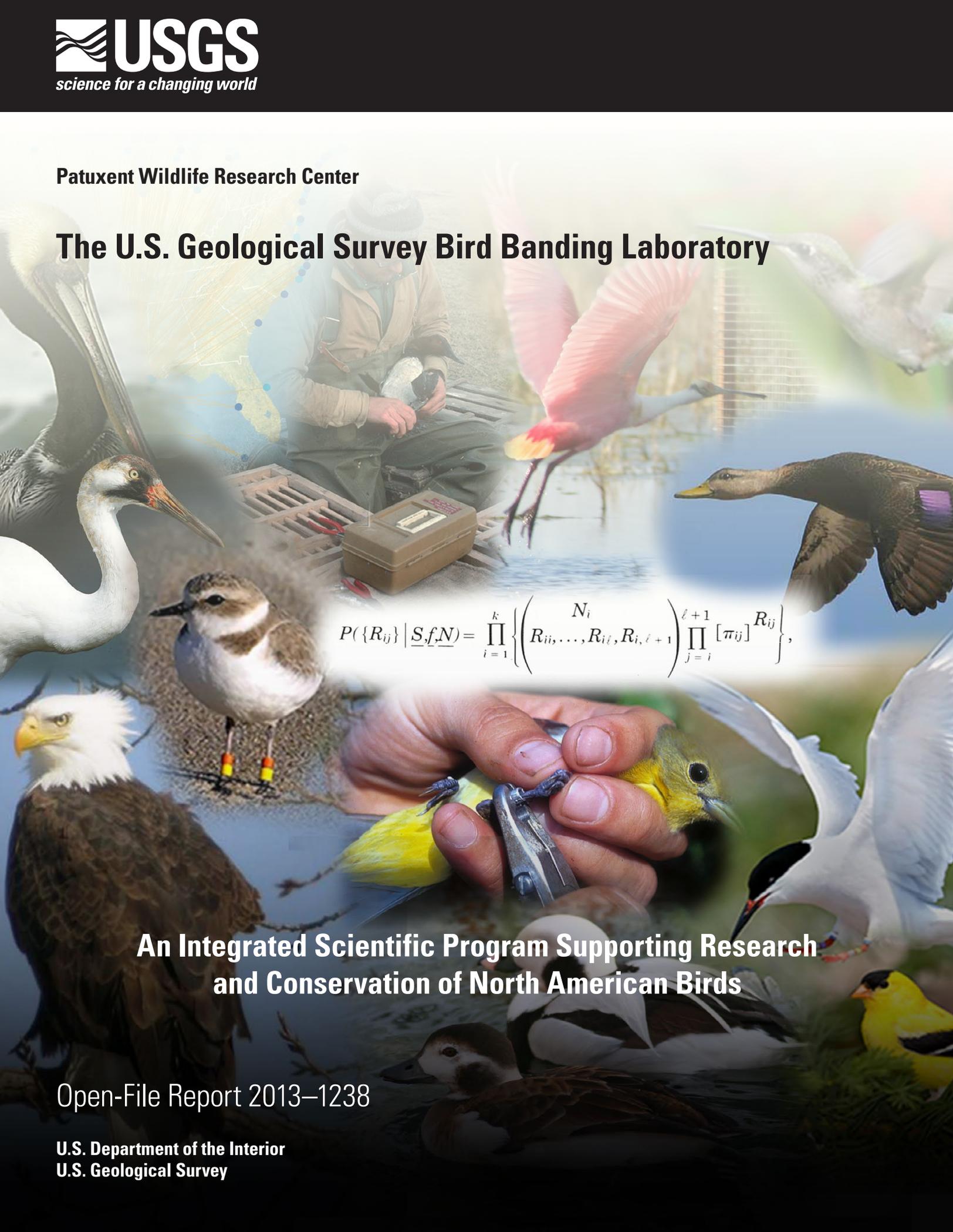


Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

The U.S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory


$$P(\{R_{ij}\} | \underline{S}, f, \underline{N}) = \prod_{i=1}^k \left\{ \binom{N_i}{R_{i1}, \dots, R_{i\ell}, R_{i, \ell+1}} \prod_{j=i}^{\ell+1} [\pi_{ij}]^{R_{ij}} \right\},$$

**An Integrated Scientific Program Supporting Research
and Conservation of North American Birds**

Open-File Report 2013–1238

The U.S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory: An Integrated Scientific Program Supporting Research and Conservation of North American Birds

By Gregory J. Smith

Open-File Report 2013–1238

**U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey**

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U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia: 2013

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The U.S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory: An Integrated Scientific Program Supporting Research and Conservation of North American Birds

By Gregory J. Smith

Abstract

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) was established in 1920 after ratification of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act with the United Kingdom in 1918. During World War II, the BBL was moved from Washington, D.C., to what is now the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC). The BBL issues permits and bands to permittees to band birds, records bird band recoveries or encounters primarily through telephone and Internet reporting, and manages more than 72 million banding records and more than 4.5 million records of encounters using state-of-the-art technologies. Moreover, the BBL also issues bands and manages banding and encounter data for the Canadian Bird Banding Office (BBO). Each year approximately 1 million bands are shipped from the BBL to banders in the United States and Canada, and nearly 100,000 encounter reports are entered into the BBL systems. Banding data are essential for regulatory programs, especially migratory waterfowl harvest regulations.

The USGS BBL works closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to develop regulations for the capture, handling, banding, and marking of birds. These regulations are published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). In 2006, the BBL and the USFWS Division of Migratory Bird Management (DMBM) began a comprehensive revision of the banding regulations.

The bird banding community has three major constituencies: Federal and State agency personnel involved in the management and conservation of bird populations that include the Flyway Councils, ornithological research scientists, and avocational banders.

With increased demand for banding activities and relatively constant funding, a Federal Advisory Committee (Committee) was chartered and reviewed the BBL program in 2005. The final report of the Committee included six major goals and 58 specific recommendations, 47 of which have been addressed by the BBL. Specifically, the Committee recommended the BBL continue to support science, conservation, and management of birds through the use of banding and banding data and that the BBL be managed by the USGS

and located at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC) in Laurel, Maryland. Recommendations that have not been implemented include those already addressed by other organizations, as well as lower priority, such as developing a BBL business plan.

The comprehensive review and recommendations of the Committee, the response of the BBL to address the Committee's recommendations, and other improvements to its operations have positioned the BBL to provide a high level of service to the banding community. As new technologies are developed and incorporated into BBL operations, further efficiencies are expected to enable the BBL to continue to meet emerging scientific needs.

Introduction

Comprehensive Review of the Bird Banding Laboratory

Bird banding and marking are scientific methods used to determine location, range, population size, migration, behavior, and other parameters for avian species and specific populations. First determined as a Federal responsibility for migratory birds in 1920, the BBL was originally located in Washington, D.C., and was later moved to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC) in Laurel, Maryland, during World War II. Bird banding and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) have become critical assets for managing waterfowl and other migratory gamebird populations, assisting in the recovery of Federally endangered and threatened species, supporting ornithological research activities, and promoting the conservation of migratory birds.

