

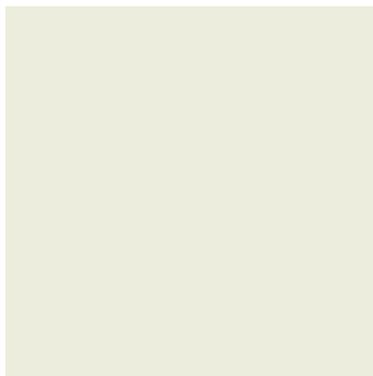


NEWSLETTER

SPECIMEN COLLECTION AVAILABLE FOR LOAN

Lesley Howes has a collection of 104 open wing bird specimens that are presently available for loan. This collection has already been used a few times and is available to permitted banders for use by those holding training courses (e.g. NABC banders and trainers). The Bird Skins collection is managed by Lesley and housed at the Bird Banding Office (BBO). Currently there is only one collection available but there are plans to increase this to 5 collections across Canada.

A loan request form is available from Lesley at Lesley-Anne.Howes@ec.gc.ca. Potential borrowers fill in and submit the request form and indicate which specimens they would like to borrow from the list issued to them. Loans are limited to 30 specimens at a time so that the collection is not monopolized and there are specimens still available to loan to others. The loan period is not to exceed two weeks unless there are special circumstances. The borrowers are asked to review the conditions for borrowing the collection and sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Special arrangements for a longer period of the loan or for more specimens can be made at that time. The BBO covers courier costs to the borrower and the borrower is responsible for the safe return of the collection. The collection must be returned via a registered means (bus, courier, registered mail). Borrowers are asked to fill in the feedback form and return it with the collection. This allows the BBO to track the use of the collection and learn which species banders would like to see.



Inside

Innis Point Bird Observatory.....	2
Editor's Notes.....	5
Ornithological Puzzle.....	6
Dates to Remember.....	7
From the Banding Office.....	8
Banding Highlights.....	9
Ontario's 1 st Rufous Hummingbird...	11

Season's Greetings from OBBA

INNIS POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY

Marcel Gahbauer

Originally founded as the Ottawa Banding Group, Innis Point Bird Observatory (IPBO) has been active since 1982. IPBO is a registered non-profit charitable organization dedicated to the study of birds and natural history.

Since banding began in 1982, 245 species have been observed at IPBO, of which 143 have been banded. 72,249 birds had been banded by the end of 2003, with annual totals ranging between 1,744 and 7,181 individuals, and 82 to 105 species. Our top species over the years, by far, has been Black-capped Chickadee (10,817), followed by Yellow Warbler (3,967), Tree Swallow (3,817), and Myrtle Warbler (3,119). Among the rarities that have been recorded at IPBO are the first Tricolored Heron for the Ottawa region, as well as Great Egret, Glossy Ibis, Black Vulture, Gyrfalcon, Arctic Tern, Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-winged Warbler, and Orchard Oriole.

Photos by Carl Pascoe



Located at the northern end of Shirley's Bay on the Ottawa River, IPBO is on the western edge of Ottawa, just 13 kilometres west of the Parliament buildings. The site is part of a 1,058 hectare tract owned by the Department of National Defence (DND), which has for over 75 years been operated as the Connaught Rifle Range and simultaneously managed as a crown game sanctuary. Thus, despite being adjacent to substantial suburban development in western Ottawa, there remains limited access to the site, and minimal disturbance. Bird banding operations are conducted under a Memorandum of Understanding between IPBO and DND. The IPBO study area is located in the northwestern corner of the Connaught property, approximately 2 kilometres from the rifle range itself. The habitat is diverse, including old fields, wetlands, and forests ranging from oak to spruce.

Most IPBO activities take place at 'the Point', a relatively small area protruding into the Ottawa River. The shore is low, limestone pavement, seasonally flooded to varying extents each spring. Adjacent habitat is mostly a mixture of regenerating clearings and mixed forest, except for the 'swamp' area, a small wetland dominated by cutgrass, willow, and dogwood, with cedar stands on either side.

Scattered around the Point area are 9 net groups comprising 25 nets in total. These are used from early April through early November. A further 6 nets in the swamp area are used for owl banding in fall, and four nets further inland are used in winter.

