

This is an exciting time for WBBA. We have taken the lead in holding NABC evaluation sessions and plan to continue making these a feature of our annual meetings. We are increasing the quantity and quality of *NABB* articles. We are starting to put technology to use in enhancing communication both within the organization and between members and prospective banders. With your help, I believe we can turn our membership decline around and be a community that truly represents the majority of banders in the West. I look forward to serving as your President, and I hope to see you at this year's meeting in Arizona!

Wishing you full nets and filled band orders,

**Ken Burton**  
29 Mar 2002

## With Regret

With regret we report the recent passing of two longtime WBBA members, **Steven M. Speich** and **Kay Burk**, both of Tucson, AZ. We extend our deepest condolences to Steven's and Kay's families and friends.

## Western Station Reports

### Alaska Bird Observatory - 2001 Summary

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The Alaska Bird Observatory (ABO) was established in 1991 and is dedicated to advancing the appreciation, understanding, and conservation of birds through research and education. The year 2001 kept us busy with a number of long-term monitoring projects across Alaska. ABO continued multi-year studies of landbird habitat use, owl surveys, Breeding Bird Survey routes, research on the effects of military overflights on nesting passerines, and population monitoring in Denali National Park and Preserve. New contracts for last year included point-count censuses in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and MAPS work at Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge.

We completed our tenth year of migration monitoring at our flagship mist-netting station at Creamer's Field Waterfowl Refuge, Fairbanks. Our staff banded 2,990 birds of 40 species from April through September (17,811 net-hr), with the help of four interns and over 50 community volunteers. The number of birds caught was lower than in previous years, although we tried to make up for it by netting larger game. The result was

seven nets destroyed, no moose banded. One highlight of 2001 was the publication of some research by Senior Biologist Anna-Marie Benson, based on data from Creamer's Field Migration Station:

Benson, A. M. and K. Winker. 2001. Timing of breeding range occupancy among high-latitude passerine migrants. *Auk* 118: 513-519.

Education remains an integral part of our mission. In 2001, we offered census and banding classes to wildlife professionals, mentored a young scientist in a nesting ecology study of Tree Swallows, and gave countless bird-banding demonstrations to school children and adults. In addition, we trained 13 interns in the skills of banding, nest-searching, censusing, and bird conservation.

Perhaps our most exciting news is that we have built a new nest for 2002! The growth of the observatory over the last ten years has spurred the construction of a new 2300 square-foot facility, located on the edge of Creamer's Field Waterfowl Refuge. Designed to be environmentally friendly and energy efficient, the building has much-needed office space, a classroom, storage space, and room for interpretive displays and a gift shop. For pictures of the new building or more information about our research and training programs, please see the ABO website.