

ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

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Please send articles to:
David R. Lamble,
Editor OBBA Newsletter,
745 Guelph Street,
Fergus, Ontario.
N1M 2X5

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Plans are being made now for the 1987 Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Sunday, February 22 at the **Royal Botanical Gardens Headquarters, Burlington**. Please note the changed location. Full details will appear in another Newsletter.

Information on our Fall Meeting appears elsewhere in this Newsletter. Plan on attending. It's a good opportunity to explain bird banding to interested people and maybe help some of our Observatories pick up new volunteers, to say nothing of new members for O.B.B.A. -- and we need 'em!!

The I.O.C. Banding Workshop in Ottawa at the end of June was a very informative event (see a report elsewhere in this Newsletter) and followed a morning banding session at Innis Point conducted by the Ottawa Banding Group.

There was some fear that there would be few birds captured during the banding demonstration, because of the late date. However, cloudy skies and light winds aided a very enthusiastic Ottawa group in capturing a good variety of species. There were good reports too, about the organization and running of the session from the participants, a number of them heads of foreign banding programmes.

On another matter, Ruth Grant has very kindly donated to O.B.B.A. the mist nets that Ed Keith used to catch owls. David Brewer was instrumental in obtaining them and both he and Ruth deserve our thanks.

At the most recent Executive Meeting, it was decided to offer the nets to each Observatory or organized group in the province (i.e. Ottawa Banding Group, Prince Edward Point Observatory, Toronto Bird Observatory, Guelph Banding Group, Long Point Bird Observatory and Hawk Cliff Raptor Banding Station). These nets will thus see good service and hopefully will capture many of the Saw-whet Owls Ed was so fond of.

O.B.B.A. FALL MEETING

DATE Sunday, October 26 **TIME** 9:00 to 16:00
LOCATION Kortright Centre for Conservation
DIRECTIONS From Hwy 400, about 20 Km North of Toronto, take Major Mackenzie Drive WEST to Pine Valley Drive South and follow the signs [the Kortright Centre is advertised by directional signs on Hwy 400 and Major Mackenzie Drive]

AGENDA
 9:00 - 12:00 -- Banding Demonstration
 13:30 - 16:00 -- Indoor Programme
 a) Bluebird Nestboxes & Banding (Bill Read)
 b) Hawk Banding (B. Cheriére & B. Duncan)
 c) Films
 d) Door Prizes

NOTE This meeting is at a very attractive centre and will be open to the public, as well as members. There **MAY BE** an admission charge to the Centre. Come out, help out and enjoy the day !!!

AIRPORT BIRDS BANDED AT MOUNTSBERG --- Martin Wernaart

In a previous Newsletter (February 1985), Bruce Duncan expressed his disappointment that the birds captured at the Toronto Airport were no longer banded. This article attempts to show that banding is still continuing for those birds captured at Pearson International. However, these birds are now brought to Mountsberg for banding.

Many of the birds listed below were captured by those individuals at the airport designated for bird control. Some, however, were captured by falconry techniques.

<u>BIRD SPECIES BANDED</u>	SEPT - DEC 1984	JAN - NOV 1985
GREAT HORNED OWL	3	3
SNOWY OWL	6	3
RED TAILED HAWK	63	77
ROUGH LEGGED HAWK	1	3
SHORT EARED OWL	1	2
LONG EARED OWL	-	22
BALD EAGLE	-	1

The Bald Eagle was captured by a male peregrine. The peregrine was chained to a post at the airport. The falcon, a young male, was stationed to keep the gulls and other birds away from the airport area. The eagle, an immature bird saw the peregrine as an easy meal and dove on him. The peregrine, at the last moment, rose to meet the eagle and the two birds locked talons and fell to the ground. An airport employee threw his coat over the two animals and captured the eagle.

HOUSE FINCH BANDING PROJECT: WINTER 1985-1986 -- Ricky Dunn

House Finches have been rapidly expanding their range in the eastern U.S. and Canada. Since they first appeared in Ontario around 1980, in the Kingston and Niagara regions, House Finches have spread all along the north shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie. In 1985, the Ontario Bird Banding Association began a colour-banding project, to try to determine how far individuals dispersed, at what time of year, and whether a certain age/sex group might be responsible for pioneering new areas. Project expenses (mainly for colour bands and postage) were covered by a grant from the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund. Our findings to date are summarized here.

Nearly 300 House Finches were banded in the winter of 1985-86, by 6 project cooperators. Although some banders found that ground traps did not work well, Marshall Field caught 173 House Finches with a 3-cell Potter trap and a walk-in trap designed for Snow Buntings. These caught best when there was snow cover, and the success of the Potter trap may have been due to its elevated perch close to a hanging feeder, which is normally favoured by House Finches.

