



AFO Banding Supplies:

Serving Ornithologists and Funding Research

In the spring of 1803, a teenager named John James Audubon used strands of silver thread to band a brood of Eastern Phoebes near Perkiomen Creek, Pennsylvania. Over two hundred years later, even field-hardened ornithologists can imagine Audubon's excitement when he located two of the marked birds occupying nearby territories the following spring. His simple investigation provided definitive evidence of philopatry in North American migratory songbirds. Since then, banding studies have illuminated many other aspects of avian behavior, ecology, and population dynamics.

Fortunately, tools for capturing and banding birds have come a long way over the last two centuries. What's more, the Association of Field Ornithologists makes it easy and affordable to gear up for your own pioneering study. **Did you know that the AFO sells high-quality Japanese-made mist nets, banding pliers, and other ornithological equipment as a service to members and the scientific community? And did you know that AFO members receive a 10% discount off already low prices on purchases made from our AFO Banding Supplies catalog?**

<http://catalog.manomet.org/catalog/category.cgi>

E. Alexander Bergstrom launched this valuable service almost 60 years ago and ran the business for nearly two decades. Bergstrom's goal was to make sure that ornithologists always had access to high quality, reasonably priced mist nets and other ornithological equipment. AFO Banding Supplies is a non-profit business run by ornithologists, for ornithologists. Any profits from the business have been put toward supporting ornithological research. Just this year, sales of banding supplies contributed to nearly \$10,000 in Bergstrom Research Awards made to ten students and non-professionals in Latin America, the US, and Canada.

Since 1973, AFO Assistant Treasurer Brian Harrington has overseen the enterprise under an agreement between AFO and the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. He is ably assisted at Manomet by Jennifer Robbins, who takes the orders and handles the shipping. They continue to work with the AFO's original mist net supplier because the net material is of the highest quality available. Cheaper nets can be found, but they are of lower quality, and/or are manufactured to supply unethical bird traders. Rest assured that AFO sells nets only for scientific purposes and only to individuals and institutions that are licensed to use them.

Given the current economic climate and broad declines in professional society membership, the AFO recognizes the need to improve marketing and sales of mist nets and other banding supplies to ornithologists around the world. Plans are now in place to enhance the operation's website (e.g., by adding a Spanish language version) and to expand the inventory. In addition to mist nets and pliers, AFO Banding Supplies currently offers wing rules, scales, magnifiers, calipers, leg gauges, and bags.

Please consider obtaining your field supplies from the AFO and take advantage of the 10% member discount. We will continue to improve this service as a one-stop shopping site for discriminating ornithologists. To share your input on our inventory and website, please contact Jeff Buler at jbuler@udel.edu.

Photo: Male American Redstart captured and banded with AFO banding supplies, Braddock Bay Bird Observatory. Photo by Charley Eiseman.





Notes from the President

Charley Eisman

Sponsor an AFO membership for a student in Latin America

Of all the North American ornithological societies, the AFO has traditionally had the strongest ties to Latin America. To further support Latin American ornithology, we are starting a new program that enables AFO members to donate a membership to an individual with limited resources who is working on avian biology in the Neotropics. Such memberships will give students and others access to not only the *Journal of Field Ornithology* but also to AFO grants that support research in Latin America. I strongly encourage all AFO members to sponsor at least one membership when completing the annual renewal form. We will report on the progress of this initiative in future editions of *AFO Afield*.

The New Ornithology Exchange website

The Ornithology Exchange (<http://ornithologyexchange.org/>) is a new website that features material on virtually every aspect of ornithology, along with a variety of discussion forums and blogs. The site describes new scientific findings, provides useful information on the nuts-and-bolts of avian research (e.g., permits and animal welfare issues), and has a continuously updated list of jobs available in ornithology. The site also contains a comprehensive set of links to related websites around the world. Because the AFO supported creation of the site, AFO members have complete access to all of its resources; you need only to register as a site user. You are then welcome to create your own articles, discussions, and blogs, or comment on those of others. You can also ask (or answer) questions about field methods, statistical analyses, permits, ethics, grants, awards, jobs, and much more. Registered users who are interested in following certain news stories and discussions can easily arrange to receive notice of updates and new postings by email. As noted below, this includes breaking news about the AFO. Please give the site a look!

