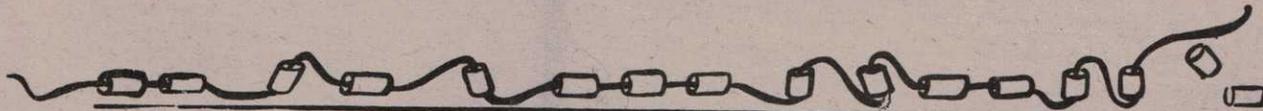


BIRD BANDING NOTES

ISSUED BY THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FOR THE INFORMATION OF BIRD-BANDING COOPERATORS



Vol. 4

Patuxent Research Refuge
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No. 1

Watch series designations on bands.--The series designation is an important part of the band number and must be used on all schedules and return cards. Example: 36-427369; 39-12645; 139-12645. Note that the series may be represented by a number of two or three figures. Watch for this!! Note also the hyphen between the series designation and the band number. Do not write the series designation above or behind the number but just as shown here.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO ALL COOPERATORS

SEVERAL NEW PROCEDURES AND POLICIES ARE ANNOUNCED IN THIS ISSUE. ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED HEREIN ARE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY AND SUPERSEDE THE 1947 MANUAL. READ THESE NOTES CAREFULLY AND SAVE THEM FOR REFERENCE.

CHANGE OF OFFICIAL ADDRESS

Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland is now the address to which cooperators should send schedules, return cards, requests for bands and supplies, and correspondence pertaining to bird-banding. It is suggested that cooperators correct all the envelopes and postcards which they now have on hand. The telephone number is Washington, D. C., TOWER 6430, Extension 102.

Visitors Welcome.--The bird-banding office and files are housed in the Nelson Laboratory on the refuge. To reach the refuge, turn east off of highway U.S. #1 at the Dodge-Plymouth Garage on the south edge of Laurel and drive 5 miles on the Bowie road. Visitors who are not traveling by automobile can reach Laurel from either Baltimore or Washington, D. C. Laurel is midway between and busses run both ways every hour or oftener. Arrangements may be made in advance by correspondence for transportation from Laurel.

GENERAL INFORMATION TO COOPERATORS

Lost Bands.--Who used or has the following bands:

41-509501	thru	41-510000
44-224151	"	44-224200
44-811851	"	44-811875

All cooperators are requested to check their records and stocks of bands

and, if they have any information regarding these bands, are asked to notify this office.

Addresses.--Do not forget to notify this office of any change in your address. Please do this on a postcard and show both your old and new addresses. Do not append this information to an order card or letter which pertains to other matters as it may well be overlooked. If he moves to another state, the cooperator must remember to request that his permit be amended or extended to include the new state. When making such a request, send in your current permit. A new permit, bearing the same number, will be issued.

Band no bird the identity of which is not positively known.--If the cooperator has the slightest doubt as to the identity of a bird, it must be released without a band. There are absolutely no exceptions to this rule. Many banded birds are found and reported by persons who do not know the species, so the responsibility for the correct identification rests with the bander. On the other hand some birds are recovered by persons who very definitely do know the birds. Recently too many cases have occurred in which there is little doubt that the original identification was wrong. In most instances species concerned have been waterfowl. It might be well to cite one example: A duck recorded as a Mallard by the bander and given a size 5 band was shot in South America. The hunter in reporting the band not only stated the age and sex but gave the scientific name as well as the common name of the Blue-winged Teal. Can there be any doubt as to who was right?

Bird-banding Manual.--A new, limited 1947 edition of the Manual was distributed recently. It is an abridgment (with a few essential corrections) of the original "Manual" by Frederick C. Lincoln and S. Prentiss Baldwin, published in November 1929 as Miscellaneous Publication No. 58 of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Any cooperator who did not receive one, may obtain a copy by writing to the bird-banding office. (with a few exceptions, copies are not being distributed to persons other than holders of federal bird-banding permits.)

In the near future, it is hoped that a new, fully revised and up-to-date manual can be prepared and issued. There is a particular need for descriptions and photographs of the latest and best traps and equipment. Cooperators are urged to contribute descriptions, sketches and photographs.

This Issue.--This is the first issue of Bird-Banding Notes since Vol. 3, No. 6, June 1946. It is hoped that in the future issues will be at least quarterly. Cooperators are urged to contribute to future issues. Notes on traps, baits, and techniques will be especially welcomed; also suggestions, comments, and criticism pertaining both to this publication and the operations of the banding office are invited.