The BBL provides bands at no cost to permitted banders in the U.S. and Canada. Currently (2013), approximately 1,630 Master Banders hold permits and approximately 5,050 banders hold subpermits. The BBL issues approximately 1 million bands and receives about 100,000 reports of banded birds or encounters each year. The BBL manages the banding

data for Canada as well, and the database now includes more than 72 million banding records and 4.5 million encounter records. These data complement the related databases managed and analyzed by the USGS PWRC that include the North American Phenology Network with 6 million records and the North American Breeding Bird Survey with 78 million records. Having these large-scale databases within the USGS and associated with USGS landscape assets, such as the USGS Landsat 8, creates scientific synergy for avian ecological research that is available nowhere else.

Over the past 93 years, the BBL has evolved to keep pace with the increased volume of banding data produced by the banding community, has improved the variety of bands available to support a wide array of banding projects, and has adopted new technologies that will allow for improved management and analysis of data and address new research challenges. As a scientific agency, the USGS has supported an integrated scientific approach to meet the emerging challenges and demands of the scientific community.

To address challenges to meet emerging scientific needs and advances in technology, in 2005 the Directors of the USGS and USFWS chartered a 14-member Federal Advisory Committee to define a vision for the BBL over the next 10 to 15 years. This independent committee and a subcommittee charged with writing a report met seven times from 2005 to 2006. The committee produced a published report, Haseltine and others (2008)—U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Circular 1320—that resulted in two primary recommendations:

1. "...the primary role of the BBL should continue to support the use of banding and banding data by researchers and managers engaged in science, conservation, and management of birds..."
2. "...the BBL be managed nationally by USGS Headquarters as a research and operational support unit and provided with resources appropriate to its national and international functions..." and "...continue to be physically located at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center..."

This independent committee, chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), recognized the importance of BBL responsibilities as part of the scientific community and as part of a scientific agency, the USGS. Moreover, the Committee also saw the benefit of the continued institutional organization of the BBL as a national research and operations program managed nationally and physically located at the PWRC. Committee membership represented a diverse array of nongovernmental organizations, professional societies, universities, and U.S. and Canadian agencies. The time, funds, and expertise dedicated to this review, report, and recommendations were substantial, and the findings and recommendations chart a course for the BBL for the next 10 to 15 years.

Purpose and Scope

This report provides a comprehensive synthesis of the changes and new procedures implemented by the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory in response to the 2008 report issued by the Federal Advisory Committee (Haseltine and others, 2008) to define a vision for the BBL over the next 10 to 15 years (see appendix 1). It describes the response of the BBL to the recommendations of the Federal Advisory Committee as well as the integral scientific role of the BBL in the avian ecological scientific enterprise.

Bird Banding Laboratory Stakeholders

The bird banding community is a diverse constituency representing a variety of interests and activities. The major stakeholder groups represented in the BBL Federal Advisory Committee included:

- The Ornithological Council
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology
- The Institute for Bird Populations
- Colorado State University
- Canadian Wildlife Service
- National Audubon Society
- Ducks Unlimited
- The Wildlife Society
- North American Banding Council
- The Conservation Fund
- Pheasants Forever

The composition of this community has changed in recent decades, from a preponderance of private citizens banding birds as an avocation to a much larger representation by agency biologists and academic research scientists. At this time, the bird banding community is nearly equally divided among three general stakeholder groups that are enumerated below.

Bird Management and Conservation Agencies

The BBL has a long history of direct communication and involvement with the four Flyway Councils and their associated joint technical committees. The Flyway Councils are

composed of representatives from each State wildlife management agency. Although, whereas they were initially developed to coordinate the management of waterfowl and other harvested game bird populations, in recent years they have added nongame sections to their technical committees to address the regional management of all groups of birds. The BBL sends representatives to the Flyway joint technical committee meetings each winter to provide annual updates on BBL activities, and is regularly involved in regional banding-related issues for game and nongame birds. Given the importance of banding data for the management of migratory game bird populations, the BBL has a staff biologist position that is dedicated as a liaison with the Flyway Councils in order to provide a direct communication link with the BBL and to facilitate issuing permits and permit authorizations needed to conduct the required management and conservation activities.

In addition to working with the Flyway Councils, the BBL also regularly communicates with Federal agencies involved with bird banding activities. The BBL has a long history of supporting bird banding on USFWS wildlife refuges, primarily for managing migratory game bird populations, but also for conservation of nongame birds. The banding and marking of birds is integral for the conservation and recovery of Federally listed endangered and threatened species, and the BBL has actively supported these activities for decades. In addition to the USFWS, the BBL supports banding activities on lands managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Defense as well as wildlife management activities conducted by Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). A BBL staff biologist also serves as a liaison with these Federal agencies.

Research Scientists

The BBL has supported a wide variety of ornithological research activities for decades. With recent advances in marking technologies, scientists are increasingly requesting BBL permits to conduct cutting-edge research on many aspects of avian ecology such as using satellite transmitters to track bird movements over large landscapes and small data loggers to remotely record information on activity patterns, physiological condition, and other aspects of avian biology. In addition to these types of projects, bird banding and marking are also essential in various studies of avian behavior, ecotoxicology, and population dynamics. These studies require an array of permitting and auxiliary marking authorizations that are provided by the BBL and are considerably more complex than traditional banding studies.

Most of these research scientists are associated with academic institutions. These research activities are also conducted by Federal government agencies including the USGS, the USDA, The Smithsonian Institution, and the USFWS. In addition, nongovernmental organizations, State wildlife agencies, and even private consulting firms are now (2013) involved in research activities that are supported by the BBL.

Avocational Banders

Citizens who conduct banding as an avocation remain an important component of the banding community. These banders continue to provide data on the changing status of and trends in bird populations across the U.S. and Canada and to document the movement patterns of birds across the continent. Some banders conduct research that is published in the peer-reviewed literature, and many contribute to local and regional publications. These banders are becoming increasingly involved in collaborative projects designed to address large-scale conservation concerns, such as the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) project coordinated by the Institute for Bird Populations, which obtains data from hundreds of avocational banders and Project Owl-net designed to improve our knowledge of the migratory movements of small owls.

Avocational banders have traditionally been associated with one of the three regional bird banding associations—the Eastern, Western, and Inland Bird Banding Associations. As funding allows, the BBL participates in the annual meetings of these associations to provide updates on BBL activities and to receive input from these stakeholder groups.

Recent Bird Banding Laboratory Advancements and U.S. Geological Survey Investments

Highlights of recent BBL advancements include:

- The conversion of 4.5 million paper and microfilm encounter records to digital format, an investment amounting to nearly \$1 million and resulting in the availability of most reported band encounters in electronic format (2010).
- The launch of a new Internet-based band-reporting program allowing bands to be reported online rather than through the costly toll-free telephone system (2012).
- A new data system that allows for recapture information to be incorporated in the BBL database. This system is essential for the analysis of new, more sophisticated capture-recapture data to assess the population dynamics of sensitive species such as the American Black Duck and Laysan Albatross. Studies are currently underway to provide USFWS managers with cutting-edge information (2013).
- The complete transformation of the 72-million-record dataset to a relational database that supports detailed scientific analyses (2006).