New Ways To Keep Up With the AFO

Over the years, members interested in following AFO news and activities have had to wait for *AFO Afield* or monitor the AFO website. But these 20th-century tactics are no longer required! We now offer two ways to receive instant notification of AFO news, events, activities, and opportunities. You can “follow us” on Facebook by visiting the site <http://www.facebook.com/#!/field.ornithology>. You can also “follow” the AFO news forum embedded within the Ornithology Exchange site, <http://ornithologyexchange.org/forums/forum/35-association-of-field-ornithologists/>. Simply click on the “Follow This” button to be alerted by email to new postings whenever they appear. Many thanks to our webmaster, Dylan Maddox, for wrangling the AFO website, our Facebook page and the AFO forum at the Ornithology Exchange.

The “Society for Ornithology” Initiative

By now, many of you are aware that there is interest in exploring the creation of a new, large, integrated scientific organization for ornithologists and ornithology, tentatively called the Society for Ornithology. (You can review and follow the discussion of this on the Ornithology Exchange website.) This single society would potentially subsume most or all existing ornithological societies in the Western hemisphere. This would include not only the American Ornithologists’ Union but also smaller societies like the AFO, should they choose to participate. Such a change would be a seismic shift in the ornithological landscape. For example, journals currently produced by the societies would be replaced by a suite of new journals. AFO officers are participating fully in ongoing discussions of the proposal with an eye to determining what may be best for ornithology in the coming decades. We promise to keep you informed of developments.

Take care,

L. Scott Johnson, President, AFO

Ornithologists Get Funny in Four Letters

In the last issue of *AFO Afield*, Liz Tymkiw took a break from her graduate studies at the University of Delaware to introduce readers to a new brand of ornithological humor. Her comedic specialty, honed over a season of endless point counts, combines the wittiness of puns with the field jargon of Bird Banding Lab alpha codes. Readers were invited to submit their own bird riddles in this style. Here are some of the best that Liz has received. Answers appear on the last page. Read more at her blog, <http://birdblgr.blogspot.com/>.

- A. What do you call a duck that works out at the gym?
- B. What do you say to a merganser standing on your doormat?
- C. How do shorebirds make important decisions?
- D. What did the pacifist yellow warbler chant at the peace rally?
- E. With whom did the turkey want to go to the dance?
- F. What did the southern Red Knot say when asked if horseshoe crab eggs are tasty?
- G. Why did the cardinal hitchhike from Worcester to Boston?
- H. Which bird likes these jokes the most?

Thanks to Mary Wright, Ken “Rook” Duren, Missy Miller, Sadie Ullman, and Liz Timkiw for sharing the laughter.

E. Alexander Bergstrom Memorial Research Awards

The E. Alexander Bergstrom Memorial Research Awards promote field studies of birds, particularly studies that: focus on avian life history, use data collected all or in part by non-professionals, and/or employ banding or other marking techniques.

At its 2011 meeting, the AFO Council voted to require that applicants for Bergstrom and Skutch Awards and/or their primary research supervisor must be members of the Association of Field Ornithologists to be eligible for consideration. Membership should have its privileges!

We have also made a number of changes designed to increase the number and quality of applications for the Latin American category of awards. We have created new Spanish and Portuguese translations of the application guidelines. We have also changed the application deadline for the Latin American awards to 15 July to better accommodate the many researchers in Central and South America whose field seasons begin in the latter half of the calendar year. As in the past, US/Canada applications are due 7 January. Finally, we recruited a number of ornithologists from, or with experience in, Latin America to serve as judges for the Latin American awards. Many thanks to our colleagues who have agreed to participate in the review of the 2012 Bergstrom Award applications.

If you have comments or questions about the awards or the application process, please direct them to Bergstrom Awards chair Andrew Farnsworth (af27@cornell.edu).

2012 Bergstrom Award Reviewers

AFO thanks the reviewers assigned the difficult task of selecting recipients from the many outstanding applications:

English: Dan Ardia, Tom Gardali, Dan Lambert, Eugene Morton, Lee Robinson, Kathryn Purcell, Andrea Townsend

Spanish: Nacho Areta, John Arvin, Dan Brooks, Felipe Chavez, Dan Lebbin, Paulo Llambias, Viviana Massoni

Portuguese: Luiz dos Anjos, Paul Hamel, Jason Mobley, Renata Ribeiro, James J. Roper

Photo: Marcelo de Oliveira Barbosa is pictured surveying the critically endangered Brazilian Merganser with an airboat purchased with support from a 2010 Bergstrom Research Award. Marcelo searched for a study population along stretches of four rivers that spanned three states, locating the subject species only on Novo River upstream of Da Velha waterfall. During thirteen censuses, Marcelo documented four pairs and several other individuals for an index of 0.125 individuals/km. The perilously small range and low density of Brazilian Mergansers underscore the need to address threats such as riparian deforestation, hydropower development, and uncontrolled tourist activities.



