



Newsletter of the

LANDBIRD MONITORING NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS

<http://www.klamathbird.org/lamna/>

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Banding Data Accumulates

The LaMNA data node has been accepting data since 2005 and organizations continue to contact us about sharing their data. By now, almost 50 organizations have chosen to archive, format, and share their data. Most of these are banding data, with a total of 400 source banding datasets, consisting of over 850,000 banding and effort records archived and about half of those datasets now formatted and added to the Bird Monitoring Data Exchange (BMDE) table. Depending upon a data owners' sharing level, datasets in the BMDE can be made accessible through the Avian Knowledge Network and soon through CADC (California Avian Data Center) (see CADC article in the July 2010 issue).

We are pleased to announce that the RSL-KBO Avian Data Center of LaMNA has received funding to expedite the process of formatting databases. Do not hesitate to contact us if you want to have access to the many benefits offered by LaMNA (<http://www.klamathbird.org/lamna/>).

We would also like to remind folks that although some bird banding fields may be more valuable than others (such as species, band number, age, sex, location and date), all data are important. So we encourage you to electronically enter all the fields you have recorded on the field form. After all, if you have made the choice to look and record on paper those extra fields (such as brood patch, cloacal protuberance, fat, wing, and others); it will take minimal extra

effort to enter those fields in the electronic database. Many studies have used and continue to use those fields. One never knows how important these data will become when considering the impacts of climate change or for other future research. LaMNA is committed to archiving all data for just such purposes.

Happy Banding!

- Josée Rousseau, HBBO Program Director
Klamath and Humboldt Bay Bird Observatories



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Meet the Data Processing Crew at LaMNA

LaMNA has been working to archive and make data accessible for many years. We would like to introduce our staff to you over the next few newsletters, beginning with some of our data processing crew.

We have been accepting banding data from our members for the past several years. We also have numerous census datasets. Datasets have come in

many different formats with differing protocols, all of which need to be documented and processed to match the standardized format of the Bird Monitoring Data Exchange (BMDE). Formatting takes a great deal of skill, attention to detail, and knowledge of both data and electronic databases and we are fortunate that we have several highly skilled workers on our data processing crew.

areas where human activity has altered the environment. We have selected 10 target species for the WNV study: American Robin, House Finch, Gray Catbird, Brownheaded Cowbird, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Yellowthroat and Yellow Warbler. The American Robin is currently thought to be particularly susceptible to mosquito bites and virus infection, and as a migrant or partial migrant across most of North America, represents a potential long-distance spreader of West Nile virus.

Recent studies have indicated that vascular pulp of feathers (the small amount of tissue material left in the quill of the feather when it is pulled from a bird) can contain remnants of the WNV virus that are detectable by genetic testing methods.

UCLA is investigating whether feathers can be a useful sample for testing WNV and is asking the

banding community and banders in the LaMNA network to consider participating in our ongoing neotropical migrant feather sampling collection efforts (described in more detail above). The list of target species in our call for feather sampling includes the 10 target species for our WNV study.

No host-to-host WNV transmission (e.g. birds-to-humans) has been reported, but banders should again follow USGS/USDA recommended procedures and precautions in handling wild birds. Note that WNV is transmitted by a vector (mosquitoes), so banders should take precautions against mosquito bites, especially in localities where WNV cases have been reported in birds and/or humans.

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Recent Publications

Betts, M. G., J. C. Hagar, J. W. Rivers, J. D. Alexander, K. Mcgarigal, and B. C. Mccomb. 2010. Thresholds in forest bird occurrence as a function of the amount of early-seral broadleaf forest at landscape scales. *Ecological Applications* 20(8): 2116-2130.

Stephens, Jaime L., Kimberly Kreitinger, C. John Ralph, Michael T. Green, editors. 2010. Informing ecosystem management: Science and process for landbird conservation in the western United States. U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Biological Technical Publication, FWS/ BTP-R1014-2010, Washington, D.C. 65 pages.

Wolfe, J. D., Ryder, T. B. and P. Pyle. 2010. Using molt cycles to categorize the age of tropical birds: an integrative new system. *Journal of Field Ornithology* 81:186-194.

Accurately differentiating age classes is essential for the long-term monitoring of resident New World tropical bird species. Molt and plumage criteria have long been used to accurately age temperate birds, but application of temperate age-classification models to the Neotropics has been hindered because annual life-cycle events of tropical birds do not always correspond with temperate age-classification nomenclature. However, recent studies have shown that similar molt and plumage criteria can be used to categorize tropical birds into age classes. We propose a categorical age-classification system for tropical birds based on identification of molt cycles and their inserted plumages. This approach allows determination of the age ranges (in months) of birds throughout plumage succession. Although our proposed cycle-based system is an improvement over temperate calendar-based models, we believe that combining both systems provides the most accurate means of categorizing age and preserving age-related data. Our proposed cycle-based age-classification system can be used for all birds, including temperate species, and provides a framework for investigating molt and population dynamics that could ultimately influence management decisions.



Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila americana*), Tortuguero, Costa Rica. © Christine Steele.

Meetings

Costa Rica Network Celebration

At the end of March, we will hold a celebratory meeting of LaMNA's integration with the Costa Rica Bird Banding Network and the founding of two stations: Madre Selva at the Costa Rica Bird Observatory, and INBioparque at Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad de Costa Rica (INBio). We will be meeting with cooperators and discussing the progress of banding programs. The meeting will take place at INBio in Santo Domingo, Costa Rica.

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Red-capped Manakin (*Pipra mentalis*), Tortuguero, Costa Rica. © Suzie Bulger



Interested in membership or learning more about LaMNA? See our web page at <http://www.klamathbird.org/lamna/> for details and a membership application form.