These recent transformations to more scientifically and technologically advanced systems have supported the

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scientific community and avian research in addition to meeting the regulatory needs of migratory bird harvest programs. BBL integration into major ecological events such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster and Hurricane Sandy continue to drive innovation in banding and encounter data management and analyses. Since 2000, more than 1,500 scientific publications have used BBL data and capabilities to continually improve the state of our knowledge about migratory bird populations in North America (see appendix 2).

In addition to the two primary recommendations, the Committee developed six broad goals for the BBL. These six goals were broken down into 23 objectives, with 58 specific recommendations as to how to achieve those objectives (see Appendix 1 for a complete listing). The five highest priority objectives out of the 23 are identified and the actions taken by the BBL to address the specific recommendations to meet those objectives are as follows:

1. To ensure a continuing and adequate supply of high-quality, Federally issued numeric bands of required sizes, materials, and types.

BBL actions: Currently (2013), the BBL maintains a 2-year supply of all band types including hard-metal bands, representing an inventory of approximately \$350,000.

2. To improve mechanisms for verifying, accepting, storing, and managing bird banding data.

BBL actions: The BBL has converted to an entirely electronic processing system for banding data through the use of the BANDIT software. It is continuously improving the data-quality-control processes to more efficiently handle large volumes of data without sacrificing data quality.

3. To accommodate recapture data.

BBL actions: The BBL has developed the software and data architecture to store and facilitate the analyses of recapture data, beginning with the long-term population monitoring data for breeding Laysan and Black-footed Albatross as a prototype and expanding this system to address emerging studies of the American Black Duck.

4. To ensure through the permitting process that banders know how to safely handle birds, collect data accurately, and maintain birds in humane and healthful conditions.

BBL actions: The BBL implemented an electronic permit renewal process in 2011 that has greatly

reduced the time required to renew banding permits. Its permit office, which handles more than 7,000 permit actions annually, is continuously improving the efficiency of its operations. Knowledge of the safe and humane handling of birds is one of several important factors used during the evaluation of permit applications.

5. To encourage the development of banding programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

BBL actions: Currently (2013), the BBL is closely coordinating with the Mexican government concerning the development of a Mexican bird banding program. It remains actively engaged in efforts to develop bird banding programs throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Of the 58 specific recommendations, 47 have been addressed and operational efficiencies have been greatly improved. Highlights of these 47 actions include—

- The BBL now maintains a 2- to 2.5-year supply of all band types.
- The BBL has worked closely with the banding community to create new band sizes in demand such as 1D (for shrikes and other passerines), 5A (for wood ducks), and 9A (for eagles).
- The BBL has developed a new Web site for reporting of auxiliary marker sightings.
- The BBL data-management system is now (2013) regularly modified to improve the automation and efficiency of banding data processing as new needs are identified.
- The BBL is working cooperatively with the USFWS to develop a prototype recapture database for Albatross and the American Black Duck. This new system will be used to manage recapture data collected by banders and will include changes to the BANDIT software.
- A new Reportband (<http://www.reportband.gov/>) Web site for reporting encounter data was released in 2013. This Web site allows immediate feedback to the reporter provided that the banding data have been submitted, and promotes the use of Web-based maps to improve the accuracy of location information and improvements to other data-quality-control processes.
- In 2012, the printing of Certificates of Appreciation for band reporting was automated; the certificates are now sent electronically, substantially reducing costs of postage.

- With funding obtained through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), approximately 4.5 million hard-copy records were converted to digital files.
- The BBL is currently (2013) working with the USGS Core Science Systems to provide public access to U.S. banding data through the BISON Web site. In fiscal year 2013, data files will be transformed to the appropriate format for BISON (<http://bison.usgs.ornl.gov/>).
- A new streamlined form, which has been well received by the banding community, was recently (2013) created for the permit-renewal process.
- In January 2013, an agreement was signed between the USGS and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) detailing the joint operation of, and listing the roles and responsibilities of, the U.S. and Canadian banding offices.

Of the 58 specific recommendations, 11 were only partially addressed, for practical reasons, as follows:

- **Recommendations 1.3.b and 2.1.f:** Build capacity to store data from nonstandard bird markers.

BBL response: The BBL did not address this recommendation because a new international program, Movebank (www.movebank.org), has been created specifically to manage these data. BBL actions in this area would be a duplication of effort.

- **Recommendations 2.2.a, 2.2.b, and 2.2.c:** These three recommendations focused on developing and maintaining metadata associated with banding data.

BBL response: The BBL recognizes that metadata provide value in describing datasets. However, metadata are not widely used by the public and many large data systems do not have metadata files. With respect to gaining operational efficiencies and science support, the priority of these recommendations is low.

- **Recommendation 3.1.b.** Develop a system to notify banders when their data are accessed so they have the ability to contact the person who downloaded the data.

BBL response: The Privacy Act precludes implementation of this recommendation.

- **Recommendation 3.1.c.** In consultation with banders and users of banding data, review and revise the current policy for use of banding data, and require all data users to agree to this policy.

BBL response: Because BBL data are in the public domain, BBL cannot legally restrict their use. The BBL and CWS have revised their data-release policies that provide voluntary guidance on the use of banding data, but all data maintained by the BBL are openly available for public use.

- **Recommendation 3.2.a.** Maintain an up-to-date Web site with resource information (including links to other Web sites) on best practices for data collection and data analysis.

BBL response: This information is already available through a variety of other Web sites.

- **Recommendation 4.1.c.** Develop an online, self-administered test to ensure that banders applying for permits are aware of and understand relevant regulations, animal welfare concerns, the banders' Code of Ethics, methods for coding and recording data, and other matters that do not require physically handling a bird.

BBL response: The North American Banding Council (NABC) has assumed responsibility for implementing this recommendation.

- **Recommendation 4.1.d.** Use the permit renewal process to ensure that banders continue to be aware of current banding standards and practices.

BBL response: Implementation of this recommendation would require a change in the Federal regulations that apply to bird banding and migratory bird permits. Action on this recommendation is not anticipated in the foreseeable future.

- **Recommendation 6.2.a.** Develop a business plan for the BBL.

BBL response: The BBL will develop this plan when business plans at the Mission Area and Region are finalized, and can provide context.

Permits

The BBL permit office handles more than 7,000 permit actions annually (new, renewed, inactivated, and modified authorizations) and issues 50 to 100 new Master permits and 200 to more than 300 new subpermits annually.

Evaluating applications for banding permits requires careful consideration with respect to the requester's banding experiences and his or her qualifications for the humane capture and handling of birds as well as the public benefit from the proposed banding activities. This evaluation has become more important in light of increased public concern over animal welfare issues in general and the specific effects of bird banding activities on migratory bird populations.

Of the 273 permit requests received during 2008-12, approximately 16 percent were not issued. The reasons for denying banding permit applications fall into three categories that have existed for decades:

1. The applicant lacks the necessary banding experience for the requested authorizations (unqualified).
2. The applicant's proposed banding project(s) are insufficient to support issuing a permit. In most cases, the proposed projects are vague or lack sufficient scientific merit. In a few cases, they unnecessarily duplicate existing banding projects (poor justification).
3. The proposed banding activities are already covered by an existing Master permit and the applicant can conduct these activities under that permit. An example would be a graduate student working on a USFWS wildlife refuge who can conduct the proposed project as a subpermittee under the refuge permit. In these cases, although the Master permit application is denied, the applicant can still conduct the banding activities (existing permit).

