

**USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
Bird Banding Laboratory
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MTAB 93: MEMO TO ALL BANDERS

MAY 2008

MEMORANDUM

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

From: Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL)

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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)). To comment on the *MTAB* please contact us at BBL@usgs.gov or call us at (301) 497-5807. Previous *MTABs* and Notes to All Banders are also on our website.

2. People in the News

NOTE FROM THE CHIEF:

I have accepted a position with the U.S. Forest Service as Assistant Director for Research for the Northern Research Station, located in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. I became Chief in the BBL in May 2004 and soon learned of the sincere commitment to bird science and conservation in the banding community. This was a key motivator in my efforts to make improvements throughout the BBL. The staff in the BBL worked hard to achieve these goals as I communicated the vision the banders helped develop. Thank you for your ideas, patience, and support. Thanks also go to the staff for getting on board, and even leading, the train of change. There are more improvements to be made and together you, the BBL staff, and the new Chief will continue to make those happen.

DEPARTURES:

- Elbert Denkins left us in February to take a permanent contract position and is working with the USFWS in Arlington, Virginia. He had been helping us with permit documents and editing banding data.

- Terry Liddick left us in January. As the BBL Federal and State liaison, he handled data requests, permit issues, and banding issues for government agencies. He arrived in May 2005 and helped the BBL move through changes in many arenas from regulations to database quality improvements. He had the lead on Bandit programming. Terry is now flying the skies for the Population Assessment section of Migratory Bird Management, USFWS as a waterfowl pilot biologist. We appreciate his work and wish him well.
- Susi Ponce, Biological Technician, has accepted a job with USFWS as a Junior Wildlife Biologist at Long Island NWR Complex in New York. She will leave the BBL at the end of May. Susi has handled the auxiliary marker reports and many of the banding data input errors for us. We will miss her and wish her well in her new position.

ARRIVALS:

- David A. Smith joined the BBL in December 2007 after retiring as Chief of the USFWS Migratory Bird Program Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, USFWS. He will be addressing issues that are being considered for updating the CFR 21.22, the regulations for Federal banding and marking permits. He is also working on updating permit conditions and the application notice (last published in 1989). Our goal is to publish a proposed rule in the Federal Register in late 2008 followed by a public comment period with a final rule to follow in 2009. We will let you know when it is available for comment.
- Robin Schrock, an Assistant Program Coordinator in the USGS Biological Resource Discipline's national office will join us on May 6 and will be Acting Chief through July.

3. Permit Issues

- Application for renewal is now required for all Master and Master Station permits. To download the instructions and the application, please go to <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/resources/forms/permitinfo.cfm>.
- Please include your **permit number on all correspondence. If electronic, please include "Permit XXXXX" in the subject line** unless you are using the reply option to an e-mail and the subject line is already filled-in.
- Please visit the North American Banding Council (NABC) web site at <http://www.nabanding.net/nabanding> to obtain information on various training manuals, bander evaluation and certification, and trainer certification. The manuals can be downloaded from this site or requested on CD or paper from the BBL. We encourage all banders to take advantage of the hard work being done by NABC.
- *Changes and Clarifications regarding BBL Regulations, Application Notice, and Permit Conditions:* The BBL has begun a review of the existing regulations (**50 CFR 21.22**), application notice, and permit conditions and we will make updates as necessary. For regulation changes and clarifications, a Proposed Rule will be published in the Federal Register and we will let you know at that time so that you have an opportunity to comment. Changes and clarifications that do not warrant publication as a regulation will be announced in future MTABs.

4. Bands

- Unless you are conducting a reporting rate study or request bands with the toll-free telephone number and postal address, we will send only bands with the toll-free telephone number and web address.
- We continue to have a two-year supply of bands. Our Oracle database allows us to easily track the band quantities for each size/type issued to each permit and the banding data received for those bands. In order to better manage the distribution of bands and improve the banding data files, we are sending a reply to any bander who appears to have a large quantity of bands on hand. We will ask you to evaluate your current band supply and status of data submissions before we issue additional bands.

- In an effort to assist banders with managing bands and banding data we will send each bander with an annual band inventory via e-mail as a .pdf file with the Fall MTAB. There have been instances where banders assumed that the BBL had received banding data or bands and this was not the case. The inventory would indicate the current status of bands issued to your permit. It would indicate which bands were outstanding (in bander possession) and which bands had been reported or returned to the BBL. If discrepancies are noted, the bander and the BBL will update their files accordingly.

