

**USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center  
Bird Banding Laboratory  
12100 Beech Forest Road  
Laurel, MD 20708-4037**

**MTAB 91: MEMO TO ALL BANDERS**

**April 2007**

**MEMORANDUM**

**To: All Banders (Master Banders: Please Forward to Sub-Permittees)**

**From: Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL)**

**In this issue:**

1. *MTAB* on BBL Website
2. People in the News
3. Migratory Bird Treaty Act Refresher
4. Permit Issues
5. Increased Electronic Correspondence
6. New Bands Available
7. Changes in Recommended Band Sizes
8. *Identification Guide to North American Birds, Part 2*
9. Schedule for Data Submission
10. Banding Location Descriptions
11. Bandit 1.02 and 1.03
12. Bandit Help Desk
13. Bandit Training Workshops
14. Replaced Bands
15. Status Changes on Previously Banded Birds
16. Web Encounter Reporting
17. Electronic Report-to-Bander
18. Electronic Periodic (Quarterly) Report
19. Meeting Reports

**1. Please Note: *MTAB* on BBL Website**

This issue of the *MTAB* has been posted to the BBL website (see [www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/mtab/mtab.htm](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/mtab/mtab.htm)). To comment on the *MTAB* please contact us at

[BBL@usgs.gov](mailto:BBL@usgs.gov) or call us at (301) 497-5807. Previous *MTABs* and Notes to All Banders (December 2006 and March 2007) can also be found on our website.

## 2. People in the News

Sandra Jackson is retiring after 30+ years of service with the Federal government and 23+ years with the BBL! We will miss Sandra and wish her well in retirement.

Mike Elms, one of our Oracle Information Technology Specialists, has accepted a job with another agency. We wish him well in his new position.

Susi Ponce, one of our biological technicians, will be leaving in May for her summer work at Great Swamp NWR in New Jersey. We wish Susi well with her summer field work.

## 3. Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) Refresher

The handling of birds, their eggs, nests and feathers is covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 plus any changes subsequent to those dates, e.g., the Treaties with Japan, Russia, and Mexico. All native birds are protected under the Act and subsequent treaties. The Act has an extensive list of protected birds and one must obtain a Federal permit to handle these birds or any parts thereof and their nests. Introduced species such as the House Sparrow are not protected by Federal law but may be protected by local laws. Whenever there is doubt, it is best to check the Act. Recently there was a rather lengthy discussion on one of the lists about the cowbird which is indeed protected by the MBTA. Permits are necessary in order to handle the bird or any part thereof. The trapping and marking of birds is permitted by the U.S. Geological Survey's Bird Banding Laboratory as long as the applicant meets any State requirements.

## 4. Permit Issues

The following information is needed when a Station/Agency permit needs to change the responsible individual for that permit: Station/Agency permit name and number, applicant (requested responsible individual) name and full contact information including current telephone numbers and e-mail address, statement that the applicant is over minimum age to hold a permit, applicant qualifications and resume of banding experience (training, experience, previous permits held), experience with specific capture techniques if needed (mist nets, rocket or cannon nets), and experience with specific groups (e.g. hummingbirds, waterfowl) if needed. This information should be sent to [fsoehnlein@usgs.gov](mailto:fsoehnlein@usgs.gov).

As mentioned in *MTABs* 89 and 90, it is the **responsibility of the master bander** to submit a **signed application for permit renewal** (and any delinquent data) 30 days prior to the expiration of the permit. Since the implementation of this procedure is new, we have been sending reminders. If we don't hear from you, your permit will be inactivated. If you have any questions, please refer to *MTABs* 89 and 90 ([www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/mtab/mtab.htm](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/mtab/mtab.htm)).

A downloadable version of the application, which may be used for permit renewals, can be found at <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/homepage/resource.htm>. Please remember that all permit **applications must be signed by the master permit holder.**

## **5. Increased Electronic Correspondence**

The BBL is rapidly progressing towards electronic communication. We will communicate electronically with you whenever possible and encourage you to communicate electronically with us. **If your e-mail address changes, please correct it in our system through our web site** <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/resources/modpinfo.cfm>.

By late 2007 we hope to have many of the banding data letters such as the Issue Problem letter, the Banding Data Evaluation, and encounter data letters such as the BLL-33 series, sent electronically to banders and band reporters who have valid e-mail addresses on file. We thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation in this matter as we streamline our procedures and communications. We encourage you to make any suggestions that you feel will be helpful to us as we increase our changeover to an almost paperless operation (send to [kklimkiewicz@usgs.gov](mailto:kklimkiewicz@usgs.gov)).

