



ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE EDITORS

This issue highlights a wide variety of valuable information for banders. We also acknowledge the 2012 recipient of the Janette Dean award, Dr. Chris Davies. Thank you to all the contributors to this issue.

As always, you can help to fill the OBBA newsletter by sending us news and events from your banding operation, research, or any other interesting notes related to bird banding in Ontario.

CALL FOR SPEAKERS: The OBBA is looking for speakers for the 2013 AGM. If you have any ideas for suggested speakers or have a project you would like to share with the OBBA, contact Stu Mackenzie.
stu.a.mackenzie@gmail.com

COMING EVENTS:

- **Ontario Bird Banding Association Annual General Meeting**, February 23 & 24, 2013. Bird Studies Canada Headquarters and National Data Centre, Port Rowan.
SAVE THE DATE and BRING A FRIEND!!!
- **Baillie Birdathon:** May 2013. Support your local bird observatory or the OBBA by sponsoring the OBBA's Birdathoner! For more information visit:
www.birdscanada.org/support/birdathon.

HAVE A COMING EVENT OF NOTE FOR THE ONTARIO BIRD BANDING COMMUNITY ?
LET THE EDITORIAL TEAM KNOW !!!

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2012 JANETTE DEAN AWARD: DR. CHRIS DAVIES

The 2012 Janette Dean award was presented to Dr. Chris Davies. Dr. Davies is a Manager of Wildlife and Research & Development for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and an adjunct professor at Trent University in Peterborough. He has been an active wildlife researcher and waterfowl bander for most of his career. He helped to organize and host annual duck banding workshop in Haliburton for nearly 30 years and in 2008 facilitated the first ever North American Banding Council waterfowl certification session in conjunction with the workshop. Dr. Davies has also played a crucial role in the preseason waterfowl banding in the province. He has provided countless opportunities for experienced banders to share their wisdom with beginners and has always encouraged the advancement and improvement of banding techniques. The OBBA thanks Dr. Chris Davies for his outstanding contributions to bird banding in Ontario.



Dr. Chris Davies receiving the Janette Dean Award from OBBA President David Okines at the 2012 North American Banding Council meeting held in Port Rowan, April 2012.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE JANETTE DEAN AWARD

If you would like to nominate a fellow bander to receive the Janette Dean Award, send a written nomination with a brief explanation of the candidate's contributions to bird banding in Ontario to OBBA President David Okines.

NORTH AMERICAN BANDING COUNCIL—A GREAT RESOURCE FOR BANDERS Erica Dunn — Environment Canada

Trapping, handling and marking birds in various ways are such integral tools of field ornithology that many of the professionally-oriented ornithological societies, including SCO-SOC, have appointed representatives to the North American Banding Council. NABC's mission is to promote sound and ethical bird-banding principles and techniques, and has developed extensive training programs and materials.

While banders are well aware of NABC's activities, many in the academic community are not. Students and professors new to banding, especially those intending to mark relatively few individuals of only one species, often do not realize that training is required. Nor do they always know where to get it. Planning ahead is needed to allow time, not only for getting the necessary permits, but for developing the skills necessary to ensure that the work can be carried out safely and ethically. A permitted bander must be on site when birds are captured and marked and the Bird Banding Office requires demonstrated experience before a permit will be issued.

One of NABC's core activities has been the preparation of detailed manuals for training of banders and of the people who will serve as trainers. These can be accessed through the NABC website (www.nabanding.net), and you can follow NABC on Facebook for the latest information.

The first round of manuals published some time ago, including those for passerines, waterfowl, raptors and hummingbirds, are starting to be reviewed and revised. New ones are underway for seabirds and for birds that use nestboxes. Eventually NABC hopes to prepare manuals for auxiliary markers (from colour bands and tags to electronic devices), and for special procedures that banders are sometimes asked to perform for researchers, including blood sampling, laparotomy, feather collection, and cloacal lavage. Additional NABC training materials include CDs and videos (e.g. how to safely apply hard metal bands). Much of the material has been translated into Spanish and French.



NORTH AMERICAN BANDING COUNCIL—A GREAT RESOURCE FOR RESEARCHERS CONTINUED Erica Dunn — Environment Canada

The second major area of activity is conducting bander training, and the group's only funds come from fees for workshops and courses. Banders can be certified by passing a course with a standardized curriculum. In the year 2011-2012, seven courses certified 12 trainers, 32 banders and three assistants. Numerous training sessions have been held for Latin Americans, both in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Researchers whose work involves handling a few birds do not need to become certified banders. However, they must obtain some training from a permitted bander, learning the trapping techniques they plan to use, and proper techniques for handling and marking the target (and incidentally captured) species.