In some cases, enthusiastic avocational banders propose to capture and band thousands of songbirds annually in order to monitor migratory events at known concentration locations. However, these "high-volume" banding activities typically contribute little new knowledge of the status of migratory bird populations while extremely low encounter rates of these banded birds provide very few insights into avian movement patterns. In contrast, banding activities in support of wildlife management programs, such as waterfowl banding, provide essential data in support of the missions of Federal and State wildlife agencies while banding by the research community results in hundreds of peer-reviewed publications annually that greatly expand our ornithological knowledge. As recommended in the Committee report, the focus of the BBL has been to support the banding programs of scientists and managers while placing less emphasis on new "high-volume" banding operations that have limited scientific potential.

Funding

The BBL continues to improve operational efficiency and serve the banding community despite relatively "flat" funding over several years (fig. 1). Salaries have been the major

expense (fig. 2) despite a reduction in BBL staff from 21 full-time equivalents (FTEs) and 3 contractors in 2007 to 15 FTEs and 2 full-time contractors in 2013. The smaller staff continues to effectively manage both the U.S. and Canadian banding programs, which have not diminished in size and scope.

To compensate for this "flat" funding and reduced staff, the BBL has implemented many operational efficiencies during the past decade that have allowed many functions to be automated. With 47 of the 58 recommendations of the Federal Advisory Committee implemented, the BBL has done a credible job modernizing its operations while maintaining cost control. Moreover, the USGS has been able to opportunistically invest in advancing the technology through specific initiatives, such as digitizing encounter records by using funding provided by the ARRA.

Conclusions

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is a nonregulatory and noncommercial scientific agency that acquires, analyzes, synthesizes, and disseminates data for the benefit of the Nation. The North American Bird Banding Laboratory at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC) manages bird banding activities and data that are essential to Federal and State regulatory decisions supporting bird conservation. A 2005 comprehensive review of the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) reaffirmed its mission to continue to support science, conservation, and management of birds at the PWRC under USGS leadership.

As a major program of the Nation's largest water, earth, and biological science and civilian mapping, the BBL and its operations have greatly benefitted from new technologies and research activities within the USGS. Moreover, USGS science continues to guide and direct the use of cutting-edge banding and marking techniques to improve the management and conservation of migratory bird populations.

Under USGS scientific stewardship and by making effective use of its capabilities, the BBL has increasingly focused on providing data to diverse scientific partners through greater accessibility of the more than 72 million banding records. The USGS has established expertise in collecting and curating large databases for understanding our natural world, such as imaging produced by Landsat, real-time streamflow data, and the Breeding Bird Survey. By following this model, the BBL has coupled banding data with stable-isotope analysis, satellite telemetry, and other research tools to provide the critical capabilities needed to understand changes in bird populations and migration in the context of ecological change at the landscape level.

Scientific research is inextricably coupled to the mission and functionality of the BBL. The strong, impartial scientific role of the USGS in supporting natural-resource management decisions makes it the appropriate organization to manage bird-banding operations.

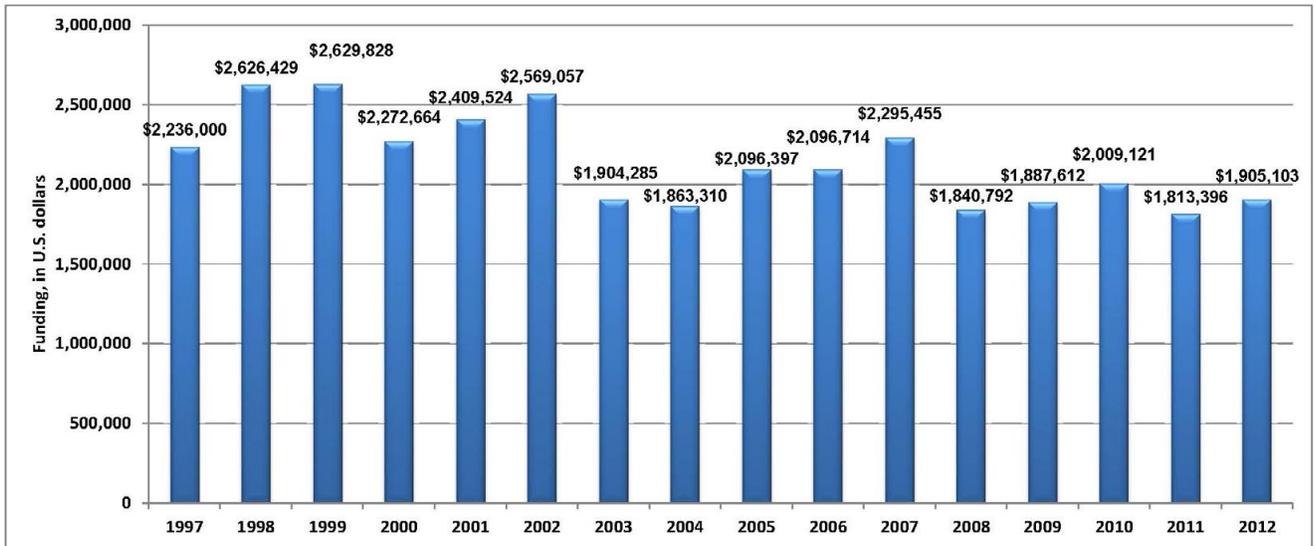


Figure 1. U.S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory funding, fiscal year (FY) 1997 to FY 2012