Reaching out to Ornithologists in the Neotropics

The Association of Field Ornithologists has always had a strong interest in Neotropical ornithology and continues to enhance connections with Latin American ornithologists. Beginning with the formation of the society from the Northeastern Bird Banding Association in 1987, a primary objective has been to increase access to published research and to provide support and recognition for those working in the Neotropics. In fact, the *Journal of Field Ornithology* was the first major North American ornithological journal to include a Spanish translation of all abstracts beginning with volume 58 in 1987.

AFO offers several awards with a focus on Neotropical ornithology. Bergstrom Research Awards honor the memory and dedication to avian research of E. Alexander Bergstrom. Each year a portion of the Bergstrom funds are granted to individuals based in Latin America. The Skutch Award for Studies in Avian Natural History is offered annually to support the study of life histories, especially social relations and reproduction, of little known birds of the continental Neotropics, including Trinidad and Tobago. In 1998, the AFO introduced the Alexander F. Skutch Medal, which recognizes career accomplishments, particularly in research relating to life history studies of Neotropical birds.

In keeping with this long tradition and commitment, the AFO is initiating a new program to provide memberships to Latin American ornithologists, through a special membership fund. When you renew your AFO membership for 2012, you will have the opportunity to contribute one or more memberships for Latin American ornithologists for only \$15 each. Please consider sponsoring one or more Latin American memberships when you submit your renewal form through the Ornithological Societies of North America. Your sponsorship will provide free membership, including an online subscription to the *Journal of Field Ornithology*.

Why Am I an AFO Member?

By Dr. Leonardo Chapa-Vargas, Institute for Scientific and Technological Research of San Luis Potosí

During my early years as an undergraduate at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, I became very interested in the study of bird ecology and conservation. I first got involved with the Association of Field Ornithologists in 1997, when I was a master's student at the University of Illinois. At this time I attended the AFO meeting in San José, Costa Rica, where I gave my first talk at a scientific conference. This was a challenging experience, especially because I made the presentation in English. Taking this challenge was rewarding, however, because I received a student presentation award. This honor further motivated me, and I came to the conclu-



Dr. Chapa-Vargas with a Golden-fronted Woodpecker

sion that I wanted to dedicate the rest of my professional life to field ornithology. A few years later, I earned my Ph.D.

In 2004, I returned to Mexico to pursue my dream of contributing to the advancement of field ornithology and avian conservation in Mexico. I got a faculty position at the Institute for Scientific and Technological Research of San Luis Potosí, one of the leading Mexican research institutions. I believe that our times call for scientific research to be conducted in an international context. This is true in ornithology and in all areas related to the conservation biology of birds and their natural habitats, because the distributions of many bird species transcend international borders. In addition, many migratory birds require habitat in multiple countries to complete their lifecycles. Moreover, if birds and their habitats are to be conserved, advancements in field research and related data management techniques should be developed through global cooperation.

After my return to Mexico, I quickly became aware that part of my mission consisted of promoting communication among scientists from different countries. My AFO membership has helped me advance toward this goal, allowing me to keep informed about the most important developments in the field, to apply some of this knowledge in the context of my research in Central Mexico, and to communicate this information to other colleagues in Mexico and Latin America. In return, I am committed to share the knowledge that my students and I generate in Central Mexico to other AFO members during conferences and in peer-reviewed publications. In a nutshell, my interaction with the AFO has positively influenced me through all the stages of my professional career.



The AFO is actively participating in planning for the upcoming Fifth North American Ornithological Conference (NAOC-V), being held 14-18 August 2012, in Vancouver, BC. Plan now to take part in this quadrennial meeting of the continent's major ornithological societies. We will gather on the beautiful University of British Columbia campus, where many new and recently updated dorm rooms will be available at affordable rates. Lodging on campus will eliminate the need to shuttle to and from the downtown area. Booking your travel reservations early will avoid the disappointments and stress of trying to secure last-minute seats. We encourage members to pre-register without financial commitment so that organizers can get an idea of potential numbers. Remember that you will need your passport valid through August 2012 to enter Canada (and return to the US if you are a US Resident).

