



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

OFFICE OF MIGRATORY BIRD MANAGEMENT
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MTAB 75
July 1993

MEMORANDUM

To: All Banders

From: Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory 

Subjects:

1. Band Shortages
2. New Band Sizes and Associated Problems
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1. Band Shortages.

Due to problems with our band manufacturer, the Bird Banding Lab's (BBL) stock of several sizes of bands has been severely depleted. Our stock of size 0 bands has been restored, but we are currently very low on aluminum butt-end sizes 1, 1A, 1B, 2, 6, 7A, 7B, and 8. We apologize for any inconvenience this shortage may cause, and ask for your patience when ordering bands. To help us through this shortage, if any of you have supplies of the above, or any other, sizes that you will not need in the near future, would you be willing to return them to us so they can be reissued to banders in more immediate need? Anything you can send would be greatly appreciated, and thank you in advance for your help.

Dedicated to leadership in cooperative
management and conservation of migratory birds
for future generations.

2. New Band Sizes and Associated Problems.

The new size 0 and size 1 bands are now being distributed. In addition to having a slightly smaller internal diameter (most noticeable on size 0, which will average 0.2 mm smaller), the bands also have an improved address (BIRD BAND, LAUREL MD, 20708 USA) instead of the old AVISE BIRD BAND, WRITE WASH DC address. The address with the zip code should increase the number of bands being reported to and received by us. The new bands may also be recognized by the words "OPEN" and "ABRE" on the front of the band, indicating in English and Spanish that the band should be opened to see the address inside.

Please refer to MTAB 70 (July 1991) for a list of species we felt might be affected by the slight changes in internal diameter. Modifications to the list will certainly occur as banders begin using the new sizes. We would appreciate any suggestions you have for changes to the list.

A number of banders have called to tell us that the smaller size 0 bands do not fit well over the pin on some banding pliers. Some people have had success pushing the new 0's over the pin using a thimble, but this does not work well on thicker pins. Roger MacDonald is working on a solution. His banding pliers appear to close the new size 0's well. Please notify BBL with any problems you may have with the new band sizes.

3. Band Orders.

Banders are asked to order bands either by using the BBL order form, by letter, or FAX (301/498-0222), as errors may result from phone messages. If you do not have a band order form, please include in your letter your permit number, name of permittee, and the size/type of bands or banding supplies needed. If in stock, the bands will be mailed out the same day or the day after the order is received.

4. Questionnaire Results.

We would like to thank everyone who took the effort to respond to the computer questionnaire included in MTAB 74. We have received 730 responses at this time. Many banders had extensive and valuable comments that helped us greatly in determining what developments to pursue first and what features to include in the programs. A summary of the results: 86% of the respondents have access to a personal computer. Of those, 82% use an IBM compatible PC; 16% use Macintosh. Forty percent of the respondents store their data on computer, but only 5.5% of all banders use BBL's current schedule-generator program (we hope to improve that percentage greatly with our new programs under development). Regarding types of programs wanted, roughly 47% indicated they would prefer a simple data entry program picturing a banding schedule on the screen, which would produce a file to be sent to us on disk. Twenty percent indicated they would like a database

program developed by BBL; 10% wanted to use their own database system; 17% chose more than 1 option.

5. Update on New Schedule-Generator Programs.

Development of new schedule-generator programs is under way. The programs will include 3 basic options: a.) a simple fill-in-the-blank data entry program; b.) a database management system provided by BBL to which banders may add additional data fields; and c.) a stand-alone program that will accept data fields from external database systems, thereby allowing banders to continue to use their own databases rather than converting to the one provided by BBL. Depending on the option chosen, the programs will include such features as internal edits to catch errors before the disk is submitted; a gazetteer to calculate banding coordinates; and an inventory of bands issued to the bander. The simple data entry program will probably be the first to be finalized as that will benefit the greatest number of banders.

6. Corrections to Bird Banding Manual and MTAB 73.

a.) Researchers working with Hawaiian Stilts (#226.1) have determined that size 3A bands have caused a high incidence of leg injuries. Please change the band size for this species to size 4 on page 5-15 of the Banding Manual (Manual). We have also been informed that size 4 may initially be too large on 1-2 day old birds even above the tarsometatarsal joint, but will fit well on older birds.

b.) On page 5-17 in the Manual, please correct the band size for Key West Quail-Dove (#322.0) from size 2 to sizes 3A-4, per McNicholl, Martin K., (1993), Appropriate Band Size for Key West Quail-Dove. NABB 18(1):11-12.

c.) On page 5-18 of the Manual, please correct the band size for White-tailed Hawk (#341.0) from size 6 to sizes 7A-7B.

d.) Please change the Alpha Code for Common Waxbill (sp. #808.1) from COWA to COMW. This species was added with the incorrect Alpha Code in MTAB 73 (July 1992). Due to a conflict with Connecticut (CONW) and Colima (COLW) warblers in the use of the first two letters of each word when creating a 4-letter alpha code, the rule followed is to take the first 3 letters of the first word and the first letter of the second word.

e.) Status codes: The table presented in MTAB 73 listing old status codes and their new equivalents had some errors. Please note the following changes: 1.) Former code 621 should become either status 500 or 700 (not 700 only), depending on how long the bird is held; 2.) former code 641 translates to either 329 or 330 (not 629 or 630); 3.) status 640 becomes 540 or 740 depending on treatment. Status 240 is not an option as transportation is assumed in this code.

