



Western Regional News

Western Bird Banding Association

Founded 1925

From WBBA's President

Identification, Sexing and Ageing

These are critical concerns and challenges in bird-banding, which are critical for the intrinsic value of our recorded observations, and the data sent to the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL). There is however a somewhat schizophrenic aspect about all of this. On one hand we are encouraged to research and test criteria for identification, sexing and ageing birds at different times of the year and in different populations and geographic regions. Yet we are held to the standardized criteria in volume 2 of the North American Bird Banding Manual, when we report our banding activities to the BBL. This seemingly arbitrary guideline nevertheless remains essential for maximizing the consistency and reliability of the data in the BBL's database, and for the sound interpretation of data drawn from the database, for research, management and other kinds of projects.

Periodic review and updating of the BBL's criteria for identification, sexing and ageing occurs. But it is an increasingly complex and challenging task because of the accelerated accumulation of new information and reevaluation of criteria. The task becomes even more complex as new techniques and technologies contribute to our expertise, and as computer based multifactorial evaluation of criteria gain in usefulness.

"Worksheets" for particular species have been a helpful intermediate step in the review, testing and evaluation of criteria for identification, sexing and ageing. They will continue to be important. However, for passerine birds a consolidated and efficiently organized guidebook of criteria is now available. This is the recently (1987) published *Identification Guide to North American Passerines* by Peter Pyle, Steve N.C. Howell, Robert P. Yunick and David F. DeSante (published by, and available from, Slate Creek Press, P.O. Box 219, Bolinas CA 94924). This is a most timely and useful volume for banders. It will serve as a consolidated basis for further advances by each of us in discovering new and testing new and old criteria. Similar concise guides for banders covering other major avian groups, are certainly needed. They will aid in bringing together the widely scattered, and sometimes practically forgotten, published information, as well as facilitating more rapid and coherent advances in our identification, sexing and ageing of birds belonging to these other groups. There is plenty for each of us to do and ways by which all of us can contribute. Peter Pyle and his coauthors deserve our praise, not only for providing this milestone guide for North American banders, but also for giving us such a worthy model of collaborative work at the core of bird-banding science.

W.B. (Bill) Quay

THE 1988 ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE IN ARCATA, CALIFORNIA, OCTOBER 7-9.

The program will feature techniques and results. The site will be a banding station in the northern California coastal dunes. Submit papers to and request further information from:

Dr. C. John Ralph
Redwood Science Lab, USFS
1700 Bayview Drive
Arcata CA 95521.

Financial Summary 1986-87 and Budget 1987-88

	86-87 Budget	12 months to 3/31/87	16 months to 7/31/87	12 months to 7/31/87	87-88 Budget
RECEIPTS					
Members dues	\$7400	\$5277	\$5822	\$5329	\$5500
Contributions	100	41	41	41	30
Interest	440	721	1069	839	800
Sales	450	37	487	397	240
NABB Advertising	0	20	20	0	30
Meeting Receipts	1000	1270	1270	474	400
TOTAL	\$9390	\$7706	\$8709	\$7080	\$7000
EXPENDITURES					
NABB	\$5200 (3 issues)	\$2625 (5 issues)	\$4503 (4 issues)	\$3770	\$4800
Annual Report	250	209	209	209	250
Officers exp & supplies	570	242	273	264	650
Sales Expenses	300	90	97	67	230
Research award	250	250	500	500	250
Meeting expense	920	944	1083	334	400
Surplus	1900	3346	2341	1936	420
TOTAL	\$9390	\$7706	\$8709	\$7080	\$7000
GENERAL FUND BALANCE		4/1/86	\$5012		
		7/31/87	\$6526		
ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCE (both dates)			\$4940		

For a more detailed report, write WBBA's Treasurer. (See address on inside front cover.)

From the Editor:

A reminder about the Annual Report. If you are a master permittee who banded in the WBBA area in 1987 and you have not received an Annual Report form, please send your list of species and numbers to the compiler:

Joan C. Tweit
3116 N Willow Creek Drive
Tucson AZ 85712-1382

If you have received a form and haven't returned it yet, please send it now, even if you didn't band. Finally if you are a subpermittee, ask your master permittee to send in your results.

WBBA wishes to thank the members of the Editorial Board: Drs. K.A. Arnold, C.T. Collins, D.F. DeSante, S. Ervin, L.R. Mewaldt, K.P. Reese, G.C. West and F.C. Zwickel and also Peter Bloom, Dr. W.A. Calder, Ross Chapin, Dr. R.C. Drewien, Dr. J.J. Hatch, Scott M. Melvin, Dr. D.L. Pearson, Dr. D.M. Power, and Merrill Wood for their careful reviews of manuscripts.