blown away) so that small birds are not fearful of raptors and will venture down to ground level to drink and bathe.

After much experimenting, our preferred "pond" is a shallow hole lined with a garbage bag (preferably green) with the excavated earth replaced around the rim to hold the bag in place. A log in the pond seems to help by providing a perch. The water supply is more problematical. An old plastic bottle with a pin hole in the base will do but :

- 1) it clogs easily
- 2) the flow rate will vary from a thin stream (useless) when the bottle is full to a drip every week when the head of water is reduced.

Our optimum solution is to place some storage device high above the pond, insert a length of nylon tubing (duct-taped to the neck to stop it falling out), tying the other end in place 3/4 of a foot over the pond and regulating the flow with an adjustable clamp (I.V. drip regulators are ideal). Adjust the flow to a rate of about a drip every three seconds. With a head of about three feet, the rate will not slow appreciably even when the bottle is nearly empty.

Finches need to drink a lot and both Crossbills have arrived here already!! So, good luck and I hope to hear about lots of successful applications

NEWSLETTERS IN THE O.B.B.A. LIBRARY -- Bruce Duncan

The Long Point Bird Observatory library houses material received or published by our association, including the Newsletter which first appeared in 1956. Recently, Martin McNicholl and I have worked towards obtaining a complete set of two copies of every Newsletter printed. There were large gaps in the library holdings, unfortunately, but with the help of Gene Richards and George Fairfield, many of them have been filled. Gene donated Harold Richard's Newsletters to us along with the journals and other material mentioned in the May 1985 Newsletter, while George gave the Newsletters that he still possessed. We are very grateful to both of them.

(Newsletters in the OBBA Library -- continued)

In addition, the Royal Ontario Museum Library loaned us the Newsletters in their collection so that we could copy any we needed. As repayment, we copied those missing in the ROM collection and donated them to their library. They were particularly generous in allowing us to have the Newsletters for over a month, when normally they do not permit removal of any material from the museum. Thanks to Julia Matthews of the Museum Library and to Wayne Ferguson for their help.

You might think that our collection must be complete. Unfortunately, there are **STILL** lacunae. If you have been a member of OBBA for a long time, would you check your Newsletter holdings for the following issues:

1956 -- # 1 and 2
 1957 -- # 6 and 8
 1960 -- March and May
 1961 -- October
 1970 -- May and December
 1971 -- March, November and December
 1972 -- January, March, April, September, October
 and December
 1973 -- September, October and November
 1975 -- November and December
 1978 -- December

If you own any, we'd appreciate the loan of them so that copies for the library could be made. Please send any of the above to myself at Box 512, Caledonia, Ontario NOA 1A0. Thanks -- and don't forget that the library at Long Point is there for **YOUR** use. Besides the Newsletters, there are long runs of journals we obtain by exchange and many books on every subject in ornithology. Contact L.P.B.O. regarding visits.

OBBA ARCHIVES --- Martin K. McNicholl

As part of the process of moving the administrative headquarters of Long Point Bird Observatory from Backus House to the St. Williams Forestry Station, I am gradually sorting through many boxes of books and journals lying around various corners, under beds etc. in Backus House to find out which are duplicates and which are as yet unshelved components of the LPBO/OBBA library. Duplicates will be sold to generate revenue for the library or traded to acquire additional volumes. As this process unfolds, I shall be publishing various lists of what we have and what we still need. Hopefully, this will stimulate members to send us donations to fill those empty gaps.

My first task, along this line, was to sort out a bunch of duplicate copies of various banding journals donated by Dr. Spencer G. Sealy of the University of Manitoba. This led to the discovery that we didn't even have **EBBA NEWS** shelved in the library (there are, however, several boxes of them). Spencer's **EBBA NEWS** all turned out to be duplicates, and I have shelved one full box of issues, but there are still more to sort. We did gain a few copies of **WESTERN BIRD BANDER** that we did not have previously.

(OBBA ARCHIVES continued)

Next, I turned to the OBBA Archives and the **RAVEN** issues mentioned in the last newsletter as having been donated by Gene Richards (we did not have any issues of this Algonquin Park newsletter). In the Archives, which will be housed in a separate corner of the library, we have a duplicate set of all the newsletters and journals that are in the library. We also have various books and folders containing minutes, correspondence and a few miscellaneous items relevant to the OBBA. We seem to have all newsletters except the first two and the sixth, but as they were not numbered in some years, there may be a few additional missings numbers. Any longer-term members can help by checking through the list that follows to see whether there are other gaps.