## **6. New Bands Available**

All new bands received in the BBL will have the web address ([www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov)) incorporated into the legend either on the outside of the band, or the inside on bands smaller than size 2. This new address, in place of the postal address, will be on all bands produced after March 2007. The toll-free telephone number will still be on the bands in the same location.

In 2007, these bands are only available to banders who are doing reporting rate or other comparative studies. If it is important for you to compare results of data from these “web address” bands against the “postal address” bands, and you would like to use the new bands this year, please send an e-mail request to [dbystrak@usgs.gov](mailto:dbystrak@usgs.gov) or [tliddick@usgs.gov](mailto:tliddick@usgs.gov).

## **7. Changes in Recommended Band Sizes**

We have several changes in recommended band sizes based on bander input. Please remember that where two sizes are given the first is the preferred and most often used.

- Wood Duck: 5A-6-5
- Common Eider: 7A-7B hard metal
- Swans: 9C flat is recommended to replace 9C
- Yellow Rail: 2-1A
- Golden Eagles: 9-9C rivet
- Bald Eagle: 9-8A rivet
- Shrikes: 1D hard metal

## **8. Identification Guide to North American Birds, Part 2**

Draft species accounts for the *Identification Guide to North American Birds, Part 2*, by Peter Pyle, are now ready for review by those who have molt and other technical expertise for aging and sexing non-passerine birds (see Spring 2006 MTAB for more background). In particular, if you or someone you know has such expertise with **diurnal raptors, shorebirds, waterfowl, or other water birds** and has an interest in reviewing and providing expedient feedback on draft accounts for individual species, please e-mail Peter at [ppyle@birdpop.org](mailto:ppyle@birdpop.org).

The BBL provided some financial support for this *Identification Guide* as the BBL uses “Pyle” as a guide when programming edits in our Oracle database. The *Guide Part 2* may be printed as early as late 2007!

## **9. Schedule for Data Submission**

If you are using Bandit it will no longer be necessary to finish a band span prior to submitting data and split schedules (breaks in a span) are no longer a problem. Hopefully this will reduce the number of Up-for-Banding letters, particularly for game birds when banding occurs close to the hunting season. The following schedule is recommended for submitting game bird banding data when using Bandit:

Post Season: Banding from Jan 16 through Jun 30 -- Submit data monthly

Pre-Season: Banding Jul 1 through Sep 15 -- Submit data July 31, Aug 30, then weekly

In Season: Banding Sep 16 – Jan -15 -- Submit data weekly

The banding data submission schedule for non-game birds remains the same except that it is no longer necessary to use a full band span prior to submitting data if you are using Bandit.

## **10. Banding Location Descriptions**

It is very important that banders use meaningful descriptions for their banding sites. In addition to a local name, if given, please include State, County, and mileage and direction from a town, preferably in the same County. These descriptions are used on the Certificate of Appreciation that goes to band finders and are not meaningful to them if they contain only local descriptions such as “Brown Farm” or “nest box 12”.

## **11. Bandit 1.02 and 1.03**

We recently released Bandit 1.02 (see the March “Note to All Banders”). Version 1.02 included a few changes that were mostly transparent to the user, but fixed several problems we were encountering when we received data from users. As of April 20, 2007, we released Bandit 1.03, which fixed bugs found involving importing Excel worksheets that contains a time field, and a problem with the age/sex fields in the recapture records. Please check the Bandit web page regularly and always use the most current version. When a newer version is downloaded, it will automatically save and restore any data you have already entered into the program.

The main improvement that was added in Version 1.02 is the ability to use the back-up file created by Bandit when you first begin a session, and to choose where you want to store that file. We recommend that you always create a back-up file when beginning a new session. The *Reference Guide* (<http://igsaceeswbdev01/BBL/resources/bandit/Documentation/index.html>) has been extensively rewritten so please consult this first if you are having problems or have questions about the program. There are also video tutorials available (<http://igsaceeswbdev01/BBL/resources/bandit/Help/Flash/index.html>) at this site that may help answer questions. These will be updated in the next few weeks.

