



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

OFFICE OF MIGRATORY BIRD MANAGEMENT
LAUREL, MARYLAND 20708



MTAB 71
January, 1992

MEMORANDUM

To: All Banders

From: Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory

Subjects:

1. Changes to band specifications
2. Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survival (MAPS)
3. Banding schedule - color-marker column
4. Computer-generated Schedule Program
5. Data requests
6. Banding assistance - Australia
7. New additional information code
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1. Changes to band specifications

We thank those who responded to our request for comments on proposed changes to band specifications (MTAB 70). Almost all comments received were favorable, so we are implementing most of the proposed changes. The new specifications have been incorporated in a package soliciting bids for our FY92 band contract.

2. Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survival (MAPS)

Programs for monitoring populations of landbirds (e.g. the Breeding Bird Survey) provide information on relative changes (trends) in population size, but typically these programs do not provide needed information on recruitment and survival of birds. In response to this need, The Institute for Bird Populations has initiated the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program. MAPS is a cooperative effort among North American bird banders to establish and operate a continent-wide network of constant effort mist-netting stations to capture and band landbirds during the breeding season. The design of this program was based on studies at a site in California and on The Constant Effort Sites banding program in Britain. The Fish and Wildlife Service and BBL have endorsed MAPS and will cooperate with the Institute to implement the program on a trial basis.

Experienced banders are needed to operate MAPS banding stations this spring and summer particularly in the Northeast and Northwest and the adjacent areas of Canada. If you are interested in participating in the MAPS program, contact the Institute for details (Dr. David DeSante, Institute for Bird Populations, P.O. Box 554, Inverness, CA 94937 [415-663-1436]).

3. Banding schedule - color-marker column

BBL has received numerous inquiries regarding use of the "Color Marker Code" column on the newer (revised 1989) banding schedules. This column gives banders a place to indicate color-marking combinations used with individual band numbers. It will also give BBL the ability, when processing sightings of color-marked birds, to match a reported color combination with a specific band number. In this column, please use a simple coding system that will identify the unique color combination, alpha-numeric code, etc., that was used with that band number. There are no standard abbreviations; those used in your field records will suffice. For example, R/G:W/A could mean a red band above a green band on the left leg, and a white band above the aluminum band on the right; YB 21 could be a yellow patagial tag with black numerals 21 on it. Please explain your abbreviations in the "Remarks" section of the banding schedule.

4. Computer-generated Schedule Program

The BBL Computer-schedule program for IBM-compatible machines has had several updates since December 1989 as a result of extensive use by many banders. Hopefully we have most of the "bugs" worked out of the program. If you do not have the latest version (January 1992) of the program, please send us a blank formatted diskette and we will send you the update. Banders who have not yet been approved for submission of computer-generated schedules should get this update before sending in a sample submission. Future updates will be sent automatically after approval has been received.

5. Data requests

Data from our banding and encounter files are available to banders and any other researchers upon request, within certain constraints to protect the proprietary interests of banders. We now supply these data on 3½ and 5¼ diskettes as well as on tape (not D.A.T.) or computer print-out. Diskette and tape files are in ASCII code. Fields are not delimited, but we supply a format description with each request. Although we can select data by any criteria, we cannot summarize or manipulate it. Thus, we supply raw data only.

6. Banding assistance - Australia

The Australian CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology is studying avian populations in remnants of vegetation and road verges in the wheat belt of western Australia. Qualified banders are invited to assist CSIRO biologists in banding projects there. Transportation and accommodation in the field are provided free, and a field allowance of \$10.00 per day is paid to volunteers. We assume that transportation to the study area is not provided. For more information contact: Perry de Reberia, CSIRO, LMB 4, P.O. Midland, WA 6056, Australia (phone 09 252 0107).

7. New Additional Information Code

A new additional information code 33 has been added for birds banded at artificial nest structures, e.g., Wood Duck nest boxes. Please add this code to BBM, Vol. 1, 1991ed., pg. 5-44.

8. Attachments

Our record of birds banded under your permit in 1989 is attached.

This listing includes birds that:

- have AOU numbers assigned
- were reported under your permit number only.
- were banded in 1989 only.
- were reported and processed by the BBL by August 28, 1991.