How does one go about finding a teacher? Bird observatories are a great first contact, as they usually handle a lot of birds and are used to providing training. Visit the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network website at www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/cmmn/ to visit 25 stations across Canada. Even if you can't travel to a bird observatory, their personnel may be able to give suggestions on how to contact bander trainers who live closer to you. You could also try contacting regional banding associations (Eastern, Inland, Western and Ontario Bird Banding Associations).

Finally, and especially if you aren't planning to handle birds much in future, you should consider simply hiring a licensed bander to do that part of the field work for you. (You may even be able to get volunteers!) You can google 'OSNA Jobs' to post a notice of your requirements, send a notice to the bird-banding organization that covers your region, or contact the nearest bird observatory.

For more information visit www.nabanding.net



The Canadian Migration Monitoring Network - taking the pulse of Canada's migratory birds

Jon McCracken^{1,2}, Stu Mackenzie^{1,2}, Marcel Gahbauer^{1,3}, Marie-Anne Hudson^{1,4}, and Alaine Camfield^{1,4}
¹ – CMMN-RCSM Steering Committee, ² – Bird Studies Canada, ³ – Migration Research Foundation, ⁴ – Canadian Wildlife Service

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Effective conservation and management of birds requires an understanding of changes in populations. Indeed, the importance of monitoring bird population trends has been recognized by both the tri-national North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) and Partners in Flight (PIF). In North America, the primary landbird monitoring program is the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), which uses roadside point counts to document breeding bird abundance. However, in Canada, the breeding range of many landbird species is largely north of the road network. Among the species with especially poor BBS coverage are Alder, Yellow-bellied, and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Blackpoll, Cape May, and Connecticut Warblers, and Harris's and American Tree Sparrows. Alternative monitoring methods are therefore required if we are to understand how these populations might be changing. Because most of these birds migrate through southern Canada, where people (including birders) are concentrated, conducting standardized migration surveys is an effective way to collect data on northern landbirds.

Partnerships from coast to coast

The Canadian Migration Monitoring Network - Réseau canadien de surveillance des migrations (CMMN-RCSM) was formed in 1998 as a cooperative venture among a dozen independent bird observatories with migration monitoring programs, Bird Studies Canada (BSC) and Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS). The network has since expanded to more than 25 independent bird observatories across Canada, monitoring over 375 species annually. As a large collaborative network, CMMN-RCSM is uniquely positioned to contribute to the understanding of various aspects of bird migration at a national scale.

A volunteer Steering Committee comprising BSC and CWS staff and elected member station representatives coordinates network activities and organizes a biennial meeting typically attended by almost all member stations. During migration, all stations follow a standardized daily protocol that has been reviewed and approved by the CMMN-RSCM Steering Committee. The core effort at most stations is a banding program,



THE CANADIAN MIGRATION MONITORING NETWORK - TAKING THE PULSE OF CANADA'S MIGRATORY BIRDS — CONTINUED

but the majority also undertake a daily count of migrants, and at one station the observational approach is the primary data collection method. Some stations operate in both spring and fall, while others operate in one season only. At the end of the year, all banding data are sent to the CWS Bird Banding Office in Ottawa for incorporation into the North American banding scheme, while daily count data are sent to BSC for archiving and for periodic population trend analysis. In addition to their core migration monitoring activities, many stations run special research projects during summer and/or winter. University researchers frequently undertake special research projects at migration monitoring stations; a publication repository is currently being compiled for the CMMN-RCSM website. Publications include studies



Blackpoll Warbler (Photo by Simon Duval)

on the effects of weather and climate change on bird migration, stop-over ecology, timing of migration (e.g. chronology/phenology), as well as energetics, physiology, disease, productivity and survival of birds. As the databases of individual member stations and CMMN-RCSM continue to grow, there will be ever greater opportunities for large-scale collaborations to advance our understanding of bird movements and population trends. Already, CMMN-RCSM data are increasingly being used to support assessment of species at risk, including status deliberations by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), and evaluation of population status for species that are difficult to monitor on their breeding grounds (e.g., in support of the *Status of the Birds in Canada* website; www.ec.gc.ca/soc-sbc/).

