

Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

Bird Banding Laboratory: Recent Accomplishments



The Challenge: Bird banding is one of the most indispensable techniques for studying the movement, survival and behavior of birds. The North American Bird Banding Program was established in 1920 and has evolved into the complex operation that supports the activities of approximately 1750 Master banders and more than 5200 subpermittees.

The Science: The Bird Banding Program supports the work of federal and state conservation agencies, the academic community, nongovernmental organizations, professional and amateur ornithologists, and businesses. Banding and encounter datasets serve important roles promulgating hunting regulations, monitoring bird populations, restoring endangered species, investigating aspects of bird behavior and ecology, and addressing issues of human health and safety related to birds.



Recent Accomplishments: In 2014, the BBL added a new dimension to its data management capabilities by implementing a system to maintain local recapture and resighting data collected by bird banders. The BBL is working in partnership with the USGS BISON project to provide web access to BBL datasets, starting with banding records collected between 1960 and 2010. Additionally, the BBL continued to support the management and conservation activities of migratory bird populations conducted by state natural resource agencies and The Flyways.



The Future: Planned activities for 2015 include developing an electronic permitting system including an online application form. The BBL will continue its collaboration with the USGS BISON project to have all banding data collected between 1960 and 2010 accessible online through various web applications. In collaboration with the Canadian Bird Banding Office, the BBL will provide support for developing a bird banding program in Mexico as well as continue to promote coordinated bird banding programs across the hemisphere.