SCHEDULES

Failure to fill out properly and submit schedules promptly causes more

wasted effort on the part of our clerical staff than any other single item. In an effort to remedy this situation, several changes in policy have been made. Every cooperator should carefully read and observe the following instructions:

List bands in numerical order.--Bands must be recorded on the schedules in numerical order regardless of the chronological order of use. If bands are properly used in sequence, the schedules will be both numerically and chronologically in order. IF NOT properly used, the operator will increase his clerical work by having to arrange the bandings in order on the schedules.

Ordinarily only one size of band, and only one series at a time, should be used on the same species. Occasionally, we all make mistakes, but when an "odd" band is used, please do not hide it by listing it among a long sequence of bands of another series. LIST all such "odd" numbers at the very start of the schedules where they will be immediately seen at the first glance.

Cooperators could save the clerical staff many hours of searching through schedules if they would annotate and cross reference their schedules. An example will illustrate this point. Suppose a string of 100 bands is all used on juncos except for one band, let us say "---79, which is placed on a stray brown creeper. Put a notation on the schedules thus - for #----79 see brown creeper." This will save the clerk looking through all your previous schedules of all species which ordinarily use that size band in an effort to locate this particular number.

Addresses on schedules.--Schedules which are submitted from wildlife refuges, college units, state projects, etc., should show the name of the refuge, unit, or project on the first line and the name of the permit holder on the second line. This will assist the clerical staff in properly recording and filing the schedules. The schedules are filed under the Unit's and not the individual's name as there are frequent changes of personnel on such projects. An example follows:

Lower Souris Natl. Wildlife Refuge # _____.
G. J. Henry, Refuge Manager
Upham, North Dakota.

The name of the actual bander and the actual location of the banding should be shown under substations or in the body of the schedule. These instructions apply likewise to sub-operators working under another's permit.

Permit Number.--To assist the clerks in this office, cooperators are now asked to show their U.S. federal permit number in the upper right corner of each schedule. Please do not show Canadian, state, or any other permit number.

A.O.U. Number.--The A.O.U. Check-list number is to be shown on each schedule in the upper left corner of the schedule preceding the name of the species. This information is needed to assist the clerks in filing the schedules. (Copies of the abridged Check-list may be obtained from the Treasurer,

Substations.--Many cooperators are not using this space on the schedules. This space is to be filled on every schedule by every cooperator. The block in the upper right corner of the schedule is for the permanent mail address of the unit or cooperator; it is not necessarily the actual location of banding. The actual location of banding must always be shown either under substation or in the main body of the schedule. When the location of banding and the mail address are the same, it is only necessary to write "same" opposite the "A" in the Substation space. If the location or operator differs, state the facts in the Substation space. When there is more than one substation location, the appropriate letter ("A", "B", etc.) should be shown after the date of banding.

Save yourself work and spare the clerks.--In filling in the main part of the schedule (i. e. number, age, sex, date, location, etc.) cooperators can save themselves considerable clerical work by heeding the following suggestions. It is not necessary to write "banded"; it is taken for granted that the date shown is the date of banding. Designate age and sex each by a single capital letter. In sequences of the same series, the full number need be shown only at the head of each column; thereafter the last three (3) digits of each number are sufficient. Use ditto marks whenever possible. When age, sex, date, location, etc. are the same, bandings may be grouped in a single entry, thus: 34-567801 thru 854. In this manner in some cases, several hundred bandings may be shown on a single schedule. When banding large numbers of a species of the same age, the use of separate strings of bands for each sex will simplify the subsequent clerical work in recording the bandings.

New Policy.--Effective immediately schedules which are not properly prepared in accordance with the foregoing instructions, will be returned to the cooperator for correction and resubmission.

Submission of Schedules.--Schedules covering all the bandings of all species for the fiscal year are due in this office on or before June 30. However, groups of full schedules may be sent in as often as convenient.

To decrease the congestion, which results in this office when hundreds of recoveries are reported daily, prior to receipt of the schedules, it has become necessary to establish definite deadlines for the submission of schedules for certain species as follows:

Waterfowl: if banded between Jan. 1 and June 30, report on or before June 30; if banded between July and Dec. 31, report monthly.

Colonial birds (such as pelicans, gulls, terns, herons, etc.) are to be reported as soon after the completion of the banding as convenient but not later than September 1.