5. Banding Issues

- Please do not double band birds without permission from the BBL in advance. A project proposal should be submitted outlining the reasons why double banding is necessary. We also caution against using two metal bands on one leg as this can cause injury to the bird. The BBL has a supply of hard metal bands so band wear is no longer a valid reason for double banding. Hard metal bands should be used when replacing bands on species that are known to badly wear or damage aluminum bands (e.g., many waterfowl species including some populations of Canada Geese, shorebirds, grosbeaks, cardinals). We have a supply of hard metal bands in stock for sizes that are used on these species.
- Please be sure that you send illegible bands to be etched when reporting replaced bands. Tape the illegible band flattened and face down on a piece of paper and include the new band number so we can match the banding data in the electronic file with the illegible band after etching. We will notify you when we obtain the complete band number (if we can't etch the band, we will add the new band number as an original banding and notify you also).
- Band reporting is fundamental to the BBL. When a band finder has a species, age, or sex discrepancy with the banding data, we request the band or a copy of the band for verification. Then we contact the bander regarding the discrepancy. Please respond promptly so that the finder can get their Certificate and is encouraged to continue reporting bands.
- If you receive a request for banding data because we have an encounter for one of your bands, please submit the schedule data promptly for that number and any other unreported bands. Prompt submission of the data will allow us to respond to the finder and he/she will be encouraged to continue reporting bands also.

6. Bandit Version 2.01

- **New Version:** We have a new and improved version available at <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/resources/bandit/index.html>). Notable changes in Version 2.01 are:
 1. faster importing of large files
 2. addition of five user defined fields
 3. upon submission there will be a count of records submitted and not submitted
 4. records with errors are highlighted in yellow
- Everyone who is using Bandit should use either version 1.03 or 2.01. Please read the Reference Manual; it will answer most of your questions.
- Please ensure that the data file sent to the BBL is the appropriate file with the following name format *Bandit_Submission_PPPPP_YYYYMMDDHHMM.tab*, where PPPPP is the permit number, YYYY is the year, MM is the month, DD is the day, and HHMM is the time the file was created. This file is stored in your My Documents (PC) or Documents (Mac) folder.
- The BBL sends automatic e-mail confirmation to the bander when data files are received at bandit@usgs.gov. If you do not receive a confirmation the file was not received or it was not sent to the correct e-mail address.

- We are always striving to improve the software. Please send suggestions and comments to (bandithelp@usgs.gov). Your feedback will be considered a later version.
- There will be a Bandit Training Workshop held at the AOU Meeting on Monday, August 4, 2008 from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm at The Portland Hilton in Portland, Oregon. Contact Frances Hicks (fhicks@usgs.gov) if you need additional information. If you plan to participate in the workshop, bring your laptop with version 2.01 loaded and some banding data to use with the program.
- Additional Bandit Training Workshops will be announced later.
- A Recapture Team has started work on developing the recapture module in order to allow recapture data to be processed by the BBL. Development includes edits that are not yet in Bandit and the ability to collect metadata that is necessary for users to analyze recapture data. If you would be willing to beta test this improvement or have a dataset we could use for testing, please send an e-mail to kklimkiewicz@usgs.gov.

7. Web Encounter Reporting

- We encourage all banders to publicize the web site reporting capability (www.reportband.gov). Finders receive instant feedback if the banding data is in our files and they receive a confirmation e-mail acknowledgement. This also gives the finder the choice of receiving their Certificate by e-mail rather than standard postal service. In addition this capability will save the BBL both paper and time expenses.
- All banders should use www.reportband.gov to report foreign encounters, unusual recaptures (e.g., records close to the existing age record or of an unusual nature such as a migrant recaptured during another migrant period). This will give you some immediate feedback and the reports will be processed more quickly through the BBL system.
- Please do not use How Obtained 53 (captured for scientific purposes, status changed, released) unless you have trapped a bird and changed the status (e.g., adding a color-marker, taking a blood sample etc. to a bird that was status 300 to 301 or 318). Give your permit number, the status of the bird when caught, and the status of the bird when released in the comments (e.g., #09432 300 to 318).

8. Color Marking Reporting Web Page Revised

The web page to report auxiliary markers (www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/homepage/recwobnd.cfm) has been greatly improved. There are now easy selections for the marker type, color(s), code designs etc. The coding for species, location, and many of the other fields are programmed the same as the information collected on the Federal band reports. This web site should be used for any reports for which the user has only the auxiliary marker information. If the Federal band number is known, please use www.reportband.gov rather than the color marking report page.