Many Band Manager users have been submitting their data using Excel worksheets due to difficulties submitting via Band Manager. If you are using Bandit, please do not export your data into Excel and submit that file. When you use the 'Submit Data' function, a .tab file is created and that is the file that the new Oracle database uses. Please ensure that the .tab file is attached to the e-mail when you submit data using Bandit.

Bandit has the capability to store recapture data. However, at this time, we are still developing the capability to accept recapture data into the BBL database. You may use Bandit to store recapture data, however, please do not submit this data until notified that the appropriate edits are in place and we are ready to accept recaptures. The submit process will be the same as that for submitting original banding data, but please use the ability to add recaptures only for storing your data at this time.

We are going to be continually improving Bandit based on user comments and through identifying any bugs with the program. Bugs will be fixed as soon as possible and a version with those fixes will be placed on the web site. Increased needs and capabilities identified will be incorporated in future releases. Right now, we are looking into the ability to add user defined fields; however, that will require significant programming time and may not be available until early next year. Please use the Help Desk link to provide us with any user requirements that you would like to see incorporated into a future version.

## **12. Bandit Help Desk**

In addition to the Bandit Help Desk via e-mail ([bandithelp@usgs.gov](mailto:bandithelp@usgs.gov)) the BBL has a telephone number for the Bandit Help Desk (301-497-5566). This number is operational Monday through Friday from 8 am to 4 pm Eastern time. The best and preferred method for contacting the Help Desk will continue to be the e-mail link [bandithelp@usgs.gov](mailto:bandithelp@usgs.gov) found on the Bandit start page. This allows us to create an electronic record of frequently asked questions as well as the answers to those questions and more quickly get this information to you. Please use this link to send us any questions, comments, or suggestions for improvements. We use communications from the Help Desk to add to and improve our Frequently Asked Questions section on the web site. Furthermore, if we do not hear from you, we do not know what is needed to improve the program. Some folks are chatting via e-mail, and we need to hear from you via [bandithelp@usgs.gov](mailto:bandithelp@usgs.gov) to become aware of the questions, concerns, and ideas you may have, in order to address them.

### 13. Bandit Training Workshops

We have Bandit Training Workshops planned during the following events. Contact Frances Hicks ([fhicks@usgs.gov](mailto:fhicks@usgs.gov)) if you need exact times and locations. If you plan to participate in a workshop, please bring your laptop with Bandit (preferably version 1.03) already loaded, as well as some banding data to work with. You may also want to have Band Manager if you have been using it.

Patuxent Wildlife Research Center	April 24	Laurel, Maryland
Web-Cast	July 12	where you are, via Patuxent
Association of Field Ornithologists	July (26-29, one day)	Orono, Maine

Additional Bandit Training Workshops to be held later in the year will be announced.

### 14. Replaced Bands

It is very important for banders to send illegible bands to us via regular mail even if they are using Bandit or Band Manager to submit electronic data and are no longer submitting paper banding schedules. Be sure to include the replacing (new) band number so that we can process the record through our Multiple System once the band number has been determined through etching. Also indicate that the electronic data (Bandit or Band Manager) has been submitted, provide the date of the submission, and include your permit name and number. The removed bands should be taped (face down) to a piece of 8 ½ x 11” white paper and the replacing band number(s) should be written next to the illegible band(s). Please note in your e-mail with the electronic submissions that replaced bands to be etched are being mailed under separate cover. Send bands as quickly as possible to reduce delays in processing the replaced band data into the BBL database. When the BBL determines the band number, we will notify the bander so they have the number for their records. If we are unable to etch the band, the replacing (new) band data will be added as if it was an original banding and the bander will be notified accordingly.

If you have the need to replace a band within the same year as banded (e.g., Northern Cardinal banded in June and retrapped and band replaced in November), please use the data from the June capture with the band number that was applied in November. Then report the number used in June as “Destroyed”. This maintains the longevity information but saves us considerable time in processing. Finally, if you find that you have birds such as Northern Cardinals that are consistently mutilating their bands, please order the hard metal bands for use on those species.

We are asking all banders to keep the legible bands that have been replaced until the records have been processed by the BBL. If we have any problems processing the replacement, we may need to have the bander send the band to us for checking but at the present time it is not necessary to send the legible bands with your Bandit or Band Manager data files.

## **15. Status Changes on Previously Banded Birds**

Please remember that anytime you report a recaptured bird whose status has been changed whether it is your own or a foreign recapture (How Obtained 53), it is necessary to include a comment that explains the status change (e.g., color-bands added, bird transported, etc.). Changing the status of already-banded birds can only be done with permission from the BBL.