Current holdings in the OBBA Archives follow:

CORRESPONDENCE

Book of LPBO correspondence 1960 - 31 May 1968
 Book of OBBA correspondence 19 Oct. 1954 - 15 Jan. 1969
 File of OBBA correspondence 1969 after 15 Jan.
 File of OBBA correspondence 1968
 File of OBBA correspondence 1970

OBBA JOURNAL (apparently complete)

Vol. 1 (1-3), 1965; Vol. 2 (1-4), 1966; Vol. 3 (1-4), 1967;
 Vol. 4 (1-5), 1968; Vol. 5 (1-4), 1969 (includes 2 slightly different versions of Vol. 5 No. 1); Vol. 6 (1,2,4), 1970 [6(3) does not appear to exist — true ??]; Vol. 7 (1-3),1971 ; Vol 8 (1-3), 1972;
 Vol. 9 (1 & 2), 1973; Vol. 10 (1-3), 1975-1976 with 2 slightly different versions of Vol. 10 No. 2;
 Vol. 11 (1 & 2-3 as a combined issue), 1977- 1978;
 Vol. 12 (1-3), 1979; Vol.13 (1-3), 1980; Vol.14 (1-3), 1981;
 Vol. 15 (1-3), 1982; Vol. 16 (1-3),1983;

MINUTES

Book of Minutes of Annual Meetings, Executive Meetings & Treasurer's Reports 1957-1978 (including a Treasurer's Report for 1956)

Loose copies of minutes of annual meetings 1966 through 1971 inclusive and 1975 through 1978 inclusive. Several copies exist for most years.

Executive Minutes, loose copies for 19 Jan. 1965, 26 March, 29 June & 17 Dec. 1969, 13 June 1968, 7 Jan., 10 April & 20 June 1970; 29 Oct. and 3 Dec. 1973; 17 April & 4 Dec. 1974; 7 Jan., 18 March & 3 Sept. 1975; 1 Dec. 1978; and 3 Sept & 22 Sept. (not year dated)

MISCELLANEOUS

1973 bird censuses : Blue-grass milweed grassland, Sedge-rush swale
Tamarack-white cedar slough, White Pine-White
Cedar Forest, Red Oak- Sugar Maple Forest;
Dry Juniper-Cottonwood savannah, Dry Cottonwood
sand dunes.

Financial statements: 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977

LPBO: preliminary report, 1967; newsletter 2(3), fall 1970 (2copies)

Notice of OBBA meeting Oct./Nov. 1973.

Notes from FON board meeting by W.A. Martin 30 May 1970.

Weighing and measuring live birds by Jim Woodford, 1965.

Methods of measuring and weighing live birds by Jim Woodford, 1958.

NEWSLETTERS

3 16 Oct. 1956

4 7 Feb. 1957, # 5 March-April 1957, # 7 22 Nov. 1957.

Vol 3 -- issues 1,2-3,4, 1958

Vol 4 -- issues 1,2,3-4 plus Dec. 1959

1960 : Jan, Feb., April, Sept., Oct., Dec.,

1961 : Feb., March, April, May, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.,

1962 : Jan., Feb., March, April, May, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.,

1963 : Jan., Feb., March, April, Oct., Nov., Dec.,

1964 : Jan., Feb., March, April, May, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.,

1965 : Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.,

1966 : Jan., Feb., March, April, May, Sept., Nov., Dec.,

1967 : Jan., Feb., March, April, May, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.,

1968 : Jan., Feb., March, April, May, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.,

1969 : Jan., Feb., March, April, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.,

1970 : Jan., Feb., March, April, July, Sept., Oct., Nov.,

1971 : Jan., Feb., April, May, Sept., Oct.,

1972 : Feb., Nov.,

1973 : Jan-Feb., March, April, May, June, Dec.,

1974 : Jan., Feb., March, April, May, Sept.-Nov., Oct., Nov.-Dec.,

1975 : Jan., Feb., March-April, May-June, Sept., Oct.,

1976 : Jan-Feb., March, April, May, June-July, July-Aug-Sept., Oct.,
Nov., Dec.,

1977 : Jan., Feb., April-May, June-Aug., Sept.-Oct., Nov., Dec.,

1978 : Jan-Feb., March-April, May-June, Sept., Nov.,

1979 : Feb., April-May, Sept.-Oct.,

1980 : Dec-Jan., Feb-March, April-May, Aug.-Sept., Dec.,

1981 : Jan-Feb., Fall, Dec.,

1982 : March, Aug., Nov.,

1983 : Feb., June, Aug.,

1984 : Jan., June, Dec.,

1985 : Feb., 30(2).