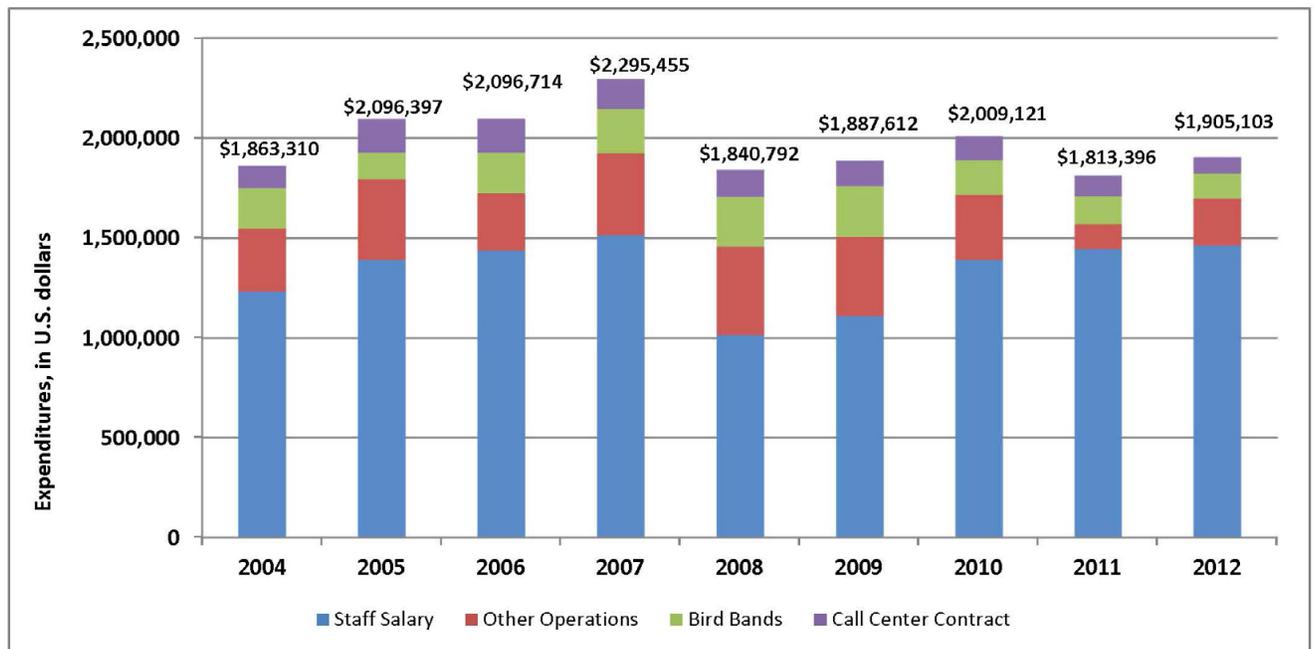


Figure 2. U.S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory funding and expenditures from fiscal year (FY) 2004 to FY 2012.

Appendix 1. Summary of Bird Banding Laboratory Activities in Response to the Recommendations of the Federal Advisory Committee Act Report



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In this document, the objectives and recommendations were taken “as written” from the Report of the Federal Advisory Committee on the Bird Banding Laboratory [U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Circular 1320 by Haseltine and others (2008)]. Actions taken by the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) to address these recommendations are provided in bold type below each recommendation.

Acronyms and abbreviations used in this appendix are as follows:

AFRING	African Waterbird Ringing Scheme
AOU	American Ornithologists' Union
BBL	Bird Banding Laboratory
BBO	Canadian Bird Banding Office
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EURING	European Union for Bird Ringing
FGDC	Federal Geographic Data Committee
FAC	Federal Advisory Committee
FY	Fiscal year
IOC	International Ornithological Congress
GPS	Global positioning system
LEMIS	Law Enforcement Management Information System
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NABC	North American Banding Council
PWRC	Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey

Objective 1.1: Ensure a continuing adequate supply of high-quality Federally issued numeric bird bands of required sizes, materials, and types. **HIGH PRIORITY**

Recommendation 1.1.a. Develop procedures to ensure that an adequate supply of high-quality bands of all types, materials, and sizes can be maintained in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost. These should include greater diversification of band suppliers and development of in-house quality controls through random checks of bands.

- The BBL currently maintains a 2- to 2.5-year supply of all band types.
- The BBL has developed a band quality-control plan that is followed for each shipment of bands received from the suppliers. All problems identified during the quality-control process or through reports from banders are resolved through communication with the suppliers.
- Following USGS acquisition guidelines, one company currently supplies bands for the BBL.

Recommendation 1.1.b. Establish processes to determine the need for new band types and sizes, and ensure that appropriate band types are both available and used for each species (for example, ensure that hard-metal bands are available and used on species that regularly outlive aluminum bands, and that appropriate bands are available for birds that frequent salt-water environments).

- The BBL maintains in-stock hard-metal bands for sizes 2 and above.
- New band sizes that have been recently created include 1D (for shrikes and other passerines), 5A (for wood ducks), and 9A (for eagles). The BBL works with the banding community to identify the need for new band sizes and then creates bands to meet these needs.

Objective 1.2: Facilitate coordination of auxiliary markers.

Recommendation 1.2.a. Ensure effective coordination of the use of auxiliary markers amongst banders—regionally, nationally, and internationally—within the Americas. Develop tools, such as Web sites and Web-based databases, where projects can be registered to facilitate coordination. The tools should allow users (banders, public reporters, researchers, wildlife managers, and BBL staff) to independently send and retrieve information. As much as possible, implement through delegation to partners with expertise in particular bird groups, with BBL providing oversight for the resolution of disputes or other problems as required.

- Auxiliary marker information is coordinated between the BBL and Bird Banding Office (Canada) on a regular basis. For species of birds with hemispheric distributions (shorebirds), the BBL has partnered with the shorebird community to develop a unified marking system. Similar coordination occurs with the waterfowl management community, which is responsible for the marking programs for this group.

Recommendation 1.2.b. Require that all auxiliary marker data submitted to the BBL be in a format that can be incorporated into the BBL database so that the BBL can build an accurate, complete database. There are some species for which auxiliary marking is the primary and most effective way of collecting information. For these birds it is essential that the data be submitted in a specified format.

- Current versions of the BANDIT software store auxiliary marker data in standard formats that are automatically submitted to the BBL with the banding data.

Recommendation 1.2.c. With regard to encounters of auxiliary markers, the BBL should: (1) emphasize maximum automation with little or no direct staff involvement, (2) focus on putting reporters directly in touch with banders to transfer and receive information, and (3) require large-scale marking projects (at a minimum) to assume responsibility for managing and coordinating their encounter data and (or) commit resources (for a Web developer) to BBL to offset costs incurred for these activities. To accomplish this, the BBL should: (1) provide a communication mechanism for information to be submitted by, and be available to, reporters of auxiliary marking encounters (“sightings”); (2) develop tools, such as Web sites, list servers, and Web-based databases, where auxiliary marker projects are registered, and reporters can be directed to file their sightings and obtain information about marked birds; and (3) design systems to accept all sightings of auxiliary-marked birds from the public and provide some level of feedback to the reporter, regardless of bander and (or) BBL interest.

- The BBL has developed a Web site for reporting of auxiliary marker sightings and is currently working to improve the automation for processing these data. As more auxiliary marker data are submitted through BANDIT, the BBL will be in a better position to begin implementing automated feedback systems to the reporter of marked birds.

Recommendation 1.2.d. Ensure banders and BBL can receive auxiliary-marking encounter information. Report to banders those auxiliary marker encounters that can be unambiguously linked with a unique band number and for which the bander who placed the auxiliary marker has an interest in knowing of public sightings. Encounters of markers that are not linked with a unique band number, or even to a specific bander, should be made available for consideration on a Web site or list server.

- The BBL has dedicated a staff position to providing reports of marked birds to the banders and dealing with related issues. Efforts to improve the efficiency of this process are ongoing.

Objective 1.3: Accommodate new methods and technologies for marking birds.

Recommendation 1.3.a. Remain cognizant of the development of new bird-marking techniques and technologies, including appropriate evaluation of their impact on bird welfare, and ensure that information on their safe use is accessible and appropriately disseminated.

- The BBL is in regular communication with the banding community concerning the use of new technologies for marking birds.

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Recommendation 1.3.b. Build capacity to store data from nonstandard bird markers, including data collected by automated means, such as satellite transmitters, if such centralized data storage is not otherwise available. Emphasis should be placed on data that may contribute to the management and conservation of birds through integration or coordination across projects.

