
News, Notes, Comments

BANDING OWLS IN NEST BOXES -- PROBLEM OF DESERTION?

Florida Audubon owns 43 acres (17.4 hectares) in Orange County, FL, five miles (8 km) north of Zellwood. Since 1972 nest boxes have been monitored. Birds using them are Great Crested Flycatcher, Tufted Titmouse and Eastern Screech-Owl. Lifting the top of the nest box has not caused desertion of the nest box.

Bands were applied to adult screech owls for the first time this year (2000). 19 March: Three adult owls in separate nest boxes were banded. None were on eggs. 23 April: Four adult owls were in nest boxes, each with two eggs; two were recaptures, two unbanded. All were in different boxes from the ones occupied 19 March. The two unbanded were banded. 21 May: Two owls were in the boxes, both recaptures, one was sitting on

three eggs in a different box from the one she was in 23 April. The other was in the box she was in 23 April. There were two young in this box about two weeks old.

Summary: Owls moved when they were banded 19 March and only one banded owl remained in the box 23 April. The other banded owls deserted their eggs.

Conclusion: In the future, owls will not be banded or even lifted to see if they are on eggs. Has anyone else had experience banding owls in nest boxes? I would like to hear from them. Should we band owls with young and should we band young?

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Recent Literature

BANDING HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHIES

Remembering Otto Hohn. L. A. Lima. 1997. *Edmonton Nat.* 25(2):23-24. c/o Edmonton Nat. Hist. Club, Box 1582, Edmonton, Alta. T5J 2N9 (Biographical tribute to avian physiologist, best known for his research on phalaropes, based partly on banding and color-marking.) MKM

BANDING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

Plastic color bands have no short-term effect on White-breasted Nuthatch behavior. V. A. Weiss and D. A. Cristol. 1999. *Condor* 101:884-886. Dept. Biol., College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795. RCT

Weight loss of stainless steel rings on Hooded Vultures. P. J. Mundy. 1996. *Safring News* 25:74-75. Dept. Natl. Parks & Wildl. Manage., Box 2283, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (Wear and weight loss of band was slight on bird found dead 256 months after banding, and writing on band still legible. Rate of weight loss suggests band should last 99 years. Weight loss of another band from a bird 81 months after banding was slightly less than that on the first.) MKM

The influence of nest controls, catching and ringing on the breeding success of Baltic Dunlin *Calidris alpina*. O. Thorup. 1995. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 76:26-30. V. Vedsted Byvej 32, V. Vedsted, DK-6760 Ribe, Denmark (During a six-year study in Denmark, 265 adults were caught in walk-in traps in 399 catching attempts without causing any desertions. Color-banding of chicks had no demonstrable effect on chick survival, and visits to nests did not increase mammalian predation, but probably increased predation by Common Gulls on some study plots.) MKM

Field technique suggestions for the study of Collared Pratincoles *Glareola pratincola*. B. Calvo and M. Vasquez. 1995. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 78:33-35. Applied Ornithol. Unit, Graham Kerr Bldg., IBLS, Glasgow Univ., Glasgow G12 8QQ, U.K. (Since most nest traps were avoided by pratincoles nesting in Spain, and nesting adults handled at the nest tended to desert at any stage of incubation, trapping of adults by night dazzling or other means outside the incubation period is recommended. Dye-soaked sponges left in nest cups were accepted by the birds, but their feathers did not absorb the dye. Chicks can be captured away from the nest by night dazzling, combined with sweep nets.) MKM

IDENTIFICATION, MOLTS, PLUMAGES, WEIGHTS AND MEASUREMENTS

The relationship of bib size to age and sex in the Black-capped Chickadee. K. Otter and L. Ratcliffe. 1999. *J. Field Ornithol.* 70:567-577. Dept. Biol., Queen's Univ., Kingston, Ont. K7L 3N6 (Males tended to have larger bib areas than females; HY/SY tended to have more ragged lower edges of bibs than AHY/ASY birds. Raggedness in the whole population varied between two years.) RCT