IPBO's biggest effort each year is the Spring Migration Monitoring Program (SMMP). Since 1997, the SMMP has been operated annually over the 45-day period from April 24 through June 7. A standardized daily protocol is followed, in which (weather permitting) all nets are open for six hours, beginning one half hour before sunrise. IPBO is part of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network and as such also conducts a daily census and records daily estimated totals for all species observed.

Being on the south shore of the Ottawa River, birds tend to bunch up at Innis Point in spring before crossing to the north. This is particularly evident with Black-capped Chickadees, which sometimes circle in flocks numbering in the hundreds before dropping back down into the trees along the shore (and sometimes the nets too!). The fall migration is less concentrated, and as a result a lesser banding effort is made at that time, usually only on Saturday mornings.

Most years an outside bander-in-charge is hired to run SMMP. From three to six additional volunteers are on site daily to assist with extractions, scribing, and general observations, as well as banding itself.

IPBO activities are coordinated by a volunteer board of directors, most of whom are also frequently involved hands-on with banding. In addition, there is a volunteer corps of approximately 60 others who help out with one or more of our projects. Some of these are transient volunteers, largely students from University of Ottawa or Carleton University, but we also have a number of permanent residents who have been involved for many years. There has been a distinct increase in volunteer numbers and participation since efforts were made two years ago to focus on boosting membership.

Every spring IPBO has held orientation and basic training sessions for volunteers in advance of the SMMP season. In recent years these have been made mandatory, to ensure that volunteers are adequately prepared. The past two years we have also organized more advanced training sessions in September and October to allow volunteers to develop their skills under close supervision.

Though generally not open to the public, IPBO frequently does demonstrate activities to organized groups. In recent years we have hosted several classes of ornithology students from McGill University, and wildlife technology classes from La Cite in Ottawa, among others.

Special projects

Bluebird trail: A network of 26 bluebird nest boxes is maintained in the field area, arranged as 12 pairs and 2 singles. Though outside the core area of IPBO, they are monitored regularly, and nestlings are banded each summer. Typically 10-12 Tree Swallow pairs and 2-3 Eastern Bluebird pairs nest, with some House Wrens later in the season. Including adults, over 600 Eastern Bluebirds have been banded since 1982.

Purple Martin colony: Three 24-unit Purple Martin houses are maintained in the immediate vicinity of the banding station. These formerly supported dozens of pairs, but conditions were sub-par in 2001, and the cold May of 2002 resulted in mass mortality. Since then occupants have been scarce, with no successful pairs in 2004, though one did lay a few eggs in a partial nest. Nestlings have been banded annually, with a high of 145 from 38 nests in 1999.

Osprey and tern nesting platforms: An Osprey nesting platform was erected near the point in 1995. Every spring Ospreys are seen in the area, but none have yet adopted it. However, it frequently serves as a Snow Bunting perch in winter, and thus still serves a useful role.

In May 2004, a raft in great condition washed up on shore during one of the spring floods. Before long, we had secured it in place in the small bay just north of the banding station, and hope to attract Common Terns to nest on it in the future.

Other nest boxes: Two pairs of Tree Swallow / Great-crested Flycatcher boxes are along the road near the banding station itself, with another 10 Tree Swallow boxes along the shore. Three Wood Duck boxes are maintained in the forest along the bay south of the banding station.

Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS): IPBO was one of the first participants in the MAPS program, and has been conducting surveys annually since 1992. This involves a series of mist-netting sessions during the breeding season as well as documentation of vegetation.

Winter bird feeders: From November through April, banding takes place on Saturday (and sometimes Sunday) mornings. This is done at a set of four inland nets in a small clearing, arranged as a triangle around a set of birdfeeders with a trail extending on one side. Additionally, a ground trap is operated on the roof of the building beside the banding lab, primarily to catch Snow Buntings. The winter banding provides an opportunity for careful documentation of species otherwise rarely accessible for study, such as Snow Buntings and Common Redpolls; over two thousand of each have been banded at IPBO. The redpolls were studied in particular detail during their irruption in the winter of 2001-02, leading to the development and field-testing of a 'redpoll pink code' that refines the ageing/sexing of the species.



