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# Western Regional News

## Report of the Western Bird Banding Association's 2013 Annual Meeting University of Arizona Folklore Preserve Sierra Vista, Arizona

The annual meeting of the Western Bird Banding Association was held 11 - 14 Sep 2013, hosted by Sky Islands Bird Observatory (SIBO) in scenic Ramsey Canyon, at the University of Arizona's Folklore Preserve. We had 40 people attend from Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, New Mexico, Utah and Washington, including attendees from British Columbia and Costa Rica. Festivities began with registration Wednesday afternoon, followed by an informal gathering at a local restaurant. Thursday began with banding at SIBO's field station, followed by afternoon, workshops on hummingbird banding and mite collection and a Board of Directors meeting. SIBO has installed in the creek bed towering nets up to 35 feet amongst the oak woodland. Among the birds captured were Blue-throated Hummingbird, Acorn Woodpecker and Western Tanager. Especially notable were the close examination of Painted Redstart, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, and Hepatic Tanager, which were new birds for many of the participants.

The Thursday evening reception featured a talk by Dr. Stephen M. Russell recounting his fifty plus years of bird research involving banding and censusing in Belize, Australia, Sonora, and Arizona. Friday morning began with a North American Banding Council (NABC) trainer evaluation at the SIBO site and a short bird walk in Ramsey Canyon. Among the species found were Black-throated Gray Warbler, Arizona Woodpecker, and Montezuma Quail.

Friday's paper sessions included 13 talks by a variety of presenters and three talks by NABC trainer candidates. In the evening, we held a poster session and a silent auction. The auction featured a wide variety of some 50 items, including many mist nets, various traps, original art, and great books, including a copy of the exceedingly rare *Moult and Ageing of European Passerines* by Jenni and Winkler. The Friday evening banquet featured a delicious variety of Mexican-style foods. The evening culminated with the riveting keynote address by Dr. Charles Van Riper titled "The Influence of Tree Phenology on Neotropical Migrant Birds in Southwestern North America," where he emphasized the vital role that banding plays in his research and understanding of the special molt migration and stopovers that occur in the Colorado and Arizona deserts.

Saturday featured two field trips, one covering the local rarities in the Huachuca Mountains including Sinaloa Wren (*Thryophilus sinaloa*) and Rufous-capped Warbler (*Basileuterus rufifrons*), the other, a walk up Ramsey Canyon where some 42 species were observed, including Olive-sided Flycatcher and Hepatic Tanager. A few hardy folks stayed on to finish the NABC bander and trainer evaluations and specimen exams on Saturday afternoon into Sunday morning with field evaluations at the SIBO banding station.

## Summary of Board of Directors Meeting 12-13 Sep 2013

In attendance were board members Howard Browers, Danielle Kaschube (by phone), Patricia Leitner, Wade Leitner, Kay Loughman (by phone), C.J. Ralph, and Josée Rousseau. Pablo (Chespi) Elizondo and Chrissy Kondrat-Smith attended as guests.

### Treasurer's Report: Annual meeting

Revenue: \$5106.50 (1374.00 auction and 3732.50 registration fees).

Expenses: \$2550.32 including \$600 for NABC.

Resulting in a net profit of \$2556.18

### Membership Report

97 Active Members, 9 Student, 51 Life, 12 Non-subscribing, 11 Sustaining, 18 Institutional, 198 Total.

### Grants Program Report

Five applicants submitted proposals for one \$1000 award. The committee, composed of Stephen Russell, Geoff Geupel and Wade Leitner, selected Allison Nelson as 2013 recipient for her proposal "Mapping the spread of infectious disease in a migratory songbird, *Catharus guttatus*."

### Webmaster Report

Our website is receiving an average of 224 hits per month. Getting back volumes of NABB into SORA continues to be a challenge. SORA 2.0, launched in January 2013, includes NABB v. 26-30; but as with v. 1-25, access to content is inadequate. SORA staff has promised to work on it - as time permits. Meanwhile, reluctance or disinterest on the part of contributing groups in putting more volumes of NABB into SORA means there are now eight years of the journal for which there is no knowledge or access except by a dwindling list of subscribers to the printed journal.

### Nominating Committee

Candidates for the vacancies for secretary and first vice president positions were discussed. All other members agreed to remain in current positions and were unanimously endorsed for election at the Membership Meeting. Chrissy Kondrat-Smith was nominated for Secretary.

Oct - Dec 2013

### Old Business

Future meeting sites: Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory (HBBO) in Arcata, California extended an invitation for October 2014 to coincide with HBBO end-of-season activities.

### General Business Meeting

President Howard Browers called the general business meeting to order on 13 Sep at 4:00 PM. The 2014 meeting site at HBBO in Arcata, CA, and the grant recipient was announced. Nominees were presented for the slate of officers with the First Vice President position open. All board members were re-elected with Chrissy Kondrat-Smith elected as Secretary.

*By Wade and Pat Leitner*

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## ABSTRACTS

(listed alphabetically by last name of lead author)

### **Hidden in the plumage: feather mite assemblages among passerines and near-passerines from Georgia – Carleton, Renee, Berry College, Mount Berry, Georgia**

Feather mites are common inhabitants of birds but are frequently overlooked because of their small size and preferred locations on their hosts. Although relatively little is known of their life cycles and ecology, they are thought to be non-parasitic and may in fact be beneficial by feeding on feather bacteria and other feather-degrading materials. In order to document feather mite assemblages among passerine and near-passerine birds in northwest Georgia, birds were captured during banding operations at four sites or by salvage and examined for the presence of mites and the locations of mites on rectrices and remiges. Mites were collected for identification using a clear, sticky mailing label to lift them from the feathers. Four hundred and sixteen passerine and near-passerine birds encompassing 20 families and 54 species were examined over a three year period. Distribution of mites among the families and species of birds examined, as well as by season, study site, habitat, nesting ecology, age, and sex of birds will be discussed. Future directions for this study include inclusion of additional species and expansion of collections to other states or regions in