Molecular vs. phenotypic sexing in Red Knots. A. J. Baker, T. Piersma and A. D. Greenslade. 1999. *Condor* 101:887-893. Dept. Zool., Univ. Toronto, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1A1 (A molecular method using polymerase chain reaction of a blood sample accurately sexed this species.) RCT

Yellow-throated and Blue-headed vireos in Ontario: 6. Interspecific interactions, maintenance activities, and moult. R. D. James. 1999. *Ont. Birds* 17:84-93. R.R. 3, Sunderland, Ont. L0C 1H0 (Comments based on author's observations on timing of molt in Ontario of nestlings/fledglings/HY birds and of molt in adults from mid-summer through early fall, as well as summary of previously published data.) MKM

Size differences in male and female 'Green' Satin Bowerbirds *Ptilonorhynchos violaceus*. M. A. Miller. 1995. *Corella* 19:146-148. Healesville Sanctuary, Box 248, Healesville, Victoria 3777, Australia (Measurements of surgically sexed birds indicated that a combination of tarsal length and wing length can be used to determine sex in most individuals. Previously, females were difficult to distinguish from males under four years of age.) MKM

NORTH AMERICAN BANDING RESULTS

Bird watching in 1994: the bird hotline -wild, wacky, fun and fantastics of 1994. P. Marklevitz. 1995. *Edmonton Nat.* 23(1):25-27. The Wildbird General Store, Old Strathcona Shopping Centre, 10429-80 Ave., Edmonton, Alta. T6E 1V1 (Ray Cromie and associates banded about 50 Great Gray Owls in the Edmonton area during the winter of 1993-1994.) MKM

Banding in Ontario: 1998. W. D. McIlveen. 2000. *Ont. Bird Banding* 31:1-10. R.R. 1, Acton, Ont. L7J 2L7 (List by species, hybrid and race of 70,016 birds of 200 taxa banded by 17 individual banders and eight banding groups or bird observatories. A map of bird observatories in southeastern Ontario is included.) MKM

The 1998 Long Point banding summary. J. Wojnowski. 2000. *Ont. Bird Banding* 31:11-13. Long Point Bird Observatory, Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. N0E 1M0 (In its 39th year, Long Point Bird Observatory staff and volunteers banded their fourth highest total—22,473 birds of 132 taxa, bringing their all-time total to over 600,000 birds. Totals for 1998 are listed for each taxon, including record highs for Tundra Swan, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Marsh Wren, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart and Wilson's Warbler. Recoveries elsewhere in Ontario and in six U.S. states are listed for 17 Long Point-banded birds of 13 species, as are recoveries at Long Point of four birds of three species banded elsewhere in Ontario, Michigan and New York.) MKM

Hawk Cliff Raptor Banding Station—twenty-eighth annual report: 1999. B. Hubert and F. Hubert. 2000. *Ont. Bird Banding* 31:14-21. 10 Paulson Court, St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 1M9 (Summaries by species of numbers of 15 diurnal raptor species seen and 2,909 birds of 11 raptor species banded at this station near the north shore of Lake Erie during the fall of 1998 [not 1999 as implied in the title]. Graphs depict the numbers of Northern Harriers, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels and Merlins banded 1983-1998 or 1985-1998. Numbers of Merlins banded [64] exceeded the previous high of 60, set in 1995.) MKM

Innis Point Bird Observatory: 1997 in review. B. Murphy and B. Petrie. 2000. *Ont. Bird Banding* 31:22-26. 11-340 Metcalfe St., Ottawa, Ont. K2P 1S6 (A table lists by species 3248 birds of 96 species banded at a station in Ottawa, Ontario, on 92 days during 1997, including their first Carolina Wren and record highs of Blue Jay, Brown Thasher, Western Palm Warbler, Northern Cardinal and Clay-colored Sparrow. Another table lists returns of 230 previously banded birds of 34 species. The text provides further details of several

of these returns, including a new longevity record for a female Red-eyed Vireo of at least 10 years, 1 month and 4 days at most recent capture, an American Tree Sparrow captured annually in eight consecutive winters, and several plumage variants. Placing a trap on a roof decreased disturbance and thus increased capture rate of Snow Buntings, 93% of which were males. A table lists numbers of Snow Buntings by sex captured in both 1995 and 1997 and another table indicates the number of banded Snow Buntings recaptured in one to four subsequent winters.) MKM