New Revised Schedules.--Cooperators should be pleased to learn that a new, revised schedule is now in the printing office. The size of the sched-

ule has been decreased so that it will fit conveniently in the carriage of all typewriters. Also the spacings conform to those of a typewriter. These schedules will accommodate 70 bandings if filled in by hand or 140 if typed in. Spaces are provided for additional information such as AOU number and Permit number. Instructions on the preparation and submission are printed on the back side at the bottom.

RETURN CARDS (3-137)

Reporting Returns.--Each return record should be reported on a form 3-137 punch-card. In the case of a routine return to the same station, the cooperater should be able to fill out this card completely. Always show the date in this order: month, day, and year. In the space for "where banded" always give at least the name of the town, county, and state. Just giving the name of the unit or station is not sufficient; the location of banding must be specifically stated. When recaptured at the same location by the same operator it is not necessary to write out the location and name; just insert the word "same" in each space.

Reporting Recoveries.--Reports of the recovery of birds banded at another station ("foreign returns") should always be made on form 3-137 instead of by letter or postcard. The latter method is not acceptable. Prepare a regular return card as follows: show band number, species, sex, where retaken, date retaken, by whom and how obtained. DO NOT fill in space for: where banded, age, and operator.

Submitting Return Cards.--Cards, both for returns and recoveries, should be submitted in groups, not oftener than once every three months. DO NOT send in small numbers of cards at frequent intervals. Hold the cards and enclose them inside the folded schedules in the same envelope with your schedules. Do not use clips or rubber bands or mutilate these cards. Despite the many times this has been emphasized, return cards are still received fastened together or attached to a letter with a clip or rubber band. This is not only unnecessary, but is almost certain to bend the edges slightly so that the card will not go through the sorting machine. Every such card has to be remade in this office.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF SCHEDULES AND RETURN CARDS

To decrease the non-productive clerical work, acknowledgment cards will no longer be prepared, addressed, and sent out by the office. Operators, who desire to receive acknowledgments, will now follow this procedure. The acknowledgment cards (form 3-888) will be requisitioned from this office in the same manner as other supplies; with each batch of schedules or return cards sent in, the operator will enclose a card which he has self-addressed to himself on one side and, on the other side, made whatever notations he desires; and upon receipt in this office, the mail clerk will merely stamp the date on it and place it in the mail. A card will be found enclosed in these Notes.

BALL POINTED PENS NOT TO BE USED

As the ink used in some of the so-called ball point pens has been found to fade out completely in a few years, it is necessary to ask co-operators to cease using such pens in the preparation of schedules and return cards.

ORDERS FOR BANDS AND SUPPLIES

Request Cards.--A new supply of the postcard forms (3-644) has been printed. With each order of supplies, the cooperator should receive one of these cards for use in placing a subsequent order. Prepare cards carefully; please print name and address; show permit number; and justify large orders.

Minimum Quantity.--The minimum number of bands which will be supplied is now 25, or multiples thereof. However, the banding office would prefer not to make lots of less than 100. Bands are received from the manufacturer in strings of 100; so, to fill orders for less than 100, a clerk must spend considerable time untying these strings, dividing up the bands, restringing the bands, and labeling each string. Therefore, please try to order in multiples of 100 bands.

Avoid frequent orders.--Some cooperators have been sending in small orders every other week. This multiplies the clerical work. Each order involves: screening order (verifying name, address, and permit number); making an entry for each size of band on the cooperator's card; making similar entries on issue slips, and addressing an envelope. COOPERATORS SHOULD BE ABLE TO ESTIMATE THEIR NEEDS SO THAT IT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY TO ORDER BANDS MORE THAN TWO OR THREE TIMES A YEAR.

Orders screened.--All requests for bands are now closely screened before being approved. This is in accordance with a new policy which may be tersely described as "no schedules - no bands." The total number of birds which have been reported as banded on the schedules is subtracted from the total number of bands which have been issued to the cooperator. If the result appears to be unreasonably large, it indicates one of three things: our records are wrong, the cooperator is overstocked with bands, or the cooperator is delinquent in submitting schedules. In any case, before additional bands are issued, the cooperator will be asked to submit a detailed statement of the unused bands which he has on hand. Also, if more than one year has elapsed since schedules were last submitted, or the cooperator last communicated with the office, requests for bands will be held up until the status of the cooperator has been determined. This screening is already paying dividends.

