



# Western Regional News

## Western Bird Banding Association

Founded 1925

### President's Message

The 1985 Annual Report is published in this issue of NABB. Thanks to all the banders who took the time to report their results; the report would not be possible without your cooperation. And thanks to the compiler for all her work.

There are 299 active banding reports. Forty banders reported over 1000 birds or 68% of the birds banded. Twenty-six banders handled between 500 and 1,000 birds, about 12% of the total. Less than 1/4 of the reports account for 80% of the birds and most of the "significant recoveries".

What can those of us who band fewer than 500 birds do to get the most data from our banding effort? Specialization is an obvious answer, either by species or habitat or locality. Raptor banders work hard for every bird they band, but have a relatively high number of returns and gather much valuable data. Many WBBA banders work on individual species and are gathering much needed information. Some species in the Annual Report do not even have ageing or

sexing summaries available; gathering and publishing this information makes an excellent banding project.

Habitat is another area of specialization. For instance pinyon-juniper covers much of the intermontane west, but bird usage has received little attention. Since this habitat varies from pure juniper to mostly pinyon and is often mixed with other trees and shrubs, there is room for many studies. Another interesting study is the comparison of the avifauna of an urban or suburban area with that of the habitat it replaced.

Locality, particularly in thinly populated areas, is an interesting specialization. What birds winter, breed and migrate through your area?

And after you finish a project, share it with all of us by publishing it in *North American Bird Bander*.

Dr. Robert C. Tweit

### Aberrant Plumage in Downy Woodpecker

On 24 June 1986 I netted a small woodpecker at our backyard station five miles south of Jay, Delaware County, in northeastern Oklahoma.

Though presumably a Downy Woodpecker, with an overall length of approximately six inches, its plumage contained definite characteristics of both Downy and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers.

**As in Downy** it showed: Back showed broad white central stripe, no zebra pattern, a face with a heavy dark patch behind eye, and outer tail feathers with three narrow black crossbars.

**As in Ladderback** it showed: Feathers of entire crown boldly red-tipped on black base, not remotely like the Downy's red nape patch, and sides buffy with a liberal sprinkling of faint dark pin stripes.

It is quite unlikely that this bird is a hybrid, in a section of the state where only the Downy has ever been reported. The Ladderback, though a common nesting species in parts of western Oklahoma, is a straggler in Central Oklahoma. The easternmost records in the files of our forthcoming *Oklahoma Bird Life* (in press) are one or two single birds seen in Washington, Payne, Oklahoma, and Marshall counties.

Thus it appears that color aberrations are a possibility even among common, boldly patterned birds, and may account for occasional sight records far off course.

A. Marguerite Baumgartner (Mrs. F.M.)  
Little Lewis Whirlwind Nature School and Sanctuary  
R 2 Box 51A  
Jay, Oklahoma 74346

**Oklahoma banding recoveries are urgently needed for inclusion as update of *Oklahoma Bird Life*, is nearing completion. Deadline December 1.**

If you have records that are unpublished (or published in non-Oklahoma journals) the following information would be much appreciated. Waterfowl recoveries are not included in this listing.

Species, where banded, date banded, banded by —, condition when recovered, where recovered, date recovered, recovered by —.

If previously published — author, publication, date.

F.M. and A.M. Baumgartner  
R #2 Box 51A  
Jay, Oklahoma 74346