

Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

Bird Banding Laboratory: Recent Accomplishments



The Challenge: Bird banding is one of the most indispensable techniques for studying the movement, survival and behavior of birds. The North American Bird Banding Program was established in 1920 and has evolved into the complex operation that supports the activities of approximately 1750 Master banders and more than 5200 subpermittees.



The Science: The Bird Banding Program supports the work of federal and state conservation agencies, the academic community, nongovernmental organizations, professional and amateur ornithologists, and businesses. Banding and encounter datasets serve important roles promulgating hunting regulations, monitoring bird populations, restoring endangered species, investigating aspects of bird behavior and ecology, and addressing issues of human health and safety related to birds.

Recent Accomplishments: In 2013, the BBL continued to improve the Reportband website by providing versions in French and Spanish. BBL staff is nearing completion of a database of foreign-banded birds that have been encountered in North America. The BBL collaborated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to continue development of systems to manage resighting data for albatross and American Black Duck populations. The USGS published a summary of responses to the BBL FACA report recommendations that also describes other recent improvements to BBL operations.



The Future: Planned activities include completing development of a data management system for local recapture data and revisions to the Bandit software to allow for the electronic submission of recapture data. The development of an electronic permitting system is also being discussed. The Bird Banding Laboratory will continue to work with banding programs in other countries to promote coordinated bird banding across the hemisphere.