



W.B.B.A.'s 1976 Annual Meeting

Fort Collins, Colorado
4-6 June

The joint meeting of W.B.B.A. with the Colorado Field Ornithologists at Fort Collins, Colorado, can only be described in superlatives: Magnificent scenery, perfect weather, excellent papers, and superbly-organized field trips. Add to that the opportunity to exchange ideas with other banders and to chat with John Tautin of the B.B.L., and this had to be one of the best annual meetings that W.B.B.A. has ever had.

Hosting the meeting were the Fort Collins Chapter of National Audubon Society; and the Department of Fishery & Wildlife Biology, and the Department of Zoology & Entomology at Colorado State University. Our special thanks go to Dr. Ronald Ryder (chairman of the arrangements committee), Dr. Paul Baldwin, Roger Boyd and the many others who made this meeting such a success.

Papers sessions

The following papers were presented at the sessions:

Some aspects of Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montana*) breeding biology. Walter D. Graul, Non-game Bird Specialist, Colo. Div. of Wildlife.

Nesting and early brood behavior in White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus*). Kenneth M. Giesen, Dept. of Fishery & Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University.

Seasonal changes in raptor populations in Wyoming. Edward D. Keith, Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory, CSU.

Some methods for trapping rails. Herman J. Griese, Dept. of Fishery & Wildlife, CSU.

An improved method for capturing Eared Grebes (*Podiceps nigricollis*). John L. Wagner, Wildlife Conservation Officer, Walden.

Possible sex and age determination of Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Alan R. Harmata and Brian Millsap, Dept. of Fishery & Wildlife Biology, CSU.

Radio-telemetry studies of the Common Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*). W.C. Royall, Jr., U.S.F.W.S. Denver.

Capturing territorial male Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) with a decoy trap. W.C. Royall, Jr. and Olin Bray, U.S.F.W.S., Denver.

Neck ligature technique for determining nestling Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) and Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*) diets. Jeanne A. Conry, EPO Biology, Univ. of Colo., Boulder.

The Point Reyes Bird Observatory Banding Program. Bruce A. Sorrie, PRBO, Bolinas, Calif.

Radio-telemetry studies of birds of prey. Paul Hegdal, U.S.F.W.S., Denver.

Business meeting

It was announced that W.B.B.A. is now incorporated as a non-profit organization and has been issued its non-profit bulk mailing permit.

Reaction to the first issue of *North American Bird Bander* was highly favorable. Members were enthusiastic over both content and appearance of the journal and felt that it should sell itself.

Worksheet editor, Charles Collins, requested material for additional species sheets. Anyone working with a species for which he knows reliable ageing/sexing criteria was urged to submit this information to Dr. Collins. (See notice elsewhere in this issue.)

L. Richard Mewaldt, coordinator for the Cooperative White-crowned Sparrow Project, reported that

the project would be continued for one more year. At the end of that period, data would be evaluated. Dr. Mewaldt said that 61 people were on the project mailing list and that approximately half that number submitted reports of bandings for the winter, 1975-76, season. A concerted effort will be made in 1976 to band as many of the *oriantha* race as possible on the nesting grounds in Oregon, with the hope that the migratory route and wintering grounds can later be identified.

Nominations for 1976-77 officers were presented. Elected were: Dr. Charles T. Collins, President; Van A. Truan, First Vice President; Roger L. Boyd, Second Vice President; Otis D. Swisher, Treasurer; and Eleanor L. Radke, Editor.

From the BBL

W.B.B.A. members had the pleasure of meeting John Tautin of the B.B.L. for the first time. Mr. Tautin spoke about some of the trends at the B.B.L.

There are 25 people employed on the staff at B.B.L. More may be added if the B.B.L. expands to include the marking of marine mammals — a project now under discussion. The number of master permit holders and sub-permittees is holding constant at approximately 2,000 each.

Total birds banded in 1975 — less than one million — was down somewhat from the 1974 total. Recoveries were also down. But with the current emphasis on non-game programs in state wildlife departments, the number of color-marking authorizations is increasing rapidly. The B.B.L. is having to go to a protocol situation in assigning new authorizations in order to avoid overlap.

Requests for data are up 2-300% over last year, in large part because of non-game programs and the preparation of environmental impact statements.

Two new band sizes are now available. A new size 9, slightly larger than the old, is suitable for banding Trumpeter Swans. The new 7D lock-on band is slightly smaller than size 8, making it a better fit for many Red-tailed Hawks, for example.

Mr. Tautin congratulated W.B.B.A. and E.B.B.A. for their joint efforts in producing *North American Bird Bander*.

Banquet

A delicious buffet banquet was served in the North Ballroom at the Student Center. Following the meal, William Burnham, director of Peregrine Fund West, presented a beautifully-illustrated talk, "Falcons and other wildlife of Greenland."

Field trips

Two field trips, scheduled simultaneously, were held on Sunday — one to Pawnee National Grasslands, led by Roger Boyd, and the other to Rocky Mountain National Park, led by Ronald Ryder.

Roger reports: The weather was warm and breezy on our field trip to the grasslands. On the way out, we stopped at a small marshy area and saw Cinnamon Teal, Pintail, Mallard, Northern Phalarope, Virginia Rail, Northern Yellowthroat, Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds. On the grasslands we found Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs. I located a Chestnut-collared Longspur nest with two young. Dr. Collins located a Mountain Plover and two 4 to 5-day-old chicks — one of which was captured for close inspection and then released. We also found Shoveler, Red-tailed Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, American Kestrel, Killdeer, American Avocet, Mourning Dove, Burrowing Owl, Common Nighthawk, Western Kingbird, Say's Phoebe, Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, Rock Wren, Lark Bunting, Lark Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow. To me, the highlight was a Golden Eagle's nest that hasn't been productive for 3-4 years and which had two eaglets in it. It was only 25 feet off the ground and could easily be observed from the ground. Both adults circled the area the entire time.

The calm, sunny weather was greatly appreciated by those going on the Rocky Mountain National Park trip.

Among the birds sighted were Mountain Bluebird, Steller's Jay, Gray Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Brown-capped Rosy Finch. The highlight of this trip was a visit to a White-tailed Ptarmigan nest site, where Ken Giesen illustrated his noosing technique by capturing the female. The male managed to evade Ken's noose and noisily circled our group while we examined the female in the hand. Both birds had been banded and color-marked as a part of a continuing study of the species.



Photos by
Bruce Sorrie