Field trips before and after the conference will highlight the meeting's theme, "From Sea to Sky". Plenary speakers have been selected and important deadlines for abstracts and student travel awards have been posted on the official web site:

www.naoc-v2012.com/

NAOC-V's sponsoring societies will offer current and recently graduated students the opportunity to compete for awards through a cooperatively administered process. However, travel and presentation awards must be applied for separately in accordance with separate due dates. Complete application guidelines are described on the NAOC-V website. Note that due dates have been recently updated, so if you viewed the web page prior to October 2011, you

should revisit the information and download the revised material. For further information on Student Presentation Awards, contact Bob Curry (robert.curry@villanova.edu). For information on the Student Travel Awards, contact Russ Dawson (dawsonr@unbc.ca).

Some key dates, updated as of 25 October 2011, are as follows:

Registration:

Early Bird: 20 January to 15 May 2012 (ends at 2359 PST)

Regular: 16 May to 5 August 2012 (ends at 2359 PST)

Onsite: 14 to 18 August 2012

Application for student and Latin American travel awards:

Early November to 15 January 2012

Regular abstract submission:

20 January to 29 February 2012

Application for student presentation awards:

20 January to 29 February 2012

Notification of abstract acceptance (all talks):

30 April 2012

Request for Nominations to the AFO Governing Council

The Nominating Committee is accepting nominations of individuals to stand for election to the AFO Council. Such individuals should have a strong interest in helping the AFO remain a vibrant and meaningful ornithological society. Individuals who support the AFO and its mission are most welcome to nominate themselves to the Council. In accordance with our Neotropical Outreach Initiative, we are particularly interested in adding one or two individuals who have strong ties to Neotropical ornithology and who can help us in these efforts.

Councilors serve for three years and can be invited to remain on the Council for a second, consecutive term. Councilors are expected to attend the AFO Council and business meetings each year, both of which are held in conjunction with the AFO's annual

meeting, which is open to all members. Between meetings, councilors are occasionally asked to respond by e-mail to issues that arise. Councilors also serve on various AFO committees, which are active throughout the year. The workload is not extensive, but it is interesting and important.

Names and brief biographies of current Council members can be found at <http://www.afonet.org/about/council.html>. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in joining this team and helping shape the future of AFO, please contact the chair of the Nominating Committee, Kathryn Purcell (kpurcell@fs.fed.us).

The 2011 Pamela & Alexander F. Skutch Research Award



The Skutch Award for Studies in Avian Natural History is intended to support the study of life histories, especially social relations and reproduction, of little known birds of the continental Neotropics. The award was established to encourage researchers who follow Dr. Skutch's tradition of careful, detailed field observation of avian behavior and natural histories. Funding for this type of study is difficult to obtain, especially in Latin America. The grantee may be an amateur or pro-

fessional ornithologist of any nationality. **One award of up to \$10,000 is given each year.** For the 2011 competition, the Skutch Award Committee received 21 proposals for research in nine different countries.

The AFO is pleased to announce that Sergio Nolcazo received the 2011 Skutch Award for his project: Aspectos ecológicos y biológicos de la especie endémica y en peligro Cortarrama Peruana: información crucial para su conservación (Ecological and biological aspects of the endangered endemic Peruvian Plantcutter: crucial information for its conservation). Sergio is currently the Director of the Peruvian Plantcutter Project. Funding will support field equipment, field assistants, and transportation. Sergio's field research will generate important new information on the reproduction and ecology of this endangered and very localized continga. Sergio just gave an oral presentation on his AFO-supported research at the IX Neotropical Ornithology Congress in Lima, Peru. The abstract for his talk appears below in Spanish and English.

Sincere thanks to Elissa Landre, Skutch Award chair, and committee members Enrique Bucher, Eduardo Iñigo-Elias, Manuel Marin, Jason Mobley, Luis Naranjo, Paul Rodewald, Ken Rosenberg, and F. Gary Stiles.

Estimando parámetros poblacionales de la amenazada Cortarrama Peruana (*Phytotoma raimondii*) en el Santuario Histórico Bosque de Pómac

S. Nolcazo, Centro de Ornitología y Biodiversidad, Lima, Perú, y J. J. Roper, Programa de Pós-graduação em Ecologia de Ecossistemas, Universidade de Vila Velha, Espírito Santo, Brasil.