As a network, CMMN-RCSM has recently participated in four collaborative national research projects: 1) contributing to the DNA barcoding of North American species, 2) contributing to modelling the spread of infectious disease into Canada through tick-borne vectors, 3) delineating catchment basins and place of origin of Canadian birds based on their isotopic signature, and 4) calculating trends in migratory bird populations across Canada (presented in a comprehensive technical report available at www.bsc-eoc.org/download/CMMNReport2008.pdf). Trends were calculated for 14 stations with at least 10 years of data; Prairie and Eastern regions showed predominantly declining populations for all species guilds examined, whereas Ontario and Western regions showed predominantly increasing populations. Summarizing across Canada, about half of the species in most landbird guilds showed population increases, while the other half showed population declines.

THE CANADIAN MIGRATION MONITORING NETWORK - TAKING THE PULSE OF CANADA'S MIGRATORY BIRDS — CONTINUED

All monitoring programs require a long time-series of data before meaningful trends can be produced and interpreted. This is especially true for bird populations, which typically fluctuate over time in relation to a variety of factors. Currently, population trends for migrating birds are updated annually and are available on BSC's portal of the Avian Knowledge Network, NatureCounts (www.naturecounts.ca) along with detailed summary statistics such as migration windows and seasonal checklists from every station across the country. However, a major effort is being made to obtain the resources necessary to produce trend results annually for all member stations in order to get a timely "big picture" of how bird populations are faring across the country. Indeed, a better understanding of how regional population trends relate to specific geographical regions and overall national trends is a priority for the CMMN-RCSM. An upcoming synthesis of feather isotope analysis paired with band recovery data will strengthen our ability to do so.

The Members

While there are many similarities, no two CMMN-RCSM stations are exactly alike. As independent entities, each station is responsible for its own management, funding, and programming. Across the network, there are strong affiliations and partnerships with universities, other research institutions, an array of federal, provincial and local government agencies, local and regional naturalist clubs, foundations, industry, and private memberships. There is also exchange among stations in terms of volunteers, personnel, knowledge, and even funding. Most CMMN-RCSM stations rely heavily upon a cadre of highly trained volunteers who are usually overseen by a paid seasonal biologist. As such, training students and other volunteer field biologists is often an integral component of the field program. In fact, hundreds of top-notch field biologists from around the world owe their professional development to the valuable training they received at such stations over the years. Some CMMN-RCSM members have even extended their research and training programs to Latin America. CMMN-RCSM members make significant contributions to conservation by engaging communities and building new partnerships, providing unique data to local and regional management issues, training citizens and students, restoring habitat, and of course, monitoring bird migration. Several stations have on-site public education programs and most provide information to the birding community.



THE CANADIAN MIGRATION MONITORING NETWORK - TAKING THE PULSE OF CANADA'S MIGRATORY BIRDS — CONTINUED

A growing number also offer special birding “festivals” during peak migration, bringing attention to conservation issues concerning migratory birds and the importance of stopover areas.



Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
(Photo by Marcel Gahbauer)

Looking to the future

CMMN-RCSM has the capacity to help answer a great variety of questions. For example, how are bird migration patterns affected by weather variables and what can this tell us about the impacts of climate change on migratory birds? To what degree can we use fall age ratios of migrants to monitor annual breeding productivity? What are the geographical connections between specific breeding and wintering populations? What habitat characteristics make stopover sites important to migrating landbirds?

Migration monitoring is taking flight with the advent of exciting new technologies like isotope analyses that link migrating birds to their breeding areas, DNA “barcoding,” radar ornithology, and the miniaturization of tracking devices. CMMN-RCSM can play a critical role in applying these techniques to advancing our understanding of Canadian migrants by assisting researchers across Canada through providing sophisticated field training or accommodation and support to students, volunteers, and staff before they go in the field. CMMN-RCSM can also provide technical and analytical support for local to national research programs. Most of the CMMN-RCSM member stations take an open-source approach to their data and comprise some of the largest data sets on migratory populations anywhere in North America available to researchers. Inquiries about potential research collaborations are always welcome!

More information about CMMN-RCSM can be found on the web at www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/cmmn. Please address any comments, questions, or suggestions to the current Steering Committee co-chairs, Marcel Gahbauer (marcel@migrationresearch.org) and Marie-Anne Hudson (marie-anne.hudson@ec.gc.ca).



