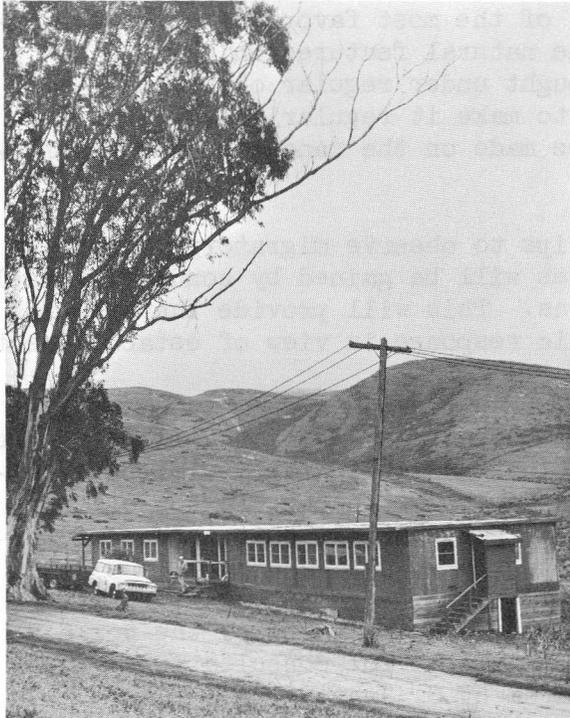


## THE POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY



There is now operating on the Point Reyes National Seashore, north of San Francisco, California, what is perhaps the first bird observatory of its kind on the North American continent.

As recently as last September this observatory was just an idea. The idea was presented to the Northern Chapter of the WBBA by Dr. L. Richard Mewaldt and C. John Ralph. An ad hoc committee was appointed to investigate the possibilities.

After some preliminary correspondence, and with the approval of the Executive Committee of the WBBA, a proposal was made by Dr. Mewaldt to the Supt. of the Point Reyes National Seashore. This proposal said in part:

"The Point Reyes Peninsula, extending from Tomales Bay and Bolinas Lagoon to Point Reyes, has long been known as an area rich in numbers and varieties of birds.

Most of the species and by far the greatest numbers of individuals, certainly numbering in the millions each year, are migratory. Surprisingly little is known, however, about the times of arrival and departure, the origin of, and the destination of these millions of birds. Contrary to common understanding, migratory birds are an important component of the avifauna of Point Reyes every month of the year.

The establishment of Point Reyes National Seashore provides an exceptional opportunity to observe, to protect and to study these most traveled of all vertebrates. The unusual combination of position (projection into the Pacific Ocean) and natural features (open grasslands, forests, lagoons, lakes, mountains, and benches) precipitates these migrants in untold numbers.

The interpretative program of the National Park Service will, in our opinion, find birds their most important animal group. We suggest that stressing the dynamic nature of the avifauna can be most rewarding. We propose to assist the Park Service in the assessment of this avifauna. With the assistance of volunteer bird-banding cooperators of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we propose to initiate programs of regular observations and of bird-banding (of especially non-game birds--but also to include waterfowl).

We propose that a regular program of observations of population levels, arrival and departure dates and local distribution of birds of Point Reyes National Seashore be initiated no later than March 1, 1965. These observations are to be made in part by a salaries resident biologist provided by the Western Bird Banding Association. The biologist and the principal investigator will also coordinate the observations of volunteer members of the WBBA. One of the important observational tools will be

the systematic banding of birds with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bands issued specifically to the Point Reyes bird observatory. We have been assured full cooperation of the U.S. Banding Laboratory.

Of initial importance will be an assessment of the most favorable areas for observations of the several types anticipated. The natural features which tend to precipitate and concentrate migrants will be brought under regular observation. These data will be accumulated in such a way as to make it regularly available for study and interpretation. Recommendations will be made on the management of waterfowl resources.