Conocer el tamaño poblacional, movimientos, recursos alimentarios y reproducción de las especies es fundamental para el estudio de las dinámicas poblacionales en ecología. Esta información es aún más importante en proyectos de conservación para la recuperación y mantenimiento de la viabilidad de poblaciones de especies amenazadas. Para estos fines, el proyecto Cortarrama Peruana se viene desarrollando desde enero del año 2011 en el área natural protegida Santuario Histórico Bosque de Pómac (5887ha). La población del área se estimó en 244 (IC 95% 185-322) machos adultos, permanentemente territoriales; y considerando una proporción equitativa de sexos la población de individuos adultos estaría alrededor de 488. Los ámbitos de hogar (territorios) estacionales para parejas se estimaron entre 1.6 a 4 ha, mostrando una tendencia al aumento durante la estación no reproductiva respecto a la estación

reproductiva. Individuos fueron observados consumiendo productos de 8 especies de plantas nativas, incluyendo hojas, frutos y flores. Las plantas *Grabowskia boerhaaviaefolia*, *Prosopis pallida* y *Colicodendron scabridum* fueron consumidas en una proporción mayor a la proporción calculada para dichas plantas en el área evaluada. La información obtenida en este proyecto es esencial para proponer el manejo que conlleve a la recuperación de la Cortarrama Peruana, en especial, en lo referente a la reforestación.

Estimating population parameters of the threatened Peruvian Plantcutter (*Phytotoma raimondii*) in the Pómac Forest Historical Sanctuary

To know the population size, movements, food resources and reproduction of a species is fundamental to the study of population dynamics in ecology. This information is even more important in conservation projects intended to recover and maintain the viability of threatened populations. The Peruvian Plantcutter project has been developing since January 2011 to achieve these ends in the Pómac Forest Historical Sanctuary, a protected natural area (5887ha). The population of the area was estimated at 244 (95% CI = 185-322) adult, permanently territorial males; assuming an even sex ratio, the population of adult individuals would be about 488. Seasonal home-ranges (territories) occupied by pairs were estimated at 1.6 to 4 ha, showing a tendency to increase during the non-reproductive season compared to the reproductive season. Individuals were observed consuming products of 8 species of native plants, including leaves, fruits and flowers. The plants *Grabowskia boerhaaviaefolia*, *Prosopis pallida* and *Colicodendron scabridum* were consumed in a proportion greater than that calculated for the same plants in the study area. The information obtained in this project is essential for proposing management leading to recovery of the Peruvian Plantcutter, especially with respect to reforestation.

Photos: 2011 Skutch Research Award recipient Sergio Nolcazo (above) and a Peruvian Plantcutter (*Phytotoma raimondii*). Photos courtesy of Sergio Nolcazo.



Association of Field Ornithologists

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100% of Banding supply profits are spent on activities of the Association of Field Ornithologists, including annual research grants to amateurs and students via the Bergstrom Awards. Your purchase of mist nets and supplies through AFO makes a lasting contribution to the ornithological community.

Visit the Online store
<http://afonet.org>



The Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences (Manomet, Inc.) acts as the agent for AFO in the sale of mist nets. For information call 508-224-6521 during eastern USA business hours, or fax at 508-224-9220, or Email at afoband@manomet.org

Thanks, Brian!

Brian Harrington is an emeritus biologist at the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, where he has studied the status, ecology and conservation of shorebirds for forty years. For nearly all of that time, he has operated the AFO Banding Supplies business. His dedicated effort to supply ornithologists with top-of-the-line equipment deserves special recognition. So the next time you see Brian, on the beach or at a meeting, be sure to thank him for his many years of service to AFO and the bird-banding community.



Brian Harrington, founder of the International Shorebird Survey (ISS), at one of many ISS sites along the south Atlantic coast. © Brad Winn

Would You Like to Get Involved with the AFO?

We're always looking for people who are interested in the AFO. There are a number of ways you can help out. These include serving on the committee that reviews proposals for the Bergstrom and Skutch Research Awards or the committee that gives out awards for the best publications in the *Journal of Field Ornithology*. You can also volunteer to help judge student oral and poster presentations at our annual meeting. Finally, you can serve on the governing body of the AFO, the AFO Council. If you are interested in any of the above and/or would like to nominate yourself or someone else as an AFO councilor, please contact AFO Vice President Kathryn Purcell (kpurcell@fs.fed.us).

Answers to Funny in Four Letters

A. BUFF

B. COME in.

C. On a WHIM

D. YWAR?!

E. WITU!

F. I REKN so!

G. NOCA

H. Harris's Hawk (HAHA!)

AFO Afield is a publication of the Association of Field Ornithologists (AFO), and is freely available on the AFO website, www.afonet.org. Please direct comments, questions, suggestions, etc. regarding this newsletter to the editor Dan Lambert <dlambert@vtcostudies.org>. Send address changes to OSNA Business Office, 5400 Bosque Blvd, Suite 680, Waco, Texas 76710 USA, or send email to <business@osnabirds.org>. For information about membership in AFO, contact OSNA at the address above or call (254) 399-9636.

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