1996 Bird banding highlights. D. Stiles. 1997. *Pica* 17(1):33-37. 20 Lake Wapta Rise SE, Calgary, Alta. T2J 2M9 (During 1996, 1577 [presumably all Mountain] bluebirds and 2093 Tree Swallows were banded along Calgary, Alberta-area bluebird trails. Several banded birds of both species were recovered at other locations within Alberta, and a Tree Swallow banded in Alberta in July 1995 was found dead that September in Nebraska. Longevity records included an 8-year old and a 7-year old Tree Swallow and two 6-year and one 5-year old Mountain Bluebird.) MKM

Innis Point Bird Observatory: 1998 spring migration monitoring project. B. Murphy and B. Petrie. 2000. *Ont. Bird Banding* 31:27-29. 11-340 Metcalfe St., Ottawa, Ont. K2P 1S6 (Although banding effort increased over spring 1997, the total of 1,063 birds banded was up only 1%. A Black-capped Chickadee irruption resulted in 282 banded, compared with ten in 1997. Numbers of top ten banded species are tabulated in comparison with their 1997 totals. A Great Crested Flycatcher was recaptured when at least 11 years, 11 months old. An American Redstart banded at Prince Edward Point on the north shore of Lake Ontario was recaptured at Innis Point, Ottawa area five days later.) MKM

Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory: 1998 spring migration report. E. A. Machell. 2000. *Ont. Bird Banding* 31:30-32. Box 2, Delhi, Ont. N4B 2W8 (Forty banders participated in the fourth recent year of spring banding on the north coast of Lake Ontario, with new highs attained for Hermit Thrush and White-throated Sparrow, and Brown-headed Cowbirds down significantly. Tables list the top ten 1998-banded species in comparison

with their totals each year since 1995 and the species with the top ten cumulative totals to date.) MKM

Cabot Head bird migration study 1998. A. Heagy. 2000. *Ont. Bird Banding* 31:33-34. R.R. 1, Walsingham, Ont. N0E 1X0 (During 1998, 3,185 birds of 84 species were banded at a site on the Bruce Peninsula, between Georgian Bay and the rest of Lake Huron. Highlights are discussed and the top ten-banded species of spring and fall listed. A Red-eyed Vireo and American Redstart banded in 1996 were recaptured, as were a 1995-banded Sharp-shinned Hawk banded at Hawk Cliff on the north shore of Lake Erie and a Golden-crowned Kinglet banded 30 km away three days earlier. Another Golden-crowned Kinglet banded in October 1998 was recaptured at Deering, North Dakota [1400 km away] in November 1998.) MKM

Raptor banding at Holiday Beach Conservation Area, 1997. T. W. Carpenter, A. L. Carpenter and P. Roberts. 2000. *Ont. Bird Banding* 31:35-37. 3646 S. John Hix, Wayne, MI 48184-1047 (Highlights of the ninth banding season along the north shore of Lake Erie included a record high of 1712 diurnal raptors banded, record high totals of Northern Harrier, Northern Goshawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk, and the station's second Swainson's Hawk. Eleven owls were also banded. A table lists 1989-1997 year and cumulative totals for each species banded to date.) MKM

Roost-site characteristics of Common Poorwills, *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*, in Saskatchewan. K. Wang and R. M. Brigham. 1997. *Can. Field-Nat.* 111:543-547. Dept. Biol., Univ. Regina, Regina, Sask. S4S 0A2 (May-August daytime roost-site characteristics were determined by comparing vegetation and other characteristics of sites used by six radio-tagged birds with nearby randomly selected sites. Males were captured by using tapes of territorial calls to lure them into mist nets, while females were caught in mist nets near the nest or near roosts used by them jointly with their previously radio-tagged mates.) MKM

A probable case of polyterritorial polygyny in the Red-eyed Vireo, *Vireo olivaceus*. D. J. Mountjoy. 1997. *Can. Field-Nat.* 111:628-630. Nebraska Behav. Biol. Group, Dept. Psychol., Burnett Hall, Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0308 (Song play-backs lured a pair of

vireos into a mist-net in Nebraska. After being banded and released, both birds were found feeding cowbirds in a nest 310 m from the territory in which they were banded, and with another vireo territory between. An unbanded female was subsequently seen with the banded male on the original territory. Both banded birds were in the same general area the following year, but not mated to each other.) MKM