9. New Call Center Contract

As of January 1st, the BBL began using a new call center, Contact One, in Tucson, Arizona, to receive our overflow 1-800 phone reports. They are also using our new software application, ReportIt, to improve efficiency and accuracy in reporting. Three Contract One representatives came to the BBL in November 2007 for training. In February, Jo Anna Leachman, the Encounter Data Manager, and Mitchell White, visited Contact One's office. They met with the managers and customer service representatives to answer questions, providing direct feedback and training to the representatives to enhance quality. We are excited about this recent change for the BBL. Please provide feedback on your experiences with the Contact One call center (jleachman@usgs.gov).

10. Increased Electronic Correspondence

- The BBL is rapidly progressing toward its goal to maximize electronic communication by May 2008. Most letters and reports are now being sent electronically and we encourage you to communicate electronically with us as well. **If your e-mail needs to be corrected or you have a new address, please go to the web site:** <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/resources/modpinfo.cfm>.
- If you do not have e-mail and wish to receive the MTAB by regular mail, please contact Laura Eldridge (leldridge@usgs.gov). Correspondence will be sent via regular mail if we do not have an e-mail address; however, we hope there will be a minimum of regular mail.
- We thank you for your patience and cooperation as we further streamline our procedures. We encourage you to make suggestions that you feel will be helpful as we expand to an almost paperless operation (send to bbl@usgs.gov).

11. Meeting Reports

- Monica Tomosy and Antonio Celis Murillo participated in the 3rd Western Hemisphere Bird Banding Network workshop at the Partners in Flight Conference in McAllen, Texas in February 2008. Monica also attended all 4 Flyway Council Technical Committee meetings in recent weeks.
- Monica and David Smith attended the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Phoenix, Arizona from March 24 to 28. There Monica presented an overview of changes in the BBL since March 2007 and both she and David discussed the effort to update the BBL regulations, with State and Federal colleagues.
- Monica and Kathy Klimkiewicz attended the NABC Meeting in Erie, Pennsylvania in April 2008 as well as the EBBA meeting at the same location. Monica presented an overview of changes at the BBL to the NABC and Kathy presented this to EBBA. Kathy presented an overview of her duties and the plans for processing selected recapture datasets with the NABC. Danny Bystrak presented the Bandit workshop at the EBBA meeting.

12. FACA Report

The FACA Report is now available at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/circ1320/>. We thank the members of the Committee for their hard work.

13. Amazing Records

- A Northern Pintail from Japan was harvested in fall 2007 in Ohio. We have had Northern Pintails banded in Canada encountered in Europe, Russia, and Japan in past years.
- An adult male Cinnamon Teal banded in Montana was encountered in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 2007. The record was confirmed with photographic documentation. An adult male was also banded and confirmed by several banders in South Carolina. Only a handful of banding and encounter reports for this species have occurred east of the Mississippi River.
- A Ruddy Turnstone that was banded with a color marker in Japan was sighted in 2007 in Guam several years after banding.

14. Requests for Assistance

- **Need for ticks:** The Yale School of Medicine is researching Lyme disease and the role of birds in the spread of ticks (mainly *Ixodes scapularis*) and *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Banders are being asked to collect ticks from birds and send to them to Yale. Ticks from the Northeast (all states down to Virginia) or the Upper Midwest (MN, WI, IL, MI, IN, OH) are needed especially from Fall banding and this is a multi-year study. If you're interested in participating, please e-mail or telephone and we'll send you the materials and instructions (Maria A. Diuk-Wasser, Ph.D., Assist Prof, Dept Epidemiology and Public Health, Yale School of Medicine, 60 College St., P.O. Box 208034, New Haven, CT 06520-8034, (203-785-4434 or 2227, Fax 203-785-3604, e-mail: maria.diuk@yale.edu).
- **Need for Band Problem Input:** An organization in Australia is studying the demographics of the Superb Lyrebird, a ground-dwelling bird that roosts in trees. Banding has been used to track individuals. Three plastic (PVC) bands were primed and glued together with PVC cement. Color bands are put on one leg and the stainless steel Australian Bird & Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS) band is on the other. Each color band consists of two bands glued together to make the band thicker and stronger. The ABBBS advised the group that the PVC bands are only designed to last one year, although the group's experience shows they last longer. The group encountered problems with the PVC bands (breakage due to wear, color hidden by mud due to the bird's scratching behavior, and fading). The possible color coding combinations have nearly been exhausted. The group has found that the ABBBS stainless steel split numbered bands last somewhat longer (although some have fallen off too) but the numbers are difficult to read from a distance with binoculars. None of the suggested resolutions have been successful. Comments should be sent to Norm Carter at ntcarter@alphalink.au.com.