

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY  
Washington, D. C.

B I R D B A N D I N G N O T E S

No. 17.

December 30, 1925

GENERAL INFORMATION TO COOPERATORS

The Biological Survey has been giving careful consideration to the system of handling bird banding records that has been in effect during the past three years and has approved a change which will greatly lessen the labor heretofore placed on station operators. Valuable suggestions made by J. Eugene Law, President of the Western Bird Banding Association, have formed the basis of the new system which is herewith placed in operation. The method is so radically different from the one outlined in previous issues of Bird Banding Notes and in Miscellaneous Circular No. 18, that all cooperators are requested to read the following directions closely.

SPECIES, DATE, AND COOPERATOR

Hereafter, when bands are issued, several blank letter-size schedules, a few of which are inclosed herewith, will be sent to the cooperator under separate cover. It should first be noted that in recording the data for banded birds only one species is to be listed on a schedule but each schedule has room for the records of 60 banded birds. Also, schedules must be filled in with pen and ink. Lead pencil is not satisfactory.

The upper left-hand block is for (1) the name of the bird, which may be either the common or the scientific name or both; (2) the year, which saves repetition of this item in listing the records; and (3) the total number of new banded birds for which data are furnished on the schedule. This total should not include repeats or returns of banded birds for which the original record of banding has already been reported. This information is used for statistical purposes and to enable the Biological Survey to furnish at any time, information concerning the total number of birds of any species that have been banded. It is also useful in ascertaining the total number of birds of all species banded in any year.

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NOTE.-- "Bird Banding Notes" is not a publication and is not for general distribution. It is issued for the information of cooperators of the Biological Survey, but anyone using in a published paper any of the information contained in it will be expected to give credit to the person named and to the Bureau.

The middle block will be left blank, as this is reserved for the receiving stamp of the Biological Survey. The name and address of the cooperator, however, should be supplied without fail in the upper right corner of each schedule.

#### SUBSTATIONS

Under the heading "Substations" it is necessary to give only the type of trap employed, as, (A) Government Sparrow Trap; (B) Drop Trap; (C) Lyon Improved Sparrow Trap; (D) Everset Trap; (E) Cohasset Warbler Trap; etc. As each cooperator is expected to furnish in a separate report information regarding the surroundings of each substation, it is not necessary to repeat this information on the schedules, but the type of trap should always be listed on each schedule carrying records of captures at that substation.

#### RECORDS OF BANDING AND RECAPTURES

Four columns are provided for records of banded birds: In the first, the band number; in the second, the age, as ad. (adult), im. (immature), or juv. (Juvenile or nestling); in the third column, the sex (if known), as ♂ (male), or ♀ (female); and in the fourth, the date of original banding underscored, and other dates of capture (repeats and returns).

The following examples show how the fourth column should be filled in: "Banded Feb. 10, 1924; Oct. 6, (B); Oct. 17 (A); Oct. 24 (B); Oct. 29 (B)," etc. The first recapture indicates a return since the bird was banded in another season. Its status as a return also is shown by giving the full date of original banding. It is desirable that the band numbers of all return records be encircled, using colored ink or pencil if available.

#### REPORTS TO THE BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

When the last "band No." column has been filled the sheet should be forwarded to the Biological Survey; provided, that all schedules containing any entries should be sent in at least once in six months, preferably during the latter part of December and June. In other words, send in a filled-up schedule at once, but report all activities every six months as in the past. Return envelopes that do not require postage will be furnished for this purpose by the Bureau.

The only exceptions to the above would be in case of special work with colony birds where large numbers of one species are banded at the same place and time, and migratory game birds banded during the open season. In the former case it will be necessary to give only the

inclusive numbers of the bands used. The records for ducks, geese, or other game birds banded during the hunting season should be forwarded daily, for the reason that returns from such birds may be obtained within a few hours or days of the time of banding and it is highly desirable that the records of the Biological Survey be up to date, so that proper acknowledgment may be made to persons reporting the finding of banded birds.

When the schedules are received by the Biological Survey, they will be stamped with the official receiving stamp and the total number of new birds represented thereon will be entered on the individual card of the cooperator and also on the index cards for the different species. The schedule will then be examined for repeat and return records and these will be copied in the Bureau on the 3 by 5 cards that were formerly prepared by the cooperators for all banding records. The schedules will then be filed in a folder bearing the name of the cooperator. The arrangement in each folder will follow the A. O. U. Check-List order, and the several schedules for each species will be arranged chronologically.

#### ADVANTAGES TO RESULT FROM THE CHANGE

The new system will materially reduce the details of clerical labor formerly performed by the station operators and also will greatly reduce the extent of the card files in the Biological Survey. Under the new plan there will ultimately be cards for repeat and return records only - those that are usable in an investigation. As records will be kept of the total number of individuals of the different species that have been banded, it will still be possible to do quantitative work.

It is possible that return records may be reported by persons other than cooperators before the original record of banding has become available in the Bureau, and this presents the only apparent weakness with this system. With the complete cooperation of station operators, however, this can be reduced to a minimum.

The Bureau maintains a complete record of the issue of all bands, and when a return is reported it will be first ascertained to whom the band was issued. The folder of that cooperator will then be examined and if there is in it a schedule that carries the record of banding for that number, the data will be carded (including the return) and our correspondent and the cooperator notified of the facts of interest to them. If, however, the cooperator's folder does not yield the record of banding, it will become necessary to communicate with him and request the original data. This will probably be done on a post card with return card attached. All cooperators are requested to give such cards prompt attention and see that the information desired is forwarded so that the Biological Survey can reply to the person who reported the return.

NEW PLAN NOW IN EFFECT

This system goes into effect upon the receipt by the cooperator of this number of Bird Banding Notes. If cooperators have unreported records of banded birds that are entered on cards, it is requested that they be forwarded to the Bureau at the earliest opportunity. Blank numbered cards for unused bands should be returned separately as they can be used in carding return and repeat records as reported on the schedules.

Additional schedules will be forwarded as needed upon request. In ordering schedules, cooperators should state the quantity desired, based upon the number of species that are being captured at their stations. It is not desirable to overanticipate probable needs, as this might result in considerable waste. A three or four months' supply will usually be sufficient at one ordering.

The Biological Survey takes this occasion to wish all its Bird Banding Cooperators a HAPPY NEW YEAR, and one of great success in the work in which we are mutually interested.