NON-NORTH AMERICAN BANDING RESULTS

Bird ringing in Zambia, 1995. P. Leonard. 1996. *Safring News* 25:72-73. Kafue Fisheries, Box 31522, Lusaka, Zambia (After an active period in the 1970s, most banders left Zambia, and few birds were banded until 1995, when four banders banded 2,576 birds of 133 species. A Martial Eagle banded as a chick in 1973 was found dead about 80 km from the banding site when nearly 22 years old. Three migrant species banded during the 1994-1995 rainy season were retrapped in the same area during the 1995-1996 season.) MKM

Letter to the editor: Ringing in Botswana. A. J. Tree. 1996. *Safring News* 25:74. Box 211, Bathurst, Eastern Cape 6166, South Africa (During 1969, 1970-1971 and 1974, the author banded 1,726 birds in Botswana, primarily in Ngamiland. Recoveries in South Africa and Zimbabwe are mentioned, as well as a recovery in Botswana of a South African-banded Black-winged Pratincole.) MKM

Co-operative care in the Singing Honeyeater *Lichenostomus virescens*. M. T. Christy. 1995. *Corella* 19:115-117. Div. Earth & Environ. Sci., Australian Mus., 6 College St., Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia (After a nestling was rejected at five days of age from its nest, and repeatedly rejected when the author attempted to return it, it was color-banded and moved in a cage to another area. Adults in the new area brought food to the young bird and performed distraction displays when the cage was approached by a domestic cat. After the nestling was released from the cage, local adults continued to visit and feed it.) MKM

Survival of Brown and Striated thornbills in the Brindabella Range, Australian Capital Territory. S. J. Wilson. 1995. *Corella* 19:138-146. 56 Harrington Circuit, Kambah, ACT 2902, Australia

(Banding of 295 birds at one site over 21 years and supplemental banding at three other sites showed both species to be essentially sedentary, with some evidence that Striated Thornbill territories were held by small groups. Banding helped determine mean annual survival rates of adults as 59% in Brown Thornbills and 68% in Striated. Oldest Brown Thornbill to date was 13 years 7 months when recaptured; Striated Thornbill, 15 years 7 months.) MKM

Opportunistic behaviour as key-determinant in winter strategy of the Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* in southern Scandinavia. M. B. Pedersen. 1995. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 78:23-26. Bygager 24, DK-7190 Billund, Denmark (Observations on one radio-tagged snipe for 52 consecutive days indicated that this species feeds primarily at night during winter and determined habitat use patterns, degree of site tenacity, home range, flight distances, and effects of temperature and disturbance on activity.) MKM

Notes on a short-term recovery of a juvenile Sanderling *Calidris alba*. V. Dierschke. 1995. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 78:39. Institut für Vogelforschung "Vogelwate Helgoland," Postfach 1220, D-27494 Helgoland, Germany (Sanderling banded at Gdansk, Poland, was recovered 715 km away on the island of Helgoland in the North Sea 17 years later, when it was 5 g lighter.) MKM

Second report on research on the Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* on the breeding grounds. P. Tomkovich. 1995. *Stilt* 26:58-60; reprinted in *Wader Study Group Bull.* 78:50-52, 1995. Dept. of Ornithol., Zool. Mus. of Moscow State Univ., Moscow, Russia. (Of 12 adults color-banded on a northeastern Siberian study site in 1993, nine [75%] returned in 1994, including both adults of a banded pair. No 1993-banded chicks returned to the same site in 1994, but one was recovered in Sakhalin. Repeated measurements of chicks showed slower development and later fledging of chicks in 1994 than in 1993. In 1994, 82 Great Knots were banded, as well as several birds of two plover, six scolopacid and a few passerine species.) MKM

Note: We welcome Doug Powless to our abstracting team. He will be covering *Michigan Birds and Natural History*.

MKM = Martin K. McNicholl

RCT = Robert C. Tweit