- Movebank is an international program coordinating the storage of data collected through use of satellite transmitters, data loggers, and other automatic recorders. The program is based in Germany but accepts global data from these sources. There is no need for the BBL to duplicate or compete with these efforts.

Objective 1.4: Encourage development of new methods for capturing and marking birds in ways that improve bird welfare.

Recommendation 1.4.a. Develop appropriate guidelines that encourage banders to evaluate and develop new and innovative methods for capturing and marking birds. Encourage submission of reports on injuries or mortalities related to new methods, with clarification that banders will not risk permit revocation or suspension if mortalities or injuries occur, provided that appropriate guidelines are followed. However, restrict the use of capture methods or markers based on potential impacts only when those impacts are serious, long lasting or permanent, well documented, and unequivocal.

- The BBL continues to provide guidance on the development of innovative methods for capturing and marking birds, and encourages the reporting of these studies in the peer-reviewed literature. Authorization of these experimental techniques is always done with appropriate concern for the welfare of the birds.

Recommendation 1.4.b. Develop mechanisms, potentially through partners, to gather information from banders on bird welfare issues associated with particular capture or marking methods.

- The BBL supported efforts by University of Connecticut researchers to document potential animal welfare issues associated with use of radio transmitters on birds. Results of this study were presented during the 2009 American Ornithologists' Union meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Objective 2.1: Improve mechanisms for verifying, accepting, storing, and managing bird banding data.

HIGH PRIORITY

Recommendation 2.1.a. Improve the efficiency of submitting banding schedules through use of appropriate Internet technology, and an automated system to vet submitted data for accuracy. This should include flags in the database that indicate the level to which data have been vetted, as well as user-friendly automated procedures to communicate with banders regarding questionable data and to receive input from banders. Inform banders that they have the primary responsibility for verifying data, initially through programs provided to banders (for example, Band Manager, Bandit, or MAPSPROG), and then subsequently through responding to automated reports from the banding office. Minimize the need for personal interaction between BBL staff and banders regarding questionable data.

- This is an ongoing process that is conducted with the release of each new version of the BANDIT software, which is shifting more of the burden for data quality control to the bander.
- The BBL data-management system is regularly modified to improve the automation and efficiency of banding data processing as new needs are identified by BBL staff.

Recommendation 2.1.b. Accept location information, including GPS data, to a higher level of precision than currently required by the BBL. The BBL should always require that the cooperators report the actual level of precision of the location data.

- BANDIT software currently allows banding data to be submitted at several levels of precision, including exact coordinates obtained from GPS systems.

Recommendation 2.1.c. Collect and store auxiliary marker data, including appropriate metadata describing the types of markers used.

- BANDIT software has been modified to store and automatically submit auxiliary marker data with the banding data.

Recommendation 2.1.d. Ensure that all digital data, including archived data, are maintained in an appropriate, up-to-date format so that they will not be lost as technology changes.

- The BBL follows USGS and Federal data-storage and -archiving standards to ensure that these data are maintained in up-to-date formats.

Recommendation 2.1.e. Allow for flexible timing of submission of banding schedules as appropriate to meet the needs of the BBL and banders.

- BANDIT software currently allows banders to submit their data electronically at any time, including making multiple submissions per year.

Recommendation 2.1.f. Build the capacity to store data from nonstandard bird markers, including data collected by automated means, such as satellite transmitters, if such centralized storage is not otherwise available. Emphasis should be placed on data that may contribute to the management and conservation of birds through integration or coordination across projects.

- Movebank is an international program that coordinates the storage of data collected through use of satellite transmitters, data loggers, and other automatic recorders. The program is based in Germany but accepts global data from these sources. There is no need for the BBL to duplicate or compete with these efforts.

Objective 2.2: Develop appropriate systems to store and maintain metadata associated with banding data.

- At this time (2013), the BBL has not taken action on the recommendations for this objective.

Recommendation 2.2.a. Use FGDC (Federal Geographic Data Committee) metadata standards, as appropriate, for all metadata associated with banding records.

Recommendation 2.2.b. Consult with appropriate experts to determine the types of metadata about the context of banding (for example, project objectives, methods, effort, and so on) that could and should be stored centrally and how they should be recorded.

Recommendation 2.2.c. Develop a system to accommodate the metadata recommended in 2.2.b by providing training and educational materials and user-friendly tools for metadata submission in order to encourage banders to submit such data.

Objective 2.3: Accommodate recapture data. **HIGH PRIORITY**

Recommendation 2.3.a. Develop an automated system for submitting, vetting, and accepting all recapture data into the BBL database, and encourage all banders to submit recapture data, including historical data, through this system, unless it is already being submitted through another program such as MAPS. Concurrently, require banders to submit metadata associated with the recapture programs under which those recaptures were recorded (again, unless it is already being reported), as recapture data without associated metadata are of questionable value and can easily be misused.

- The BBL is working cooperatively with the USFWS Region 1 Migratory Birds Management Office on a project to develop a recapture database for albatross data collected from the northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Additionally, in FY 2013 the BBL will begin to create a system to manage recapture data collected by banders. This process will include modifications to the current BBL data-management system as well as major changes to the BANDIT software to allow for the proper management and submission of these data to the BBL. The changes to the BBL data-management system should be completed during FY 2013, whereas a new version of the BANDIT software may be released during FY 2014 to allow banders to begin submitting their recapture data to the BBL.

Objective 2.4: Create an archive for storing voluntarily submitted ancillary and associated data.

Recommendation 2.4.a. Develop automated systems for submission, vetting, and acceptance of voluntarily submitted ancillary data (and associated metadata, including information on data quality control), noting that the responsibility for data quality control resides with the bander. Remind banders that these data will be available to the public.

- The BANDIT software allows for the management of these ancillary data. Some data-quality functions have been incorporated to improve the vetting of some of these fields, but better data-quality-control procedures need to be developed before these data will be of sufficient quality to be submitted to the BBL. Improvements to these data-quality-control procedures is an ongoing process with each new version of the software.

Objective 2.5: Continue to improve the efficiency of methods for receiving encounter information to enhance the quality of information received and reduce the costs of processing encounters, while encouraging greater reporting.

Recommendation 2.5.a. Develop and promote Web-based, auto-mated reporting of band recovery data, with appropriate checks to ensure that all required data are submitted, and provide immediate feedback to the person reporting the band. Offer finders the option of an electronic or paper “Certificate of Appreciation.”

- A new Reportband (www.reportband.gov) Web site for reporting encounter data was released in 2013. New functions of this Web site include providing immediate feedback to the reporter as long as the banding data have been submitted to the BBL, use of Web-based maps to improve the accuracy of location information, and improvements to other data-quality-control processes. In August 2012, the BBL shifted to entirely electronic Certificates of Appreciation, a step that improved the availability of these certificates while substantially reducing costs to the BBL.

Recommendation 2.5.b. Begin to include a Web address on bands to enhance Web-based automated reporting of recovery. Promote Web reporting to reduce errors and costs; however, in the near term, continue to support the use of toll-free numbers for reporting bands. Investigate the costs and benefits of an automated telephone system to capture data using touch-tone technology that could simultaneously handle English, French, and Spanish, to reduce the costs of processing calls.