Explanation for delays.--In the past, cooperators have complained, and quite justly so, about how long it took to receive bands. Properly submitted requests for bands have always been filled promptly upon receipt in this office at Laurel, Md. However, due to complications in rerouting and transporting the mail from Washington to the Patuxent Refuge, much time is

frequently lost. It is expected that the change of address so that all banding mail will come direct to the Patuxent Refuge will help this situation

Transfers of Bands.--Transfers of bands between cooperator (and units) should be avoided except in extreme emergency as it always leads to endless confusion in the records and frequently results in some blocks of bands (including the schedules and return records thereof) being lost in the files. With the above-mentioned delay eliminated, there should be no reason for not obtaining all bands direct from the bird-banding office.

THE BAND SUPPLY

During February and March the band situation was very critical. In several sizes, the supply was nearly exhausted. It was only possible to continue to fill requests by instituting two programs. The first was a close screening of all orders which resulted in some orders being denied and others being reduced. The other was a campaign to recover idle and surplus bands. Sufficient bands were turned in, especially from the west where the W.B.B.A. publicized the campaign, to tide us along.

Recently the last of the regular allotment for the current year was utilized to purchase an additional supply of bands. However, the funds were only sufficient to purchase a few thousand in each of the most critical sizes. Already most of these have been issued so that the situation is again becoming very critical.

As of the first of May the situation is approximately as follows with respect to the small sizes of bands (#0 through #3). In each of four of these sizes there are less than 10,000 on hand. Altogether in these six sizes less than 85,000 remain. These bands will have to suffice until September. That is about the earliest that we can expect to receive a new shipment from the manufacturer with the funds for the new fiscal year which begins July 1.

SEND IN YOUR SURPLUS AND IDLE BANDS

A survey of the records indicates that there are still thousands of bands lying idle and unused in the hands of numerous cooperators. These fall into two classes. Inactive cooperators, - those who do not expect to resume banding during this calendar year, are asked to send in all the bands which they have on hand. Active banders should check their band supplies and ascertain if they have more bands in some sizes than their current needs warrant. Active cooperators should send in only full strings of 100 bands each. Current needs should be considered as running to December 31.

There is another group of cooperators which can no longer be contacted. These are former active banders who are now deceased. Official letters certainly should not be sent to the relatives of deceased cooperators. Yet it is desirable, when a cooperator dies leaving no one to carry on his work and without indicating any disposition, that an effort be made to obtain his banding records, bands, and traps. The records should be examined for

material which should be published and the records preserved for future reference. The traps certainly should not fall into unauthorized hands but ought to be made available to some active and worthy cooperator who cannot afford to purchase his own. Such matters should be handled by personal contact by other cooperators who are friends of the family. It is suggested that possibly each Regional Association could appoint a member or committee to handle these matters, act as the custodian of the records, and approve the disposition of traps. Another function would be to notify this office immediately of the death of a cooperator. This would in the future avoid embarrassing and unfortunate incidents such as occurred recently when postcard requests were sent out in an effort to revise the mailing list and bring in delinquent schedules.

MAILING LIST

For the first time in many years the mailing list has been given a much needed trimming and revision. Because it was so long overdue, it was necessary to swing the axe rather arbitrarily. Cooperators who have submitted no schedules since 1940 have been automatically dropped. Likewise, those who received new permits between 1940 and 1946, and who have never submitted a single schedule have been dropped.

Cooperators who were formerly active but who have not submitted schedules recently were placed in a special group. To each of these persons was mailed a postcard notice giving the date when schedules were last received and asking if they wished to remain on the mailing list.

The response from these cards has been very gratifying. Not only have many addresses been corrected but a surprising number responded by sending in long-overdue schedules. However, approximately 200 failed to reply and consequently have now been dropped.

Altogether it is estimated that more than 500 names have been dropped from the former mailing list. The present list is actually not a mailing list but the roster of active bird banders. Furthermore, the list is going to be kept on that basis for several reasons. First, there are definite Congressional limitations on the amount of franked mail any agency may use in a year. Secondly, the costs of paper and printing have increased substantially and are subject to prescribed limitations. Third, Bird-Banding Notes is the only publication issued by this office and this is primarily a house organ for the active cooperators. This does not and will not contain anything of interest to persons who are not actively and currently carrying on banding operations. Hence, there is no reason to distribute it to anyone else.

