



AUGUST 1973
Vol. 36 No. 3

EBBA NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE EASTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

EASTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION
FOUNDED APRIL 1923

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Dr. Jeff Swinebroad
10423 Kartwright Court, Gaithersburg, Md. 20760

1st VICE PRESIDENT

Christopher N. Rose
98 Lopez Road, Cedar Grove, N. J. 07009

2nd VICE PRESIDENT

Ronald J. French
R. D. 1, Doylestown, Pa. 18901

3rd VICE PRESIDENT

George Lakata
3718 Woodburn Road, Annandale, Va. 22003

SECRETARY

Mrs. Eugene T. McDonald
510 Glenn Road, State College, Pa. 16801

TREASURER

Davis H. Corkran
154 Lake Avenue, Fair Haven, N. J. 07701

EDITOR

Frederick S. Schaeffer
84-55 Daniels Street (#1k), Jamaica, N. Y. 11435

COUNCILLORS

1974

T. A. Beckett, III
Frank P. Frazier, Jr.
Archie G. Richardson
Mrs. Mabel Warburton

1975

Mrs. Roger W. Foy
Gale Smith
Robert C. Leberman
John H. Buckalew

1976

Mrs. W. A. Katholi
Waldron F. Kennison
Robert J. Pantle
Frank J. Neumann

Through 1974 as Retiring President: Emil J. Berger, Jr.

August 1973

143

REPORT ON AGING AND SEXING CRITERIA FOR AMERICAN REDSTART

DANIEL R. GRAY III

For several years I have heard argument on the validity of the presently available aging and sexing criteria for the American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*). I felt it necessary to solve this problem before I continued to report age and sex on redstarts to the Bird Banding Laboratory. First I read all the resources available to me on plumage and age/sex determination of this warbler. Then I tested the reliability of my findings with study skins.

After reading several authorities, patterns of agreement emerged similar to the criteria many banders now use. The criteria and figures given below resulted from age/sex determination by plumage characteristics only; skull ossification was not obtainable with the study skins.

Black and orange birds	ASY MALE	spring
	AHY MALE	fall

Grayish birds with orange breast patches and yellow to orange underwings, usually contrasting (SY Males often with black on head and throat)	SY MALE	spring
	HY MALE	fall

Grayish birds with yellow patches and yellow underwings, little or no contrast	AHY FEMALE	spring
	U FEMALE	fall

Using the above guide, basically that put forth by Robbins (1964) and Wood (1969), I tested my findings with study skins. ASY/AHY Males checked out with 0% error. SY/HY Males showed a 19.1% error. AHY/U Females had a 3.7% error. Obviously in the fall much more accurate results can be obtained for adult females by using skull ossification along with plumage. Identifying SY Males and AHY Females in the spring, when skull condition is not helpful, seemed a possible problem. Identifying SY Males by plumage as above produced a 14.6% error. (Table 1). An unofficial statement from the Banding Laboratory indicated that the percent of error for banding criteria should be 1% or less.

Other interesting plumage characteristics I found were:

Two birds were marked female on the museum label and had black body feathers and orange breast patches. On one the black was on the breast, throat, forehead and lores. On the second, black was on the breast, mid-back, and crown. This indicated that the presence of black feathers may not be totally reliable in separating SY Males from females. However, the sample of