NOTE Listings above are as they appear on Newsletter (although the year is not always printed on)

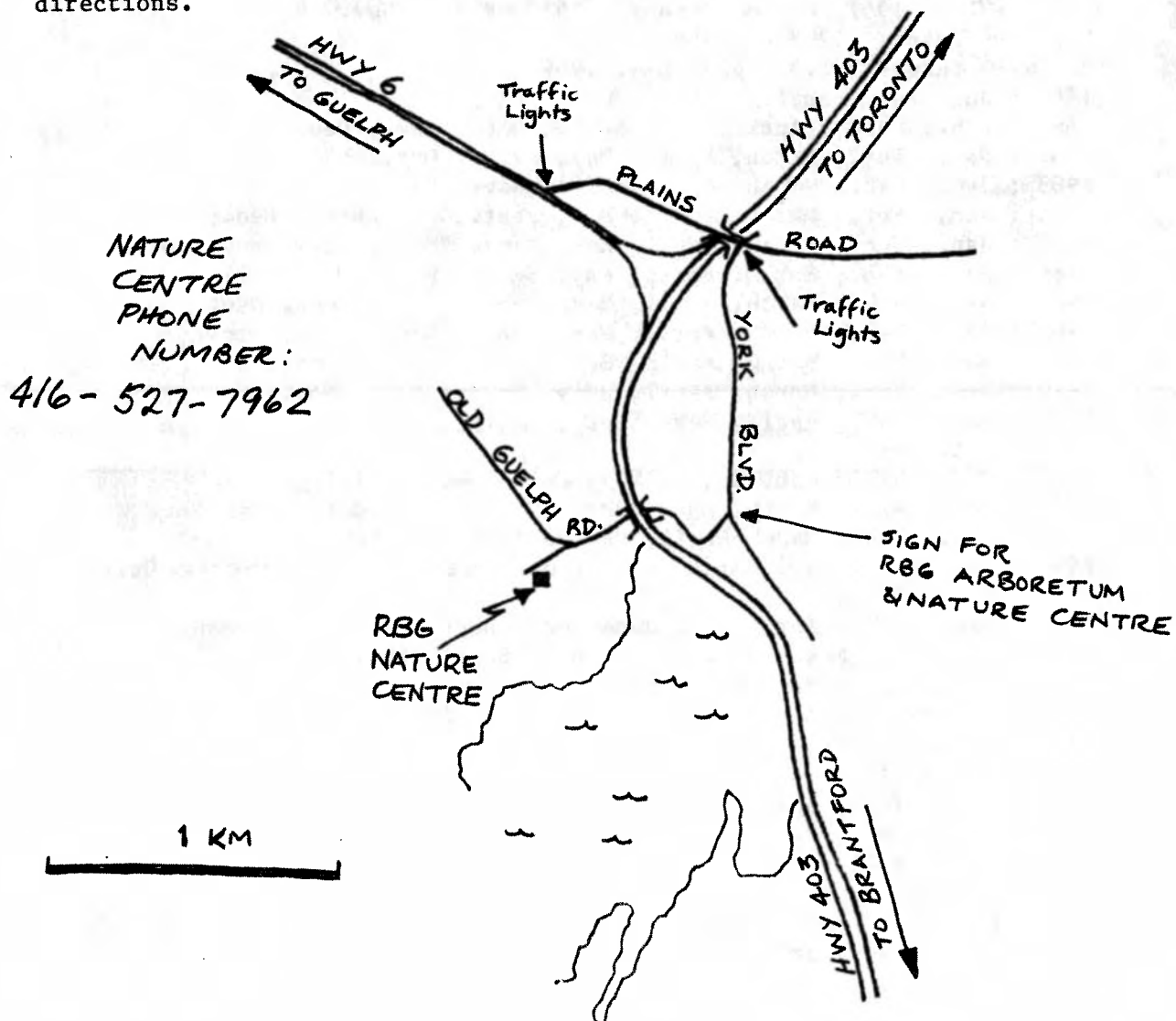
FALL MEETING

Mark Sunday, October 20 on your calendar. That's the date of a banding workshop and general meeting of the Association of the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton. Besides helping Len Simser, the R.B.G.'s resident bander, we'll be giving demonstrations to the public at the Nature Centre, throughout the morning.