About a dozen sightings of banded House Finches have been reported to us to date. Unfortunately, most appear not to be our birds, since they bore colours of bands not used in our project. Moreover, the Bird Banding Laboratory has no record of anyone using some of the colours most commonly seen. The only definite sighting of one of our birds away from the banding site was in Union and was probably one of the large number of birds banded in nearby St. Thomas.

Because we soon realized we were unlikely to obtain dispersal data through numerous sightings of our colour-banded birds far from the banding sites, we concentrated on keeping track of sightings and retraps by the banders. Our reasoning was that if a particular age/sex group disappeared right away, while others hung about the feeders, then the disappearing group would be the most likely candidate for being in the vanguard of dispersers. Again, however, we have been frustrated by low numbers. Nearly all banded House Finches disappear right away, and are never seen again. For example, of the 224 birds banded last winter in St. Thomas (the largest concentration of banding), only 6 were seen or retrapped at the site of banding, and 2 more were seen elsewhere (one of them retrapped by another bander). These individuals were a mix of ages and sexes, suggesting no pattern in who stayed and who left. On the other hand, of 10 birds banded in Hamilton, 3 were resighted on and off over a 10 week period, and the St. Thomas retraps included one bird banded 3 months earlier. Taken together, these observations suggest that House Finches do a great deal of feeder hopping over quite a wide area, but that there is a tendency to stay within a general region, at least for the winter.

Bryan Wyatt, banding in Guelph, found himself banding nestlings in the spring but having no luck in the winter, as the birds moved away after the breeding season. In contrast, Marshall Field reported flocks of 50-100 House Finches at Hawk Cliff in late November-early December, about the time that the finches begin congregating at feeders. He found none of his banded birds among the several pairs nesting near his home in the spring. These data suggest movement both in spring and in fall, perhaps combined with a southward shift in autumn. Much more work will have to be done to confirm this, however, and we plan to continue our project through next winter.

HOUSE FINCHES continued

Thanks are due to Shelia Smith, for coordinating the project in its early stages and to the following people for colour-banding House Finches in 1985-86: Ted Dinniwel, Marshall Field, Charles Francis, Bob Hubert, Len Simser and Bryan Wyatt. Anyone wishing to help, in banding, or in offering coffee and a warm living room to banders trying to catch House Finches in a back yard, are welcome to get in touch with the project coordinator, Ricky Dunn, at 30 Davidson Road, Aurora Ontario. L4G 2B1 (416-727-3519)

REPORT FROM BANDING WORKSHOP I.O.C. -- Bruce Duncan

The Banding Workshop at the I.O.C. was chaired, this year, by O.B.B.A. first Vice-President, Martin McNicholl, who found himself in the unenviable position of having extra speakers and less time than originally scheduled. However, Martin, in his normal calm way, steered the workshop smoothly through any potential storms.

The workshop began with reports from around the world. Chandler Robbins of the Bird Banding Laboratory at Laurel, Maryland, gave a world overview. He commented on the new banding programme in China where there is a plan to have 35 banding stations operating by 1990. He also commented on the decline of older projects in south-east Asia where activity is more limited than 20 years ago. Mr. Robbins also reported that Brazil is the only country in South America with an active banding programme. Apparently, all banding in Central America is done using USFWS bands. A major problem in some areas (eg. East Africa) is the lack of proper information exchange among ringing schemes. This coupled with the many language groups in the area, poor transportation and communication systems makes the schemes here in Canada and the USA seem like heaven.

Following Chan, George Jonkel of the USFWS, described briefly the history and current operations of the US banding programme. He was followed by Steve Wendt, who did the same for the Canadian scheme. Here are a few interesting highlights of their talks.

- there are currently 2500 master permittees in North America, more than half of them are private citizens.
- there are 36,500,000 records on computer (going back to the '20's) and another 6,000,000 not yet on file
- about 1,000,000 birds (70% non-game species) are banded annually
- about 1,500,000 bands are issued annually (whatever happens to the 500,000 apparently not used each year??????)
- about 30,000 banding schedules are received each year
- there are currently 2,500,000 encounters on file and this is increasing by about 60,000 each year

Steve Wendt pointed out the major projects of the Canadian Wildlife Service, after discussing the Banding Office's role. They include:

- a) seabirds b) colonial waterbirds c) waterfowl d) shorebirds
- e) endangered and diminishing species

[note, this is not listed in any priority]

All of the above species are operated under government sponsorship for a variety of reasons. General mist-netting and university research are not usually government-sponsored.