Experience in public reaction to planned trips to observe migratory, wintering and summering birds and of bird-banding activities will be gained by conducting field trips for various Central California organizations. This will provide the National Park Service with an opportunity to observe public response in view of establishment of its interpretive program.

Available literature on the avifauna of Point Reyes and vicinity will be accumulated and brought to a single place for consultation. A bibliography will be established for use of interested cooperators and personnel. Dr. Robert Paxton of the WBBA ad hoc committee has already undertaken preliminary work in this aspect of the project.

A file on the operation of bird "observatories" in other parts of the world (especially Europe) will be established and made available for consultation. Substantial progress has already been made in this area by C. John Ralph."

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The Point Reyes National Seashore administration warmly embraced the proposal, and has been most cooperative. On a Special Use Permit from the National Park Service we now occupy a barracks-type building which provides, (1) living quarters for the resident biologist; (2) dormitory, kitchen and lounge facilities, provided at cost, for volunteers and investigators; (3) office, library and work space; (4) storage space for traps, nets, etc. Minimum furnishings and building repairs were donated by Northern Division WBBA members. More extensive facilities and quarters are planned.

Operations began on March 1, 1965, when Paul DeBenedictis assumed the duties of Resident Biologist. Mr. DeBenedictis is a February graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, and was a Junior Scientist on the Galapagos International Scientific Expedition of 1964. Dr. Mewaldt, Professor of Zoology at San Jose State College is the Director.

Point Reyes Bird Observatory has been incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt scientific research facility. It is dependent upon memberships and contributions for its operation. You are invited to become a member and support its program.

Member . . . . .	\$ 5.00 annually
Sustaining member . . . . .	\$ 10.00 annually
Contributing member . . . . .	\$ 25.00 and up annually
Patron . . . . .	\$1000.00 (includes Life Membership)

Make membership dues and contributions payable to Point Reyes Bird Observatory, and mail them to Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Star Route-Lighthouse Road, Inverness, California, or care of Dr. Mewaldt, Biological Sciences, San Jose State College, San Jose, California.

Benefits of membership include receipt of the Newsletter and the annual report of activities. As the Observatory program and facilities can accommodate them, qualified members will be encouraged to participate in the program of banding and observations. All banding on Point Reyes National Seashore will be done under the Observatory Master Bird-banding permit.

The records system is being designed to yield a maximum of useful information for investigators and for the interpretive Program of the National Park Service. Independent investigators of appropriate ornithological problems will be encouraged to use the facilities of the Observatory as they can be made available.

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#### HUMMINGBIRD RETURNS

Since hummingbird returns are somewhat unusual the following are reported even though only one year had elapsed from date of banding. An adult male Rivoli's Hummingbird, No. X2444, banded May 4, 1963, in the Chiricahua Mountains of Arizona was retaken on April 27, 1964, in the same locality. An adult male Blue-throated Hummingbird, No. X2450, banded at the same place May 5, 1963, was netted again, also on April 27, 1964.

In Colorado the Broad-tail is the most common Hummingbird. Although 76 of this species were banded in 1963 only two were recaptured the following year. The feeding station where most of the banding was done was not maintained during the past year. An adult male, No. X6902, banded near Allenspark, Colorado, on July 29, 1963, was netted on August 10, 1964, at the same location.

A Broad-tailed Hummingbird, No. X6908, banded in the Allenspark area on July 29, 1963, was recorded as "immature male." Its general appearance was that of the female, except for a few flecks of metallic red on the throat. This bird was retaken on August 11, 1964, and was still in the same plumage, that of the female except for a central patch of red spots on the throat. Since it was now unquestionably an adult bird I must conclude that female Broad-tails do occasionally possess this feature though I find no confirmation in literature at my disposal.

Roger Tory Peterson advises me that "two or three other Hummingbirds besides the Anna's may show red spots on the throat, and we have always suspected they may be females. However, they just could be young males." Dr. Peterson adds, "Your observation on the Broad-tail is most interesting. I think there is more work to be done here."

Allegra Collister  
Longmont, Colorado

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