## **16. Web Encounter Reporting**

The web encounter page has undergone some changes. We are now encouraging the use of web reporting for encountered bands rather than the 1-800 number. This will be a mutually beneficial arrangement, because it will save the BBL significant amounts of money that we will not have to pay an answering service, and it gives the user more information. In order to encourage this we have shortened the URL of the site to **reportband.gov**. We hope this name will be easily remembered, and we will be starting to produce bands with the URL on them to make it even easier. We have also added a return data feature on the site – before the final ‘submit’ button is pressed, basic banding information is returned. We also compare the species reported by the finder with the species reported by the bander and warn the user when there is a discrepancy. We hope this will help prevent misread numbers from being reported. We also added the option for the reporter to request the full banding information (the Certificate of Appreciation) via email rather than regular mail. We expect banders in particular to use this option. Again, this saves us money and gets the C/A to the user faster. Finally, we are almost ready to release a tri-lingual version. This will expedite reports from Mexico and allow the Canadian Banding Office to provide a link on their websites. We also hope that the simplified URL and three languages will encourage more reports from various other parts of the world.

Please be sure to report foreign encounters to the Bird Banding Laboratory (<http://www.reportband.gov>) even though you may be requesting information from e-mail listservers such as BirdBand or Sawwhetnet.

If you report recoveries (dead birds or bands removed) that are your own bands or on behalf of someone else, please keep the band(s) and encourage anyone who contacts you about reporting a band to keep the band. Also, please keep a record of the report until the Certificate of Appreciation is received. This will make it easier for you or the person reporting the band to respond to correspondence from the BBL when there is a possible problem with the band number or encounter data.

## **17. Electronic Report-to-Bander**

As we mentioned in the November MTAB, we are sending the Report-to-Bander electronically to all banders who have valid e-mail addresses. A .pdf file will be attached that can be printed. The first electronic reports were sent on December 12, 2006. Please be sure that you keep your contact information current (see the April and November 2006 MTABs). Only master Banders and responsible individuals for Station permits receive the Report-to-Bander so please forward copies to subpermittees or others under your permit who may wish to see the reports.

We are aware of the need to provide banders with a file that they can download in addition to the .pdf file and although our initial attempts failed we are investigating other options. Also, we will incorporate the encounter fields, such as How Obtained and Report Method, into Bandit so that users could add encounter data to their banding file(s). Hopefully this feature will be part of the next iteration of Bandit and be available sometime in early 2008.

## **18. Electronic Periodic (Quarterly) Report**

We will begin sending the Periodic (Quarterly) Report electronically in July 2007 to all recipients who have a valid e-mail address. A .pdf file will be attached that can be printed. If no e-mail address is available, the Report will be sent via regular mail. Please contact [Karen Jones@usgs.gov](mailto:Karen.Jones@usgs.gov) if you have any additions or changes to your contact information. If you do not have e-mail and are unable to receive the Periodic Report electronically, please contact Karen Jones via postal mail to our address at the top of this MTAB.

## **19. Meeting Reports**

The Eastern Bird Banding Association's annual meeting was a great success, with over 80 participants and many excellent papers, in a fabulous setting. We are especially thankful to Sue Finnegan for putting this meeting together. Danny Bystrak attended from the BBL, presenting an update from the Lab and a two-hour overview of the new Bandit software.

Terry Liddick recently attended the four winter Flyway Technical Section meetings and provided the BBL updates at each of those meetings. The addition of a web address to the bird bands, the creation of the [reportband.gov](http://reportband.gov) web site, and Bandit were included in these discussions. Bandit training sessions were held at these meetings also.

Terry Liddick and Monica Tomosy participated in the North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Management Conference in Portland, Oregon, March 19-23. This event marked the start of the "web encounter reporting page" marketing efforts. Monica presented an update on the status of the BBL to the Bird Conservation Committee, the National Flyway Council, and the Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Committee. Terry held a Bandit training session as well.

Karen Jones, the BBL Bands and Banding Data Manager, and Monica Tomosy participated in the North American Banding Council meeting at Bentson State Park, in McAllen, Texas. Monica presented an update on what is new in the BBL and Karen presented an overview of the operations of the bands and banding data section of the BBL. Karen also led a Bandit training session. They participated in several of the committees to support the NABC objective of promoting the best banding practices.

Thank you!

The Bird Banding Laboratory