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# Western Regional News

## WBBA'S 2007 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2007 Annual Meeting was hosted by the **Point Reyes Bird Observatory's (PRBO)** Diana Humple and Geoff Geupel, with events occurring at the new PRBO headquarters in Petaluma, California, as well as at their Palomarin Field Station.

Geoff opened the meeting by reading a request for WBBA support written by L. Richard Mewaldt and C. J. Ralph in 1965 that resulted in the first seed money received by PRBO to support their long-term banding efforts. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting. In addition to our board and membership meetings, the event featured plenary and keynote presentations, a scientific paper and poster session, world class field trips, an update from the Bird Banding Laboratory, and opportunities to advance banding as a tool for bird conservation through collaborative interactions.

This year's scientific session (abstracts included below) was chaired by Geoff Geupel and Roy Churchwell (San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory). It started with a thought-provoking presentation by UC Santa Barbara's Steve Rothstein. Dr. Rothstein cautioned that, despite the effectiveness of Brown-headed Cowbird control as an emergency stop-gap for the conservation of cowbird host species that are critically threatened, it must be combined with the protection and restoration of habitat throughout the range of these endangered songbirds. He suggested that recovery plans which employ control should consider it as a temporary approach.

A recurring theme in many of the presentations was cooperative monitoring and data exchange, with examples from the Hummingbird Monitoring Network (HMN), the Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas (LaMNA), the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN), Monitoring Avian Productivity Survivorship (MAPS), Monitoring Overwintering Survival (MoSI), and the newly unveiled Molt Migration Stopover program (MoMS). Other topics included climate, life history studies, banding methodology, modeling approaches, and the conservation of tropical rain forest birds and habitats in Peru. During the evening banquet, we heard an inspirational keynote presentation by PRBO's Nils Warnock about tracking shorebird migration through radio telemetry and, more recently, satellite technology. Dr. Warnock's research collaborations have documented the longest non-stop migratory flight on record, the passage of a Bar-tailed Godwit of more than 11,000 km from Alaska to New Zealand in less than nine days!

On Friday afternoon, Karen Jones from the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) led a workshop to introduce and demonstrate the functionalities of "Bandit." The new application, an alternative to using Band Manager for submitting banding data to the BBL, is PC and MAC compatible, user friendly, and allows banders to submit their data in an electronic format—no paper required. Support for the program is available at [bandihelp@usgs.gov](mailto:bandihelp@usgs.gov) and 301-497-5566.

Ms. Jones also provided an update of BBL activities. BBL has been diligently promoting the improved web-based band reporting page [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov). BBL is supporting efforts to establish a Western Hemisphere Bird Banding Network (WHBBN). The Federal Advisory Committee's Final Draft Recommendation will be published shortly and will direct the 10-15 year vision for the BBL.

The Board of Directors presented a brief report to WBBA membership about the current state of our association, which is strong. Membership trends have reversed and are on the rise. The organization is operating in the black with an endowment of over \$15,000, revenues from which support WBBA's research and monitoring grants program. This year's three \$500 grant recipients were announced. Funds were awarded for the following graduate student projects: **Kristy Dybala** (University of California at Davis) is using radio telemetry for her PhD research on juvenile Song Sparrow dispersal; **Jackie Gaudioso** (University of Hawaii at Hilo) is studying plumage coloration of a Hawaiian honeycreeper for her Masters research; and **Diana Humple** (Sonoma State University) is banding Western Grebes as part of her Masters' work to connect wintering and breeding grebe populations. The WBBA grants program is one of our most important contributions to the science of bird banding, and in 2008 the committee, chaired by Geoff Geupel, will be offering two to three \$1,000 grants.

Along with Jim Tietz, I continue to represent WBBA on the North American Banding Council (NABC); WBBA board members C.J. Ralph and Ken Burton also serve on the Council. This year NABC certification opportunities were offered in the West by Big Sur Ornithology Lab, and Klamath, Humboldt Bay, San Francisco Bay, and Point Reyes Bird Observatories. NABC now offers certification for assistants, in addition to certification at the bander and trainer levels. The NABC International Committee, with active participation from the Canadian and United States banding labs, is taking the charge on developing a Western Hemisphere Banding Exchange. NABC's latest manual by Melissa Pitkin (PRBO), *Mist Netting with the Public: A Guide for Communicating Science Through Bird Banding Demonstrations*, is now available through the International Migratory Bird

Day Catalog; Ms. Pitkin presented related information during this meeting's paper session.

WBBA continues to support making the *North American Bird Bander (NABB)* available in paper copy, and through SORA, the online ornithological archive. The Board encourages all western banders to submit papers to *NABB* and contribute to our Annual Banding Report which, for over 50 years, has been summarizing bird banding efforts throughout the West.