- All bands procured by the BBL now have the Web address printed on them. As supplies of older band types are depleted, only Web-address bands will be supplied to banders in the future. Use of the 1-800 telephone number to report bands continues, but because of the complexity associated with obtaining this information, converting to an entirely touch-tone system is not feasible at this time (2013).

Objective 2.6: Ensure the preservation and eventual computerization of historical (nondigitized) banding data currently stored at the BBL.

Recommendation 2.6.a. Arrange immediately for proper physical storage of the original records (in consultation with the National Archives and Records Administration) to ensure that they are adequately protected and do not deteriorate.

- The BBL has been in contact with NARA about the proper care and disposition of its paper records and is following all appropriate Federal standards.

Recommendation 2.6.b. Investigate appropriate ways of making these data available digitally in the future, considering options such as digitizing the data through the BBL (perhaps in a cost-sharing program with interested users), or scanning the records as images so that they can be distributed to interested third parties to capture digitally.

- The BBL received funding during 2009 to convert hard-copy band encounter records to digital files. This project was completed in September 2010, with approximately 4 million images created of these records. This project addresses both recommendations below. The BANDIT files submitting banding data to the BBL are currently

archived on Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC) computers. At this time (2013), only the paper banding schedules have not been digitized.

Objective 3.1: Develop a Web-based, user-friendly system to provide full and open access to all banding data and information, except where such information may be of a sensitive nature (for example, exact locations of endangered species), along with appropriate guidelines for use of the data.

Recommendation 3.1.a. Develop a Web-based, user-friendly interface to allow for public retrieval of bird-banding data. All data, including recent data, should be available, with the exception that locations for biologically or commercially sensitive species should be limited to province or state. The database should be updated at regular intervals (once or a few times per year) but not continuously, so that the download is dated. Use methods such as a password-based login, with an e-mail-based verification, to gather information on who is downloading data.

- The BBL is working with the USGS CDI program to provide public access to U.S. banding data through the BISON Web site that was recently launched by USGS. Banding datasets will be made available during 2013 as data files are transformed into the appropriate format that can be accommodated by BISON. Individual banding records will be made available through this publicly available Web site, which also provides access to data for other taxa of animals and plants.

Recommendation 3.1.b. Develop a system to notify banders when their data are accessed so they have the ability to contact the person who downloaded the data.

- At this time (2013), the BBL has not taken action on this recommendation.

Recommendation 3.1.c. In consultation with banders and users of banding data, review and revise the current policy for use of banding data, and require all data users to agree to this policy. The BBL should also encourage the adoption of this policy by ornithological societies and scientific journals as part of their scientific code of ethics.

- This recommendation does not reflect the fact that the BBL data are in the public domain and the BBL cannot legally restrict use of these data. The BBL and the Canadian Bird Banding Office have revised their data-release policies that provide voluntary guidance on the use of banding data, but all data maintained by the BBL are openly available for public use.

Objective 3.2: Encourage development, adoption, and sharing of best practices related to project design, data collection, and data analysis for banding projects.

Recommendation 3.2.a. Maintain an up-to-date Web site with resource information (including links to other Web sites) on best practices for data collection and data analysis. Encourage researchers to provide information for such a Web page. Ensure that users downloading data are aware of these approaches and methods.

- This information is already available on existing Web resources and the banding community can use existing search-engine technology to identify and access these sites. There is no need for the BBL to duplicate existing efforts with little or no value added.

Recommendation 3.2.b. Provide a technical assistance function within the BBL to advise banders and researchers on best practices in project design, field data collection, and data analysis when requested.

- The BBL is in regular communication with the banding community to provide guidance on banding project design and data collection. Questions on data analyses are typically directed toward USGS PWRC statisticians, who have considerable expertise in this area.

Objective 3.3: Encourage development of tools to make better use of banding data.

Recommendation 3.3.a. Work with partners to develop Web-based visualization tools that could be hosted on the BBL Web site to allow better use of banding data (for example, interactive Web-based mapping of band recovery data).

- The Smithsonian Institution is working collaboratively with the BBL to develop Web-based tools to summarize the movement of birds within the context of full life-cycle bird conservation. This project was initiated during fiscal year (FY) 2012. Some preliminary products may be available during FY 2013, but the full set of visualization tools may not be available until FY 2014 or later. The BBL is also working toward developing Web-based summaries of banding and band encounter data. The BBL hopes to start releasing some of these summaries during FY 2013, with continued releases as new summaries become available.

Objective 4.1: Without significantly increasing the number of master permits, base the decision on whether or not to issue master or subpermits on evidence that the applicant has the skills and knowledge to capture and handle birds of the requested species safely, to collect appropriate data (including age and sex) for those species, and to submit data timely and accurately to the BBL. **HIGH PRIORITY**

Recommendation 4.1.a. Ensure, through the permitting process, that applicants know how to safely handle birds, maintain birds in humane and healthful conditions, and collect data accurately.

- The BBL permitting procedures have been consistent with this recommendation during recent decades.

Recommendation 4.1.b. Use a variety of tools to evaluate the qualifications of the bander, including the following: (1) Recommendations of people who have worked with the bander; (2) Information on experience handling birds and numbers of birds handled; (3) Evidence of bander training; (4) Information provided by the applicant; (5) Online testing; and (6) Demonstrated proficiency at identifying the birds to be banded.

- Most of these “tools” are already in use to evaluate the applicant’s qualifications. Development of online testing applications requires addressing a variety of complex administrative issues. Creating such a testing application is not anticipated in the short term.

Recommendation 4.1.c. Develop an online, self-administered test to ensure that banders applying for permits are aware of and understand relevant regulations, animal welfare concerns, the banders’ Code of Ethics, methods for coding and recording data, and other matters that do not require physically handling a bird.

- Developing online testing applications also requires creating appropriate training materials that can be reviewed before taking any test. The North American Banding Council (NABC) has assumed responsibility for developing training materials for the banding community and there is no need for the BBL to duplicate these efforts. The BBL cannot create a comprehensive online test until the NABC has developed these materials.

Recommendation 4.1.d. Use the permit renewal process to ensure that banders continue to be aware of current banding standards and practices, perhaps through updated Web-based testing, or completion of a questionnaire or checklist.

- The BBL has not taken action on this recommendation. Testing as a part of the permit renewal process would require changes to the Federal regulations that apply to bird banding permits, and such changes are not anticipated in the foreseeable future.

Recommendation 4.1.e. Require brief summaries of proposed banding projects, but do not use these to decide whether or not to grant a permit.

- Banding project proposals have always been required of applicants and are typically used to determine the specific authorizations that need to be provided to the permittee.

Objective 4.2: Streamline the permit application process to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Recommendation 4.2.a. Develop a streamlined, online application system, including online submission of information on qualifications and letters of recommendation.

- The BBL created a streamlined form for the permit renewal process during FY 2011, a form that has been well received by the banding community. The BBL intends to develop a fully electronic application system. Because of funding and staffing limitations, work on developing an electronic permitting system will not begin until FY 2014 or FY 2015 at the earliest.