THIS ISSUE OF BIRD-BANDING NOTES IS BEING DISTRIBUTED ONLY TO THOSE WHO ARE ON THE NEW CURRENT LIST OF ACTIVE COOPERATORS. It might be well for the Regional Associations to call this to the attention of their members as they may be some who should but will not receive copies.

REPORTS OF RECOVERIES

The present procedure for notifying the bander of the recovery of one of his birds is to type out the information on a plain white 3 x 5 card and, when several such cards have accumulated, mail them to the bander. The hunter or whoever recovers and reports the band is advised by means of a special form letter as to where, when, and by whom the bird was banded. If the bird was banded in or recovered in Canada, a third report is prepared and forwarded to the Dominion Wildlife Service.

Thus, to process many recovery records, three separate forms have to be prepared and typed in three separate steps. Consequently these procedures and forms are being discontinued. A new form will be in use in the near future. This is prepared with carbon copies with just one insertion in the typewriter. The original will go to the hunter, one copy to the bander, one to Canada, and one is filed in this office.

The upper half of this form will show the band number, name and address of the person reporting the recovery, and all the information which the person provided regarding the recovery. The lower half will show the species, age, sex, date banded, where banded, and full name and address of the bander. At the bottom are spaces to show if the band was submitted and the number verified, disposition of the band, and initials of the clerk preparing the form.

ONE PARTICULAR POINT SHOULD BE NOTED: This new form cannot be prepared until after all the pertinent data have been received from both the finder and the bander. Consequently, the bander will no longer receive information on recoveries prior to the submission of the schedule which contains the original banding data.

However, in the case of incomplete data a special request may be sent out to the bander for the original banding data. The bander should provide this promptly irregardless of whether the schedule has already been submitted. It frequently happens that the clerk is unable to locate readily the desired number in the schedules. In such cases, a second clerk then tries. If unsuccessful a request is then sent to the bander rather than spend hours in further searching of the schedules.

OPERATION OF TRAPS

Whether large traps for waterfowl or small traps for song birds, the most successful traps are those which, when not in operation, the birds may feed in freely. Birds should always be able to enter and leave the trap without the position of the trap being changed in any way from its normal operating position. Birds should always be fed inside the trap to accustom them to entering the traps readily.

Traps should never be left with the doors down or the funnels closed. Nor is it a good practice to remove or turn over traps. Feeding outside of the traps or in a different location reduces the efficiency of trapping

operations. Many cooperators can only operate their traps before and after working hours and/or on weekends and holidays.

Such operators must capture as many birds as possible in very limited spaces of time. Consequently, they desire to obtain the maximum efficiency in the operation of their traps. This calls for speed, ease, and simplicity both in unsetting (opening up trap so birds may enter and leave) and in re-setting traps (so that birds will be caught).

Manufacturers of traps would do well to bear this in mind when designing and constructing traps. There is at least one well-known line of traps on the market which does not meet the above specifications.

In selecting traps to describe and illustrate in the next edition of the manual and in otherwise endorsing traps, the above points will be watched for.

Landing Nets.--The further use of hand, landing nets to remove birds from traps, especially house traps and duck traps, should be discontinued. This operation creates a very unfavorable impression in the minds of laymen. Further publicity likewise should not be given to pictures which portray this operation. Gathering compartments and cages are readily adaptable to all large traps and allow faster and more efficient handling of the birds and result in less harm to the birds. Normally it should not be necessary for an operator to get inside of a trap with the birds.

PERSONNEL

Dr. Gustav A. Swanson.--Dr. Swanson is Chief of the Branch of Wildlife Research with offices in the Interior Building in Washington, D. C. The branch of Wildlife Research (formerly called Division) includes the Section of Distribution and Migration of Birds.

Dr. John W. Aldrich.--Dr. Aldrich is in charge of the Section of Distribution and Migration of Birds and has his office in the U. S. National Museum in Washington, D. C. The bird-banding program is one of several functions included in this section.

Seth H. Low.--Mr. Low was transferred the first of the year to the Section of Distribution and Migration of Birds and assigned as a Research Biologist to the bird-banding office. His duties include the supervision of the office and bird-banding program and research on the data which have accumulated in the bird-banding files. Mr. Low has been with the Service for twelve years as a Refuge Manager, has been an active bander for the past twenty years, and received his early training and experience at the Austin Ornithological Research Station.

Clerical Staff.-- Lois Horn, Russell Carpenter, Arthur Kraeski, and Helen Severance constitute the staff in the banding office. This staff, although fewer than in prewar days, is handling a much larger load of work.