BIRDERS AND BANDERS WANTED

Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) stations across the country, many of which are in Ontario, are looking for birders and banders who are interested in gaining the experience of a lifetime volunteering or working for the birds. Visit the CMMN website – www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/cmmn/ for more information about stations near you and opportunities offered. Population trends, seasonal abundance graphs, and other summary statistics from the CMMN are available from Nature Counts at www.naturecounts.ca.

Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) Positions Available:

LPBO is looking for experienced individuals to help run its research, education and training programs. For more information about volunteer or internship opportunities at LPBO, visit Bird Studies Canada's job opportunities page - www.birdscanada.org/about/jobs or contact LPBO at lpbo@birdscanada.org.

Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory

PEPtBO is looking for an experienced bander for the 2013 season. Please send a resume with banding experience (including banding/ringing permit details) and contact information for two references, to Cheryl Anderson (cherylanderson23@sympatico.ca) before January 31, 2013. Details are available at <http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/22588867/1428473829/name/EXPERIENCED+BANDER.pdf>.

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

BBO in Alberta is looking for a highly motivated individual to take on the Executive Director position. This job involves field studies (running songbird monitoring from May 1 through October 9 and Saw-whet Owl monitoring September to early November), and office work at home from November through April. See the Job Posting available at www.beaverhillbirds.com.

ATTENTION PARENTS AND KEEN TEEN BIRDERS! - 2013 Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop

The Long Point Bird Observatory is looking for keen teen birders to apply for the 2013 Doug Tarry Natural History Fund - Young Ornithologist Workshop to be held from Saturday 3 August to Sunday 11 August. Participants will receive hands-on training in field ornithology including bird banding, censusing, field identification, birding trips, preparing museum specimens, guest lectures, and more! Six of Canada's most promising ornithologists between the ages of 13-17 will be selected to attend, and will receive the Doug Tarry Bird Study Award to cover all on-site expenses. For those traveling long distances, special grants may also be available to help offset air travel costs. Applications are due 30 April, 2013. For more information and an application form, contact LPBO at lpbo@birdscanada.org, or visit www.birdscanada.org/lpbo.



ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION (2012-2013)

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President	David Okines davidokines@aol.com	273 Charlotteville Rd. 2. RR#2, St. Williams, ON. NOE 1P0. 519-586-9464
Immediate Past President	Eric Machell elmachell@aol.com	Box 2. Delhi, ON. N4B 2W8. 519-582-4738
1st Vice President	Stuart Mackenzie stu.a.mackenzie@gmail.com	PO Box 160. Port Rowan, ON. NOE 1M0
2nd Vice President	Norm North north@execulink.com	274233 Wallace Line. Ingersoll, ON. N5C 3J7
Recording Secretary	Bill Read info@billreadsbooks.com	24 Brant Pl., Cambridge, ON. N1S 2V8 519-620-0744
Treasurer/ Membership Secretary	Barbara Campbell Barb.campbell1@sympatico.ca	19 Harwood Lane. Kanata, ON. K2K 1X7. 613-839 3418
Directors at Large	John Brett John.brett@utoronto.ca	Toronto, ON.
	David Brewer adavidbrewer@yahoo.ca	7204 Concession 1 Puslinch, ON. N0B 2J0
	Jim Smith benavis@sympatico.ca	358 Diltz Rd. Dunnville, ON. N1A 2W2
	Myles Falconer mfalconer@birdscanada.org	PO Box 160. Port Rowan, ON. NOE 1M0

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Ontario Bird Banding Editor	Garth Baker	birdguy69@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Stu Mackenzie and John Brett	stu.a.mackenzie@gmail.com
OBBA Rep. to LPBO	Eric Machell	elmachell@aol.com
Bird Banding Office Rep. To OBBA	Lesley-Anne Howes lesley-anne.howes@ec.gc.ca	National Wildlife Research Centre Carleton University Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0H3
WEB Master	Barbara Ferris	finally@hay.net
OBBA Rep. To North American Banding Council	Norm North	north@execulink.com

The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of each contributing author and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the OBBA or its management.

The Ontario Bird Banding Association is a non-profit, membership-driven and inclusive organization representing the interests of all amateur and 'professional' bird banders across Ontario.
If you band birds in Ontario, for any reason, you should be a member!