Saw-whet Owls: Since 2000, IPBO has banded Northern Saw-whet Owls annually during their fall migration. An attempt was made at spring banding in 2002, but with very limited success, and has not been repeated. Coverage of the fall season has increased annually, as has the number of owls banded, with a high of 125 over 26 nights in 2003, and an overall total of over 300. To date, only one foreign-banded owl has been caught, one banded 18 days earlier in Timiskaming, Ontario. This fall we have finally started hearing reports of our owls elsewhere, with four recaptures to date. Interestingly, one of those was banded in October 2003, and caught this October in Témiscamingue, Quebec! Another was banded at Innis Point on October 12, 2004, and caught again 14 days later southeast of Buffalo, New York – roughly 370 kilometres to the southwest. Most recently, two Innis Point owls turned up at Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory on October 28, one banded three weeks earlier (a slow migrant indeed!), and the other from October 2003.

The owling is done using an audiolure of the Saw-whet Owl mating call, played at full volume near the centre of the nets. Several locations have been used, but since late in the 2002 season all efforts have been concentrated in the swamp area. To guard against mammalian predators, all nets are elevated to

approximately 1.5 metres above ground using a pulley system similar to that in use at Thunder Cape Bird Observatory.

IPBO has contributed data to various projects, including genetics studies and avian tick research. A special effort was made from 1998 to 2002 to collect warbler moult data in support of a M.Sc. thesis by C.A. Debruyne at Lakehead University: "Pattern and chronology of prebasic moult in wood-warblers (Parulidae)". IPBO is currently involved with the collaborative effort at Northern Saw-whet Owl analysis being coordinated by OBBA.

With over twenty years of accumulated data, we are also beginning to explore our records in more detail to see what can be learned from them, and expect to be increasingly occupied with analyses in the next few years. Already we've been keeping track of certain statistics, such as the longevity records of certain Innis Point birds. According to the most recent records published by the Bird Banding Lab, we have North American records for four species: Nashville Warbler (10 years, 2 months), Yellow Warbler (12 years, 1 month), Eastern Kingbird (10 years, 11 months), and Red-eyed Vireo (10 years, 1 month).

Board member David Britton has recently completed the "Annotated Checklist to the Birds of Innis Point Bird Observatory", a 120-page document which summarizes the status of all birds observed between 1982 and 2003. Included are seasonal histograms for the more frequently banded species, and appendices listing other fauna and flora recorded at the site. We look forward to updating this document in the years to come as we continue operating our various programs.

IPBO can be reached at: P.O. Box 72137, Kanata, K2K 2P4, (613) 820-8434, email ipbo@mac.com

EDITOR'S NOTES

The Ontario Bird Banding Association is taking the lead in a Cooperative Owl Banding Project. At least 10 banding stations have already expressed interest in participating. Draft data forms and operating guidelines are available from OBBA President Audrey Heagy.