Our membership elected 2007-08 Board of Directors. I will continue to serve as the President and will have the privilege to work with Past President **Gary Blevins** (Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane, WA); 1st Vice President **Michael Boyles** (US National Park Service, Boulder City, Nevada); 2nd Vice President **C. John Ralph** (USFS Redwood Sciences Laboratory and Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory, Arcata, CA); Secretary **Tina Fabula** (Calif. Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection, Fort Bragg, CA); Treasurer **Gina Barton** (San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, Milpitas, CA); *NABB* Editor **Walter Sakai** (Santa Monica College, Santa Monica, CA); Membership Chair **Ken Burton** (Arcata, CA); and at-large members **Kay Loughman** (Berkeley, CA), **Howard Browers** (US Fish and Wildlife Service, Pullman, WA), and **Renée Cormier** (Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Bolinas, CA). We welcome incoming directors Howard, Gina and Renée, and thank our outgoing directors Tricia Campbell, Roy Churchwell and Diana Humple for their contributions to WBBA.

Upholding the San Francisco Bay Area's reputation for tasty, healthy food, PRBO staffers prepared barbecued oysters, organic vegetables, and honey vanilla ice cream flavored with lavender for Friday's dinner, wonderful baked goodies for our Saturday breaks, Saturday lunch sandwiches filled with a variety of northern California specialties, and scrumptious lasagnas, salads and desserts were served at our banquet. Due to rain, Friday field trips had to be cancelled; but Sunday offered several opportunities to take advantage of the birding opportunities around the San Francisco Bay. At the Point Reyes National Seashore field trip, participants were treated to vagrant migrants that included Blackpoll Warbler, Palm Warbler, and American Redstart. Legendary birder and field tripper Rich Stallcup led a pelagic trip to Cordell

Bank. Highlights included two Laysan Albatrosses, followed very closely by sightings of a few Blue Whales. The boat picked up a Yellow-rumped Warbler who hitched a ride back to the mainland at the end of the trip. Other field trips included one to Hawk Hill (Golden Gate Raptor Observatory) and North Bay wetland sites, and a banding demonstration at Muddy Hollow, one of PRBO's long-term monitoring sites in Point Reyes National Seashore.

The 2007 Annual Meeting of the Western Bird Banding Association was a success thanks to meeting chairs Diana Humple and Geoff Guepel and our host organization, the PRBO Conservation Science. Many thanks to Ms. Humple and to PRBO's staff and interns, who put on a great event.

**John D. Alexander**, WBBA President and Klamath Bird Observatory Executive Director

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### ABSTRACTS FROM WBBA'S 2007 ANNUAL MEETING PAPERS

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A SALT-MARSH SONG SPARROW: TRACKING INDIVIDUALLY MARKED BIRDS THROUGH THE YEARS.** Parvaneh Abbaspour (pabbaspour@prbo.org) – PRBO Conservation Science, Mark P. Herzog, Nadav Nur, Christine A. Howell

Since 1996 PRBO has monitored, and individually color-marked, Salt-marsh Song Sparrows in the tidal marshes of the San Francisco Bay. Study plots were established at two remnant marshes: China Camp State Park in San Pablo Bay, home to the endemic sub-species *Melospiza melodia samuelis*, and Benicia State Recreation Area, in Suisun Bay, home to the endemic sub-species *M. m. maxillaris*. Plots were surveyed intensively during the breeding season, (Mar-Jul). Song Sparrows encountered on the plots were spot-mapped to determine territory boundaries and efforts were made to locate nests. Nestlings in monitored nests were color banded. We recorded the identity and location of marked birds subsequently encountered in the field. Twice a season we made efforts to locate color-marked birds that dispersed beyond the boundaries of our study plots. Based on 12 years of data, we explore some of the demographic patterns that have occurred within and among individuals.

**APPLICATIONS FOR BIRD BANDING STATION NETWORKS.** John Alexander (jda@klamathbird.org)– Klamath Bird Observatory / Prescott College, Keith W. Larson, Robert I Frey, C. John Ralph.

As we continue to build the Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas (LaMNA), we are developing visualization applications for the analysis of banding data collected at constant-effort banding stations. Using data from a network of banding stations in the Upper Klamath Basin of southern Oregon, we will demonstrate various examples. We will demonstrate how visualization applications can be used for understanding life history patterns and estimating population trends. By comparing visualizations of data from groups of stations, we will explore emergent patterns that provide landscape-level insights during the breeding, dispersal and migration seasons. The analysis applications presented are proto-types of products that will be made available to LaMNA cooperators through the Avian Knowledge Network.

**HUMMINGBIRD MONITORING IN THE SIERRA FOOTHILLS.** Rita R. Colwell (rcolwell@sbcglobal.net)

Results from three seasons of hummingbird banding (2004-2006) for the Hummingbird Monitoring Network (HMN) at a site in the Sierra foothills. HMN is a network of banding stations which monitor hummingbirds at various elevations and habitat types to evaluate breeding, migration, movement patterns, diversity and abundance patterns. Banding at the Sierra site took place one day every two weeks using HMN standardized protocol. Comparisons of data for the three years is presented, including species diversity, timing of molt for hatching-year birds versus after-hatching-year birds, and fat deposition, particularly in Anna's Hummingbirds.

**THE EFFECT OF CONSTANT-EFFORT MIST-NETTING ON SONG SPARROW AND WRENTIT BREEDING SUCCESS.** Scott Jennings (sjennings@prbo.org) – PRBO Conservation Science, Tom Gardali, Nat Seavy

Constant-effort mist netting is used widely to survey bird populations during the breeding season; however, little is known about what effect such efforts have on breeding success. As part of a long-term monitoring project at the Palomarin