After a picnic lunch, we'll have two or three slide presentations plus a slide quiz with a new National Geographic Bird Guide (or better !!) for a prize. There will also be a draw in the afternoon, for something else (undecided, at the moment).

The Royal Botanical Gardens is a beautiful area with a tremendous diversity of habitats and some of the best locations for seeing and catching a great variety of birds. Its a place where rarities show up regularly and where there are always plenty of migrants -- passerines, waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls etc., throughout the fall. Not only that, but the Nature Centre has a nice collection of mounted birds and plenty of other displays on natural history.

The day will start anytime after 8:30 and continue until 3 or 4 o'clock. It should be a good one !! Meet at the Nature Centre anytime during the morning and stay as long as you like. See the map, below for directions.



DO WE NEED A NEW LOGO FOR OBBA???

At our last OBBA executive meeting there was a question raised about our logo. Indeed there was quite a lively debate about the suitability of our present logo. As a result, a proposal was made to run a logo contest. It was felt that new logos would be submitted and these would be shown to the membership at the Annual General Meeting and voted on to select a new logo. It was also decided that the old logos (note the plural !!) would also be shown and all could be voted on.

If you are interested, submit any logo designs to the editor and he will display all the entries in the newsletter prior to the AGM for your consideration.

Below you will find 3 logos. The first was used before 1960 , the second after 1960 and the third, of course, is our present one.



SAW-WHET OWLS, 1984 -- Edward W. Keith

(The following article was taken from the ESSEX COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS)

By late October, 1984, the Toronto Globe and Mail reported that Prince Edward Point had only banded 77 Saw-whet owls. This same paper also reported only 5 banded on the Toronto Islands and 17 at Long Point. Along with the new Southwestern Ontario Bird Observatory [SOBO] (only 2 banded), this represented a serious shortage of these diminutive owls. In mid-October, the Globe and Mail reported Saw-whet owls still singing in Algonquin Park.

In 1983, I spent the last 3 weeks of October at Prince Edward Point (P.E.P.) -- operated by the Kingston Field Naturalists -- located near the eastern end of Lake Ontario, southeast of Picton. By October 31, we had banded 410 Saw-whet owls. On one night alone, 9 of us handled 200 owls -- the best night ever at P.E.P.!! This included 161 first-time Saw-whets, 34 from one or two previous nights banding and 5 first-time Long-eared owls.

The basic theory is, that Northern Saw-whet owls follow the same pattern as the hawks. They leave the north country and hit the eastern end of Lake Ontario, where, seemingly reluctant to cross the large body of water, they turn southwest and follow the north shore of the lake. Reaching the eastern end of Lake Erie, the same problem confronts them and they continue southwest passing Long Point and Hawk Cliff (near Port Stanley). When the hawks arrive at Point Pelee, some of them appear to set off south over the lake via the islands, but the great majority appear to continue in a southwesternly direction to Holiday Beach Provincial Park. Here, great concentrations of them have been seen (95,000 broadwings on September 15, 1984, by observers of the Detroit Audubon Society). The hawks then set off over the Western end of the lake, or continue the short distance to the Detroit River where they cross, sometimes going further north as far as Amherstburg and Bob-lo Island. SOBO at Goodchild Beach, about 2 Kilometres east of Holiday Beach Provincial Park, is directly on this flightpath. Here, we have observed large numbers of hummingbirds, blue jays, hawks, turkey vultures, crows and blackbirds during migration last fall.

Since the Saw-whets seem to follow the same flight plan as the hawks in other areas, it seems reasonable to presume that they would do the same at SOBO. It was for this reason that SOBO was established, with the partial assistance from the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund, in 1984. It has been a tremendous amount of work, frustration and disappointment for my associate, Ruth E. Grant, and myself to begin our new observatory during such a poor Saw-whet migration.

After some 20 years of training and helping others at P.E.P and Long Point, I decided to set up SOBO to replace the Point Pelee Bird Observatory, which was forced to close some years ago. Numerous Saw-whet owls were banded there during its few years of existence. SOBO now becomes the southwestern link in the chain of bird observatories along the north shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie.