I.O.C. REPORT continued

The Ottawa Banding Group, represented by Colin Griffiths, described their banding projects (Innis Point, winter feeder banding, Bank Swallow colony work (and the really tough one!!!!) banding in the Bahamas (wow!!).

Following this, the only South American scheme, Brazil's was reported on by Paulo de Tarso Zuquim Antas of the Centro de Estudos de Migracoes de Aves (or CEMA). In Brazil banding began in the 1950's with Hummingbird banding and was followed in the '60's by several isolated studies. In the 1970's, William Belton organized a state banding scheme to coordinate these studies and in August, 1978 a Bird Banding Agency with two biologists was established .

Grants may be provideed by the CEMA for studies of game birds or species of special interest. Workshops for the training of banders are also conducted under the sponsorship of the CEMA. During the last 6 years over 200 banders have been trained and licensed and 650,000 birds banded.

Although a continent-wide scheme coordinated by Brazil has been suggested, there are large problems that may make such a plan impossible for the foreseeable future. However, despite the problems of finance, language difficulties and bureaucratic indifference, Peru and Argentina are currently establishing banding programmes.

EURING (The European Union for Bird Ringing) was described by Pertti Saurola, its President. There are 33 ringing schemes throughout Europe that are coordinated though this agency. These involve 20 different languages, 8000-10,000 authorized ringers and some 3,600,000 birds annually. In some countries the number of ringers is very high considering the population [Britain has 2100 and Finland 500] while in others the numbers are fairly small [USSR 500+]. Birds banded include:

Passerines	83%	(43% in North America)
Larids	7%	
Shorebirds	3%	
Raptors	1%	(2 % in North America)
Waterfowl	1.4%	(30% in North America)
Owls	0.7%	
Others	4.1%	

[of these 20 - 40 % are banded as nestlings]

Questionnaires were sent out to each of the 24 countries involved in the 33 ringing schemes in 1981 and 1984 with some interesting results -- here are a few.

QUESTION	NO. OF COUNTRIES	
Do Ringers pay for rings?	Yes - 5	No - 19
Is there training for new Ringers?	Yes - 23	No - 1
Must an examination be passed?	Yes - 17	No - 7
Are there restrictions on new banders?	Yes - 14	No - 9

I.O.C. REPORT continued

EURING holds general meetings every 3 years and Board meetings annually and have produced a number of important results. For example, ring sizes have been standardized; there are common codes for band encounters; a data bank of encounters has been set up in Arnhem; annual national reports are written and a conference on analytical methods has been held.

Pertti then went on to describe the Finnish Ringing system (this has already been outlined in Vol 31 No. 1 of the Newsletter). However, he did make the point that the Finns seemed very concerned about maximizing the results for the cost and effort expended.

Martin McNicholl asked if anyone else in the audience might comment on banding schemes not already discussed. This brought Robert Grugh of the Bombay Natural History Society to the microphone to describe India's Ringing Scheme.

Bird banding started in 1959 in India, to help in the study of encephalitis in Southern India. It was suspected that birds were carrying the disease to other areas, including Siberia. There are now about 20 major ringing stations and since 1958 over 350,000 birds have been banded. Migration and moult are the two areas on which most study has been concentrated.

From Japan, a report from an unidentified person told about the 90,000 to 100,000 birds banded annually at the 55 main stations. There are 400 to 450 band encounters annually and they are reported in English and Japanese by the Yamashima Institute which runs the ringing scheme.

Following this, a very brief report from China was given. As was reported in the December 1984 Newsletter, China has recently signed a bird protection treaty for migratory and endangered species with Japan. This treaty was outlined and a few general comments about banding in China.

Finally, mention was made of ringing elsewhere in south-east Asia where some work is going on in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand as well as a shorebird project called "Interwader" being run out of Kuala Lumpur using Malaysian and Australian rings.

This was a very interesting series of reports, pointing out the problems encountered by banders throughout the world and the solutions so far discovered. Co-operation was **the** key word throughout the conference. Banding cannot hope to produce results if recoveries are not reported, if projects cannot be extended beyond limited political boundaries and if techniques and reporting cannot be coordinated and standardized. EURING, in particular, has produced good results in an area having many schemes and many languages. We , in Canada, are lucky having few countries nearby that harbour our birds as well as few languages to deal with BUT we could certainly learn from the European experience.

NOTE [Part II of the Banding Workshop will be reported on in a future Newsletter]