



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

OFFICE OF MIGRATORY BIRD MANAGEMENT  
LAUREL, MARYLAND 20708



MTAB 66  
July 1, 1989

### MEMORANDUM

TO: All Banders

FROM: Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory

SUBJECTS: 1. BBL Review  
2. Mexican location coordinates  
3. Transfers of bands  
4. Facsimile schedules

1. MTAB 65 (January, 1989) announced the selection of a new Chief of BBL. That, coupled with broadening involvement of the Fish and Wildlife Service in nongame bird surveys and programs, has led to speculation regarding possible changes in Service policy on bird banding. In particular, it has been rumored that the Service is considering eliminating the banding of birds by nonprofessionals. Recently, the rumors have been furthered by inaccurate statements attributed to BBL by the press.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is not considering eliminating the banding of birds by nonprofessionals. We do not intend to prevent anyone from banding who has a legitimate reason for banding. In this context the terms professional and nonprofessional are meaningless. The Service recognizes that many avocational banders have made important contributions to the conservation of migratory birds.

The Service also recognizes that the BBL plays a vital role in migratory bird conservation, providing essential services to agencies, institutions and individuals who work with migratory birds. To maintain adequate services, we must review periodically how and where BBL should best apply its resources. Thus, during the next two years the Service will be evaluating BBL functions and banding programs.

Internal functions of BBL will be reviewed with the goal of improving operations. BBL has found it increasingly difficult to cope with heavy workloads and the growing complexity of bird banding. Chronic backlogs in work occur with the BBL typically being weeks behind in processing band recovery reports, months behind in processing banding schedules and years behind in doing less critical but important work such as microfilming. Improving BBL operations will require some staffing changes, new systems development and improved use of technology.

General banding programs also will be reviewed with the goal of identifying and reducing banding that does not serve well the conservation of birds, and promoting that which does. To this end, the Service will be cooperating with the Canadian Wildlife Service and seeking the views and recommendations of ornithological institutions, conservation groups, regional banding associations and others. An early winter meeting with representatives from these groups is tentatively planned. The review of general banding programs will focus on the types, purposes and quality of banding that should be done rather than who does it.

MTAB 66  
July, 1969

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. [Name]

FROM: Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory

SUBJECTS: 1. BBL Review  
2. Mexican local coordinators  
3. Trends of bands  
4. Possible solutions

MTAB 66 (January, 1969) announced the selection of a new chief of BBL. That coupled with increasing involvement of the Fish and Wildlife Service in non-game bird surveys and programs has led to speculation regarding possible changes in Service policy on bird banding. In particular, it has been rumored that the Service is considering eliminating the banding of birds by non-professionals. Recently, rumors have been furthered by inaccurate statements attributed to BBL by the press.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is not considering eliminating the banding of birds by non-professionals. We do not intend to prevent anyone from banding who has a legitimate reason for doing so. In this context the terms professional and non-professional are meaningless. The Service recognizes that many vocational banders have made important contributions to the conservation of migratory birds.

The Service also recognizes that the BBL plays a vital role in migratory bird conservation providing essential services to agencies, institutions and individuals who work with migratory birds. To maintain adequate services, we must review periodically how and where BBL should best apply its resources. Thus, during the next few years the Service will be evaluating BBL functions and banding programs.

Internal functions of BBL will be reviewed with the goal of improving operations. BBL has found it increasingly difficult to cope with heavy workloads and the growing complexity of bird banding. Chronic backlog in work occur with the BBL typically being weeks behind in processing band recovery information. It is important to process banding schedules and years being in being less critical, but important work such as microfilming, improving BBL operations will require some staffing changes, new systems development and improved use of technology.

General banding programs also will be reviewed with the goal of identifying and reducing banding that does not serve well the conservation field and promoting that which does. To this end, the Service will be cooperating with the Canadian Wildlife Service and seeking the views and recommendations of ornithological institutions, conservation groups, regional banding associations and others. An early inter-agency meeting with representatives from these groups is tentatively planned. The review of general banding programs will focus on the types, purposes and quality of banding that should be done rather than who does it.

The ultimate goal of these reviews is to assure most effective use of banding in the conservation of migratory birds. The field is constantly evolving, especially in the area of nongame bird management, and BBL and banding programs must keep pace.

The Service can appreciate that some banders are apprehensive about possible change. Should major changes be proposed, we will keep banders informed and provide opportunities for their opinions and comments. Banders are reminded that BBL remains open to communication, and that, should individual banders disagree with BBL decisions on permit matters, 50 Code of Federal Regulations provides them opportunity for redress.

2. BBL computer systems have been modified to accommodate 10-minute block coordinates for banding and recovery locations in Mexico. Schedules submitted for birds banded in Mexico should now include 10-minute block coordinates. Banders should also submit pinpoint maps of banding locations for BBL to verify coordinates, and banders should continue to send maps for new locations. Thank you for your cooperation in implementing this change.
3. Occasionally it is necessary to transfer bands between banders. Banders are reminded that transfers should be approved in advance by BBL. Significant record keeping problems arise when BBL is unaware that transfers have been made. MTAB 60 (July, 1987) detailed procedures for transfers of bands.
4. In recent years a number of banders have suggested that BBL accept digitized or word processed schedules in lieu of form 3-860. We anticipate that beginning October 1, 1989, we will be able to accept reasonable facsimiles of form 3-860. Banders wishing to submit them must send samples for approval. Samples may be sent anytime after October 1.

John Tautin

The ultimate goal of these reviews is to ensure that all effective use of funding in the conservation of migratory birds. This is a complex task, involving a variety of factors in the areas of management, and BBL and banding programs must keep pace.

The Service can appreciate that some banders are opportunistic about possible change. Should major changes be proposed, we will keep banders informed and provide opportunities for their opinions and comments. Banders are reminded that the remainder of the banding season should be used to submit bander change requests with BBL, banding, and other Federal Regulations. Banders are reminded to submit their requests for banding.

BBL computer systems have been modified to accommodate 10-minute block assignments for banding and recovery locations in Mexico. Banders submitted for banding should include 10-minute block assignments for banding locations for BBL. Banders should also submit all banding requests for BBL to verify coordinates and banders should continue to send requests for new locations. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us improve this system.

Occasionally it is necessary to transfer bands between banders. Banders are reminded that transfers should be reported in advance by BBL. The current record keeping problems with BBL's database of transfers have been noted. BBL (July, 1987) detailed procedures for transfers of bands.

In recent years a number of banders have suggested that BBL could be utilized or word processed. A list of forms 3-600, the anti-pollution banding October 1, 1988, and a list of banding requests for BBL are being processed. Banders wishing to submit banding requests for BBL should mail them to the BBL office, 1000 North Main Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73102.

Jim Tait