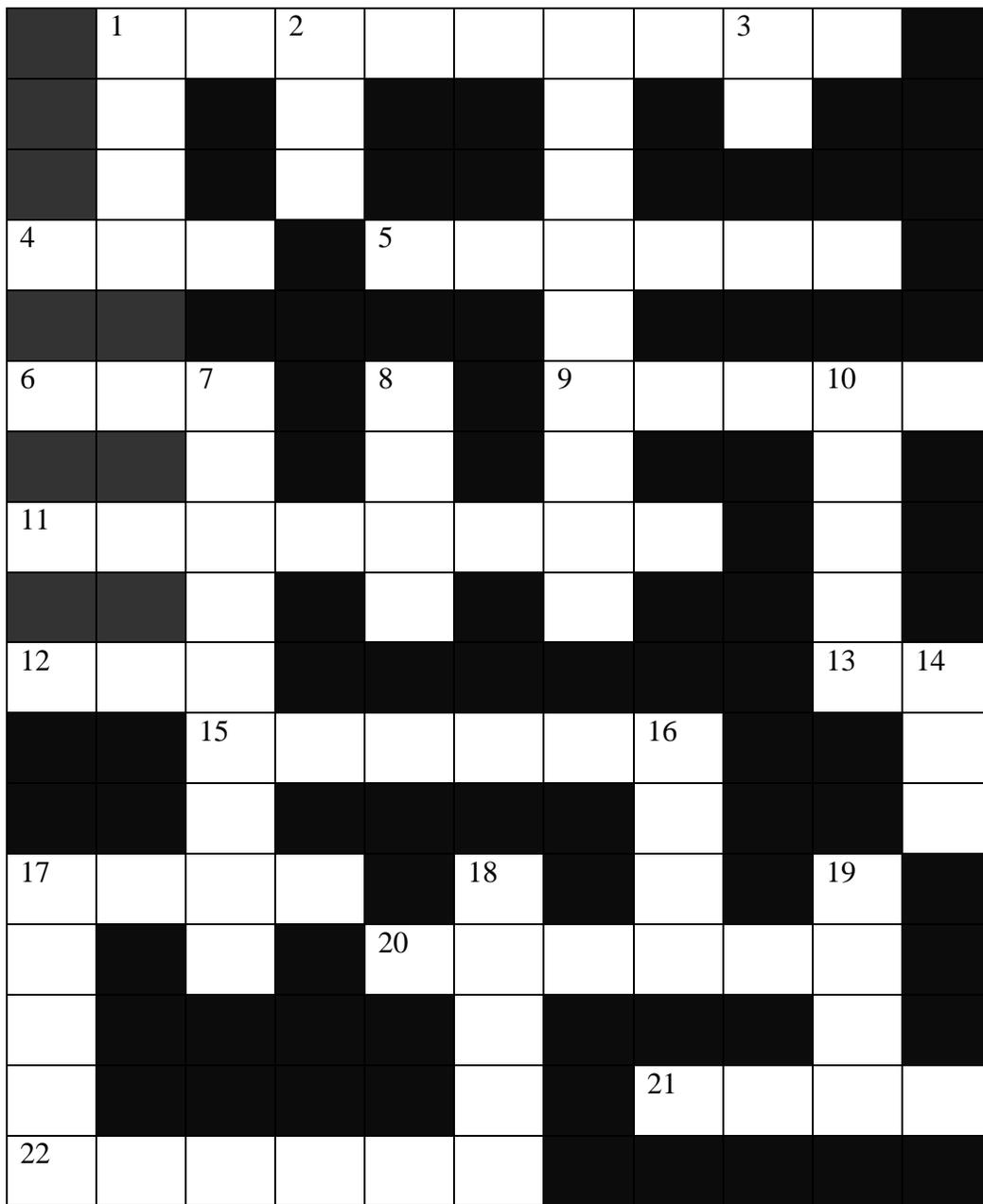
The Janette Dean Award is given annually to an individual in recognition of their contribution to bird banding in Ontario. Please submit nominations for this year's award to any member of the OBBA board by December 31, 2004.

The OBBA website format has been updated and includes the new members-only section. The electronic version of this newsletter, as well as some past issues are now available for download. Members will be able to view the newsletter on-line or print their own copy including colour photos. This will also provide easy storage of past issues, instant delivery and the ability to link to additional information. Members are encouraged to visit the website at www.ontbanding.org and access the members-only section using the user name: [obba](#) and password: [obbanews](#). All members will continue to receive the paper copy of the newsletter unless they request the electronic version only. The website also has a new bander directory. OBBA members can have their contact information added to the directory for public information. Each bander will be able to edit their own information as they want it to appear in the directory.

ORNITHOLOGICAL ACROSTIC

David Brewer

"Ornithological" is stretching it a bit; a deep knowledge of ornithology will be of little help. By contrast, an extensive repertoire of trivia and a warped sense of humour will be much more useful! First complete correct entry sent to the compiler (RR#1, Puslinch, Ont. N0B 2J0) will merit a prize. Whether you will actually get a prize is more dubious.



Please note that in the template I omitted one number in the top row, which becomes 2a.

Clues across

1. A tatty bogle, not a true corvid. (9).
4. "The moping XXX does to the moon complain (Gray). (3)
5. Lovelorn bird in "The Mikado". (6).
6. Cut the lawn with a New Zealand bird? (3).
See 15 across.
9. Mate of 16 down, active in rural politics. (5).
11. The Skunk Blackbird. (8).
12. British chickadee. (3).
13. Bird much longer than its name.(2).
15. (See 6 above). Then flatten it with a Eurasian species. (6).
17. Collective name for snipe. (4).
20. Smokin' alcid? (6).
21. Three-eyed Hawaiian bird? (4).
22. Martin, Gallinule, Sandpiper or Finch? (6).