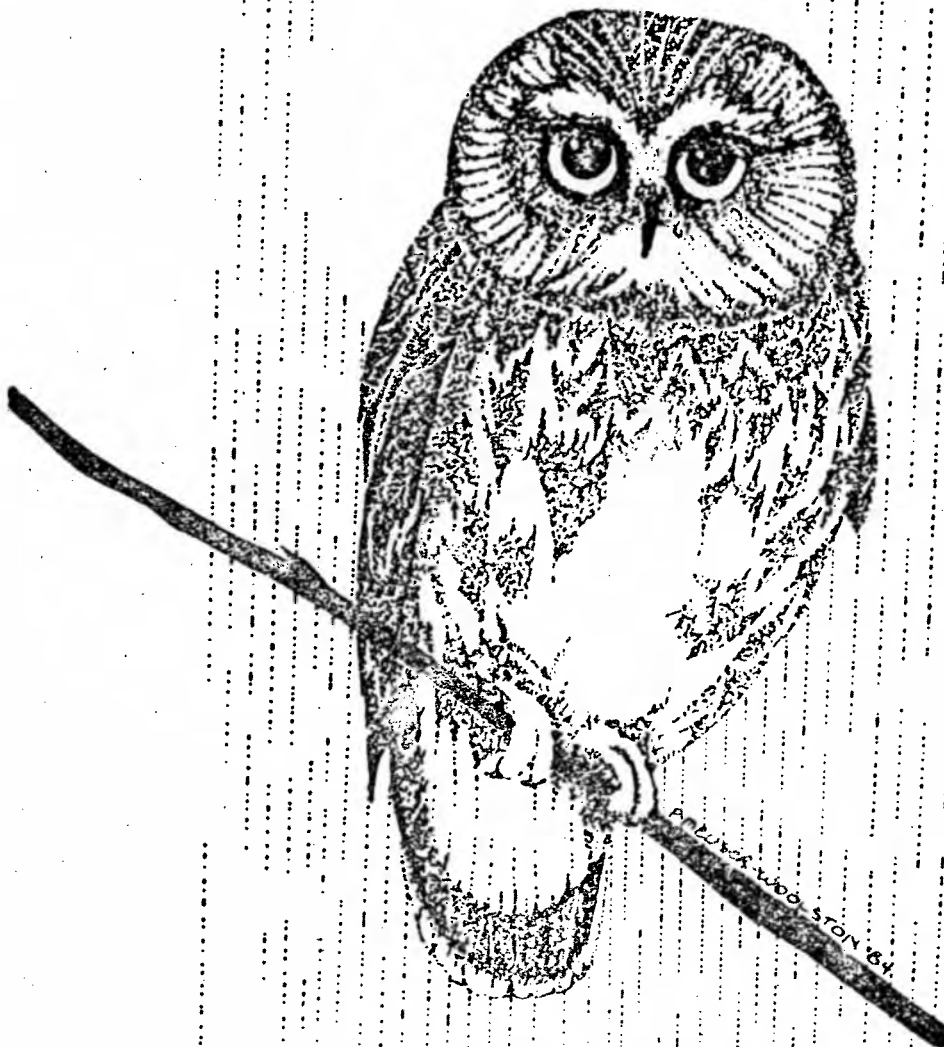
The falloff 1984 was not a complete loss to us since we have established the observatory, cut net lanes, installed 48 nets (34 in one continuous string) and banded 2 Saw-whets as well as 4 grey-phase Screech Owls. An interesting observation is that we banded our first Screech Owl on October 6th and caught it again exactly one month later -- even within the

(SAW-WHET OWLS 1984 continued)

same 15 minute time period, in almost the same net. A further bit of information is that we both contracted scabies from handling this bird on its first capture when it appeared quite sluggish and docile. This is my first knowledge of a bander catching anything from the birds. Upon recapture, this bird seemed very lively and aggressive. After releasing the bird, we immediately washed up as a precautionary measure.

We hoped to set up early, this spring to see if there was a return path through this area. But spring netting was literally washed out because of the high Lake Erie water levels. We even had carp swimming in our net lanes !!!!! We would appreciate hearing from anyone sighting or having sighted any Saw-whets in this area. It would be most helpful if you could advise us, preferably in writing, giving time , date, place, action etc.

Our thanks to those few who assisted us in any way in this project.



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