This listing does not include:

- lost or destroyed bands.
- rebanded birds.
- birds that died before the schedule was submitted.
- birds that died after the schedule was submitted, but within 90 days and within the same 10' block of banding.
- 1989 bandings reported or processed by BBL after August 28, 1991.

If you detect any errors or omissions, we would appreciate your notifying us by returning this list (or a copy) with your reply and providing band numbers for species in question. **Note:** There is no need to reply or return the list if there are no discrepancies.

A current Name and Address Listing is attached. If corrections are needed, please make them and return the listing to us. It should not be used for other requests.

9. Recent literature

Last October's issue of the *Journal of Wildlife Management* contains a most interesting and stimulating set of philosophical essays about gaining reliable knowledge in wildlife science. Discussions center on the hypothetico-deductive method and its application to wildlife studies. The essays reflect changing philosophies, that along with technical advances in methodology, are producing more and better studies of birds. We see these developments as healthy and promising, eventually leading to more effective use of banding to gain useful, reliable knowledge for the conservation of migratory birds. See *J. Wildl. Manage.* 55(4): 744-799.

A. Neil Arneson, *et al.*'s Estimating Closed Population Size and Number of Marked Animals From Sighting Data (*J. Wildl. Manage.* 55(4):716-730) is an example of technical advances in methods to estimate population sizes.

Their Abstract: "We describe a new estimator of population size that can be formed when independent sightings are made of marked and unmarked animals in a closed population where a subset of the population is individually marked. Each marked animal must bear a unique mark but the number of marked animals alive in the population is unknown. The estimate can be used when no recaptures or removals of animals are possible during the experiment. An example is estimating the number of immature bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) on a lake some years after banding of nestlings. We derive the maximum likelihood estimates for population size and number of marks, and we show how to develop confidence intervals and perform goodness-of-fit test. Criteria are developed for determining the number of sightings required to yield satisfactory estimates."

For an example of how reliable knowledge can make a difference in migratory bird conservation

see *Federal Register* 55(123): 26114-26194. That was the issue that listed the spotted owl as a threatened species. Much of the knowledge of the owl's population status and habitat requirements was gained through banding.

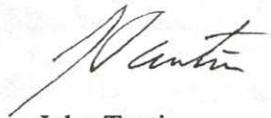
The July, 1991, issue of *American Hunter* has an excellent review article on portable navigational receivers. If you have trouble determining latitude and longitude of banding locations and pinpointing them on maps, you might consider obtaining one of several receivers now on the market. These highly accurate, hand-held receivers are about the size of "walkie-talkies". They operate in the LORAN-C navigational system.

Bird bander Harry Krueger has developed an ingenious radio-controlled device for trapping bluebirds at nest boxes. See the December, 1991, issue of *Nature Society News* for details.

The Summer, 1991, issue of *Journal of Field Ornithology* contains some techniques articles that will be of interest to banders. Subjects include fat-scoring, radio-transmitters on small passerines, and walk-in traps. If you band the difficult to separate Willow and Alder Flycatchers (Traill's Flycatcher complex), you will want to read that issue's article: "Morphometric Identification of Traill's Flycatchers: An assessment of Stein's Formula" by Gilles Seutin.

Seutin's abstract: "Stein (1963) proposed an equation for the morphometric identification of the sibling species Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) and Alder Flycatcher (*E. alnorum*), collectively referred to as Traill's Flycatchers. The equation, based on bill length and wing formula, was reported to be very efficient, but the test was biased because the same specimens were used to derive the equation and to evaluate its power. Applied to specimens from eastern Canada, Stein's formula correctly identified about 80% of the sympatric and allopatric Alder Flycatchers and less than 70% of the sympatric Willow Flycatchers. The formula is thus judged not to be very reliable where it is most needed (in areas of sympatry). Caution is recommended in attempts to identify Traill's Flycatchers on morphometric grounds before the question is reinvestigated using large series of specimens identified by song."

Finally, if you are tired of philosophical, analytical, technical topics and would just like some light, easy reading about birds, get a copy of *All About Birds* by bird bander Dorothy Mitchell. The book has excellent photographs, brief species accounts of natural history, and a bander's anecdotes. It is a simple, but delightful, book that evokes the joy, wonder and love that we all feel about birds. *All About Birds* is published by City Duplicating and Printing, Newport News, Virginia.



John Tautin