Clues down

1. Eurasian sawbill. (4).
2. Macaw genus. (3).
- 2a. Insatiate (Richard II) and too expensive for the Canadian Armed Forces.(9).
3. Episcopal exclamation on Maui? (2).
7. Species slaughtered by superannuated sailor. (9).
8. AOU 536. (4).
10. I am green, although my eyes may be white or red. (5).
14. German for Eagle Owl. (3).
16. A very uneven shorebird?(4).
17. Scots for Curlew. (5).
18. Newfie for birds of the genus Uria.(5).
19. Hedwig's four-letter code. (4).

Good luck!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Renew your membership	January 1, 2005
OBBA AGM at BSC Headquarters	February 26-27, 2005
Haldimand Bird Observatory AGM	February 19, 2005
Ontario Eastern Bluebird Association at RBG, Burlington	March 12, 2005
Eastern Bird Banding Association AGM	April 15-17, 2005
Deadline for submissions for January 2005 issue	January 16, 2005

Please submit newsletter articles electronically or on a floppy disk. Articles should be 1-2 pages using font 12. Do not add page numbers to your articles. Photos (include photo release), pictures and cartoons are welcome.

BANDING NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS

Lesley-Anne Howes, Bird Banding Office

Over the last decade, increased interest in Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWO) has led to a growing number of migration monitoring operations to track the movements and abundance of this nocturnal species. The Northern Saw-whet Owl is one of the most abundant and widely distributed owls in North America, and there is still much that needs to be learned about this secretive species. Cooperative, standardized, large-scale banding efforts allow researchers to determine migration pathways, to identify essential habitat, and to monitor population trends for this species where other monitoring schemes have proved less useful.



Photo by Dave Tannahil

In the past, NSWOs were banded with standard size 4 bands. The North American Bird Banding manual lists sizes 4 and 3A as recommended sizes, and Pyle recommends size 4-3A lock-ons. **Lock-ons are no longer recommended by the Banding Office/ Lab for NSWO.** Due to the short tarsus length of NSWOs, banders were finding the standard 4 bands fit too snugly on many owls. Based on recommendations from the banding community, the Bird Banding Offices have developed and now issue size 4 short butt-ended bands specifically for NSWOs. The internal diameter of the standard 4 is 6.5 mm with a height of 10.0 mm. The internal diameter of the size 4 short butt is still 6.5 mm but the height has been reduced to 7 mm. The newer 4 short butts will consistently fit more birds than the standard 4 bands.

NSWOs are sexually dimorphic, with males being between 25 and 40% smaller than the females. Smaller males may still require the smaller size 3A band. Banders should gauge the legs of NSWOs until they are familiar with individual size variation and should continue to gauge smaller birds to ensure that the appropriate size band is used.

Tips for banding Northern Saw-whet Owls

- Check both legs to ensure that the owl has not already been banded. It's easy to miss a band on those feathery feet!
- Gauge the leg to ensure you have the appropriate band size. Smaller males take size 3A.
- When applying the band, partially close the band around the leg, and then rotate the band to ensure that no feathers have been caught in the band. Crimp the band closed and give it a final spin.
- If you are still using the standard size 4 band, consider making the switch to size 4 short butt-ended bands.
- NSWO banders using the Brinker method to determine sex (see www.projectowl.net.org/df.htm) must put the following comment in the remarks box "*Sex determined using the wing-mass DF available from Project Owl.net.*"
- Remember to report encounters and recoveries to the Bird Banding Office **1-800-BAND (2263)**!

Thinking of banding Northern Saw-whet Owls?

- In order to band NSWOs, you must have specific authorization for NSWOs and mist net authorization on your banding permit. You will also need a provincial permit to band raptors.
 - To have these authorizations added to your federal banding permit you must demonstrate on the application form that you have experience banding NSWOs, have a permitted NSWO bander who is familiar with your NSWO banding skills submit a testimonial form, and submit a project description. For more information contact us directly at bbo_cws@ec.gc.ca, by telephone at 613-998-0524, or review the BBO website (http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/nwrc-cnrf/migb/01_1_1_e.cfm).
 - Banders should only order the amount of 4s bands that they think they will actually need for each year.
 - Project OwlNet manages a website dedicated to owl conservation that explains how to set up a standardized NSWO banding operation and contribute to the monitoring of owl population trends. Check out their website <http://www.projectowl.net/default.htm>.
 - Project OwlNet also maintains a listserv dedicated to nocturnal owl research. You can join by contacting Sawwhetnet@adelpia.net.
-

BANDING HIGHLIGHTS

Joanne Dewey caught a HAWO 962-68577 on February 1, 2004 that she had first banded on November 4, 1993 as an AHY M. It is not a record but it is at least 12 years old.

