

MEXICAN ORNITHOLOGIST RETURNS TO BBBO



I had the chance to visit Braddock Bay Bird Observatory for first time in October 1998 during a 3-day break from my graduate studies at the State University of New York-College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, NY. I'll never forget that brief visit as I was able to see, handle, measure, identify, and study hundreds of Neotropical migratory birds in the hand for the first time.

After almost 10 years, I was finally able to return to BBBO from the 19th to the 31st of August 2007. Now a professor in Tamaulipas, Mexico, this return visit was as enriching and unforgettable as my earlier visit as a student.

I had heard of the amazing progress that BBBO had made in recent years, and it was a pleasure to see the changes. The purchase of a house for hosting the banding crew and the acquisition and protection of more habitat in the area are two outstanding improvements. The house is a comfortable and cozy place that boosts the energy and spirit of any bird bander. Both of these improvements show how BBBO continues to make progress towards becoming a premier center for studying migratory birds in North America. Following discussions with

my friends David Bonter (better known as 'Davidito' in Mexico) and John Waud, I was excited to hear that the next step in the BBBO development plan is to renovate the banding center and expand BBBO's educational capacity.

The integrated involvement of volunteers, undergraduate and graduate students, and well-trained instructors and banders is critical to the long-term success of a research station. BBBO has done a remarkable job of this. I miss those beautiful, misty mornings as we opened the nets at BBBO. Next fall I hope to return to Braddock Bay with a couple of my best students in order to build an international cooperation that will help us all better understand and appreciate migratory birds.

- Rafael Herrera-Herrera ♦

Mexican ornithologist Rafael Herrera-Herrera banded birds at BBBO as part of an international team including BBBO's David Bonter, Rachel Vallender (Canada) and Ernesto Ruelas (Mexico). Rafael is a professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico.



Above: Mexican professor Rafael Herrera-Herrera with a Black-throated Blue Warbler. A young Saw-whet Owl was a surprise capture in late August 2007. Bottom: Rafael banding along with Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Rachel Vallender, Ernesto Ruelas, and David Bonter.