7. New Status Codes for "Hacked" Birds.

We have decided that the most appropriate status codes for hacked birds under the new coding regime should be 433 or 434 instead of miscellaneous 485. Although hacked birds are not "taken from an artificial nest structure," they are instead placed in an artificial structure after banding, so the similarity is close enough to make 433 or 434 more informative than any other codes. Please modify the definitions of additional information codes 33 and 34 to include "placed in an artificial structure after banding (e.g., hacking)". Use 433 for hacked birds that are banded with USFWS bands only, and 434 if any auxiliary markers are used.

8. New Encounter Listings.

Banders should be aware that if they send in a long list of band encounters from a trapping effort or a hunter check station, we will now send the banding information as a single listing rather than as individual Certificates of Appreciation. This change should reduce unnecessary mailings and make the data easier to interpret. If hunters' names are included, they will, of course, receive certificates.

9. Acknowledgement Cards and "Pink" Cards.

BBL routinely sends out an Acknowledgement Card (3-860b) 1-2 days after receiving banding schedules. If you do not receive a card within 3 weeks of sending us schedules, please contact us to ensure that your schedules got here.

Whenever a recovery of a band arrives at BBL before the banding data have been sent to us, BBL sends out "Pink Cards" (Banding Data Request Card - Form 3-860a) to the responsible bander for the data. Last year we sent 1640 pink cards for this purpose; some years we've had to send as many as 2500. The reduced number this past year indicates that more banders are submitting banding schedules by the preferred deadlines, thereby allowing us to process the recoveries quickly. Please respond promptly if you receive a pink card. The band finders anxiously await their Certificates, and public relations problems can result if we are unable provide the data in a reasonable period of time. Thanks for your cooperation.

10. New Mail System at BBL.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (including BBL) has changed over to a mail-metering system, and the eagle-franked envelopes will no longer be accepted by the Post Office. From now on we will supply banders with 4x9 or 9x11 Business Reply envelopes for mailings to BBL. Please recycle any eagle-franked envelopes you may have in your possession.

11. Newly Listed Threatened Species.

Several species or populations of North American birds have

recently been listed as Threatened by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. These are Marbled Murrelet, Spectacled Eider, Snowy Plover (West Coast population), Mexican Spotted Owl, and California Gnatcatcher. Anyone planning to band or mark these species will need to apply for an Endangered Species permit from the appropriate USFWS Law Enforcement Office, in addition to having a valid banding and auxiliary marking permit from us.

12. Operation Wing-Chord: A Reminder.

This is a reminder that banders banding birds during the breeding season are encouraged to participate in the Eastern Bird Banding Association's "Operation Wing-Chord," to help establish measurement criteria for use in sexing birds with monomorphic plumage outside the breeding season. Species being studied include BLJA, CHSP, SOSP, SWSP, NOWA, NOMO, WOTH, and VEER. Banders are asked to collect data from birds of known sex from existing records as well as from current banding activity. For information and forms please send name, address, banding permit number, and SASE to Susannah K. Graedel, 3 Talmage Road, Mendham, NJ 07945.

13. Recent Literature.

- a.) For an excellent discussion of wing molt, please see "Using wing molt to age Passerines" by Robert Mulvihill in the Jan. 1993 issue of NABB.
- b.) Banders of Painted Buntings should be interested in "A Key for Ageing and Sexing Painted Buntings" by Christopher W. Thompson, in the Autumn issue of the Journal of Field Ornithology, vol. 63:445-454.
- c.) The July 1993 issue of The Journal of Wildlife Management contains papers on 4 studies employing contemporary methodology to estimate survival rates of waterfowl.
- d.) EURING, the European confederation of ringing programs, held a technical conference in 1992 in Montpellier, France. Conference proceedings have been published as Marked Individuals in the Study of Bird Populations, edited by J. D. Lebreton and P. M. North, and published by Birkhäuser Verlag AG, Klosterberg 23, P.O. Box 133, CH-4010 Basel, Switzerland (FAX 061/271 76 66). This excellent book contains many papers that will interest those who analyze banding data. Examples include:
 - Estimating survival of radio-tagged birds
 - Merging recoveries and recaptures to estimate survival probabilities
 - Combining mark-recapture data sets for small passerines
 - Estimating migration rates using tag-recovery data
 - Testing hypotheses about the relationship of habitat to animal survivorship
 - An overview of software for terrestrial vertebrate population dynamics

Unfortunately the book is expensive. If you would like a complete list of papers to help decide if you would like to order the book, please let us know.

e.) In MTAB 71 (January 1992) we mentioned the availability of hand-held receivers using the LORAN-C navigational system to determine accurate latitude and longitude coordinates for a location. Numerous similar receivers operating in the Global Positioning System (GPS) are now available as well. GPS has the advantages of broader coverage and altitudinal readings. See the August 1993 issue of Outdoor Life for a good article on both LORAN-C and GPS receivers.