Roger Frost (Willow Banding Group) has had several of his NSWO recovered this year. One banded October 17, 2003 at Candlewick Woods, just west of Port Hope was recaptured on November 11, 2004 by Lori Byrne in Ridgely, Maryland. One banded on October 8, 2001 and another banded on October 12, 2003, both recaptured by LPBO this fall.

Cindy Cartwright banded a NSWO on October 22, 2003 near Oliphant, Ontario that was recaptured on October 27, 2004 in Freeport, Maine by Steve Walker.

Audrey Heagy banded a NSWO on April 13, 2000 at Cabot Head Research Station as a SY-F which was recaptured November 4, 2004 by John Miles at Selkirk. This owl was interesting because it also appeared to have a SY moult pattern when recaptured this year.

An inscription problem

According to the Knight-Ridder News Service, the inscription on the metal bands used by the U.S. Department of the Interior to tag migratory birds has been changed. The bands used to bear the address of the Washington Biological Survey, abbreviated, "Wash. Biol. Surv." until the agency received the following letter from a camper:

"Dear Sirs: While camping last week I shot one of your birds. I think it was a crow. I followed the cooking instructions on the leg tag and I want to tell you it was horrible." Source unknown.

**EASTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION 82nd ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 15-17 2005**

AIRPORT HOLIDAY INN - ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
HOSTED BY BRADDOCK BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY

WORKSHOPS

AGING AND SEXING PASSERINES ROBERT YUNICK
BANDMANAGER'S NEWEST VERSION

REPORTS FROM THE BANDING OFFICES

CANADIAN LESLEY-ANNE HOWES; UNITED STATES MONICA TOMOSY

FRIDAY NIGHT PROGRAM

DAVID BREWER – U.S. AND CANADIAN SAW-WHET
OWL BANDING

SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET SPEAKER

DAVID BONTER – LABORATORY OF ORNITHOLOGY

FIELD TRIPS TO:

HAWK WATCH, BBRR RAPTOR BANDING, and
KAISER-MANITOU BEACH BANDING STATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

REGISTRATION CHITA AND BOB MCKINNEY
<mckinney@netacc.net>

POSTER SESSION LINDA BOUTWELL
<lboutwel@rochester.rr.com>

PAPER SESSION BETSY BROOKS
<ebrooks@bbbo.org>

BUCKET RAFFLE DAVID HAUBER
<haubers3@penn.com>

**SPECIAL RATES AT AIRPORT HOLIDAY INN
FOR RESERVATIONS:**

1-585-328-6000 OR 1-800-HOLIDAY

OR www.hirochesterairport.com

USE CODE EBB FOR SPECIAL EBBA RATES

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT

BETSY BROOKS <ebrooks@bbbo.org>



Photo by Bonnie Collins-Patterson

ONTARIO'S FIRST RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD BANDED

Cindy Cartwright

A rare bird is always cause for excitement, particularly when it cannot be easily identified and has the potential to be a provincial first record. This was the case with a *Selasphorus* hummingbird that has been coming to the feeders of Janice and Art Haines in Niagara Falls, Ont., since September 2nd. Immature and female Rufous and Allen's hummingbirds are indistinguishable in the field and must be identified by key measurements taken while the bird is being processed.

Photo by Dan True



The Niagara Falls hummingbird was banded on December 2nd by Allen Chartier with the assistance of Cindy Cartwright, and positively identified as a HY female Rufous hummingbird. Although this was not the first Ontario Allen's hummingbird that many birders had wished for, it was still a milestone as there are no previous records of a Rufous hummingbird being banded in Ontario.



A hummingbird is aged by examining the bill for corrugations through a 10-power magnifier. Although there are other ways to determine the age of a hummingbird, this is the recommended method, considered by experts to be the most accurate.

Photos by
Diane and Kayo
Roy



“For reference, a paper published by F.G. Stiles in *The Condor* (1972) was used. This reference continues to be the best available for distinguishing Rufous from Allen's Hummingbirds in-hand, and the appropriate use of this information involves first aging and sexing the bird, followed by species identification.” Allen Chartier



The notch on r2, which can be used to separate Rufous from Allen's hummingbird is very indistinct in this particular bird.