Recommendation 4.2.b. Issue permits for 3 years, and require all banders to actively renew their permits. As a prerequisite for renewal, demand up-to-date submission of all required banding data (for example, schedules).

- The BBL currently issues permits for 3 years and permit renewal is dependent on the bander's resolving all of the "up for banding" requests from the BBL to ensure that banding data are submitted for all banded birds that have been reported by the public.

Recommendation 4.2.c. Establish, if feasible, a link with the Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS) to determine if an applicant has been found guilty of a violation of a Federal wildlife law and use this information as a factor in determining whether or not to issue a permit.

- Federal computer security guidelines will not allow the BBL to develop a direct link to LEMIS at this time (2013).

Objective 4.3: Update regulations, policies, and guidance using best practices (including providing opportunity for public notice and comment) and clearly communicate the regulations, policies, and guidance to the community in writing.

Recommendation 4.3.a. Identify regulatory gaps (for example, use of radio and satellite transmitters, PIT tags, and issuing of subpermits) and revise regulations as needed. Regulations should allow the BBL to issue banding permits authorizing the taking of blood, feather, and cloacal samples.

- The BBL is currently in the process of revising relevant portions of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) that relate to bird banding.

Recommendation 4.3.b. Review and revise the North American Banding Manual to ensure that it clearly includes information on all policies, guidance, and regulations relevant to banding.

- The concept of a paper "North American Banding Manual" has become obsolete in this electronic era. The BBL Web site is evolving to provide the same information in an electronic format that can be easily updated as new information becomes available. A new BBL Web site was released during FY 2011 and is being revised and updated to meet the functions that were formerly served by the banding manual.

Objective 4.4: Ensure consistency in written regulations, policies, and practices regarding revocation and suspension decisions.

Recommendation 4.4.a. Develop and implement policies for revocation and suspension of permits that reflect the current regulations and that protect the proprietary interests of banders, while ensuring that banders follow best practices.

- These policies are established in the portions of the CFR that apply to all permits related to the enforcement of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and have been followed in the few instances where banding permits have been proposed for suspension or revocation.

Recommendation 4.4.b. If feasible, use available information on convictions of violations of wildlife laws to inform revocation and suspension decisions.

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- This remains a standard practice of the BBL as defined in the appropriate sections of the CFR that apply to all migratory bird permits.

Objective 5.1: Work with partners to achieve shared goals and leverage available resources.

Recommendation 5.1.a. Involve partners in the creation of products and tools to meet the needs of the BBL and the partners and to deliver BBL messages.

- The BBL considers all constructive comments and suggestions that it receives from the banding community and others with an interest in its operations. For example, banders have provided a number of useful suggestions that were incorporated in improved versions of the BANDIT software. The Flyways receive annual updates on BBL activities and provide their comments on all aspects of the BBL program.

Recommendation 5.1.b. Maintain active interactions with banding schemes and organizations elsewhere in the world, such as EURING, AFRING, and the IOC standing committee on bird ring-ing, and develop schemes in Latin America and the Caribbean to exchange and share experiences, expertise, and products.

- The BBL continues to interact with various international banding schemes/organizations to the extent possible under current budgets. Much of this interaction occurs through electronic communication.

Recommendation 5.1.c. Work with partners to identify key materials that promote ethics and bird welfare and proper capture, handling, and banding techniques for distribution by BBL. Use MTABs, the BBL Web site, permitting processes, workshops, and other communication tools.

- The BBL remains involved with the activities of the NABC and bird banding associations in ongoing efforts to address these issues.

Recommendation 5.1.d. Seek opportunities to augment BBL staff and resources through partnerships that further BBL's mission.

- The collaborative effort with USFWS to develop a data-management system for recapture data is a recent example of using partnerships to further the mission of the lab, as is the collaborative project with The Smithsonian Institution to develop data-visualization tools.

Recommendation 5.1.e. Where appropriate, use formal agreements, reviewed and updated from time to time, to document intra- and intergovernmental partnerships and to define clear roles and responsibilities.

- A new agreement between the USGS and the Canadian Wildlife Service regarding the joint operation of the BBL and the BBO was signed in January 2013. This agreement defines the roles and responsibilities of both banding offices with regards to the operation of the North American Bird Banding Program.

Objective 5.2: Develop and implement a process that involves partners in advising the BBL.

Recommendation 5.2.a. Maintain and strengthen relationships with key Federal partners (for example, FWS).

- A representative from the USFWS Migratory Birds Management Division regularly attends meetings of the BBL management team to further communication between the two offices. BBL staff members attend annual meetings of the various Flyway Councils to further communication with important state agencies. These are just two examples of attempts to strengthen relationships with other government agencies.

Recommendation 5.2.b. Maintain a FAC composed similarly to but not necessarily the same as the current one, to monitor and advise the BBL on implementation of the recommendations of this report, and to maintain and enhance communication with and relationships between the BBL and its partners, stakeholders, and the broader bird-banding community.

- **USGS decided not to establish a formal Federal Advisory Committee at this time (2013).**

Recommendation 5.2.c. Establish and maintain an open-door policy for partners and stakeholders. Consult to the extent possible with affected partners and stakeholders while making major operational decisions.

- The BBL has always maintained an open-door policy for stakeholders, but has also had to balance the often conflicting demands of the entire banding community. It will strive to improve communication as much as possible given current staffing shortages.

Recommendation 5.2.d. Provide for BBL presence at key partner and stakeholder meetings.

- BBL staff members attend meetings of the various bird banding associations, flyway councils, NABC, and other stakeholders to the extent possible under current budgets.

Objective 5.3: Encourage development of banding programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

HIGH PRIORITY

Recommendation 5.3.a. Play a central role in building capacity for bird-banding programs elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere. The BBL should be flexible in helping to develop Latin American and Caribbean banding schemes that are appropriate for the partners and feasible for the BBL, considering options ranging from independent schemes that exchange data, to expanding the North American Bird Banding Program to include additional countries with agreements similar to that between Canada and the U.S.

- The BBL remains active in the development of the Western Hemisphere Bird Banding Network to better coordinate banding activities among the various banding programs in this hemisphere.

Recommendation 5.3.b. Allow the use of U.S. Federal bands on resident as well as migratory birds for projects within the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) checklist area, in consultation with the affected countries, subject to the same terms and conditions as are currently applied to projects banding migratory birds in these countries with U.S. bands. Specifically, the bander must qualify for and possess a permit in the U.S. or Canada, and must obtain appropriate permits to capture and handle birds in the country where banding will take place. The BBL must modify its database to be able to receive, process, and store data on these resident birds (but without investing heavily in data-vetting procedures).

- USGS guidelines require the BBL to have formal international agreements with countries to allow the use of U.S. bird bands in those countries. Creating these agreements requires considerable time and effort, but will be attempted as staffing allows and specific needs are identified.

Objective 6.1: Ensure that all components of the program are delivered in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Recommendation 6.1.a. Continue to identify ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of BBL operations by looking at opportunities to outsource noncore functions.

- The BBL remains committed to identifying new approaches that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations, but "outsourcing" is frequently a more expensive option and should be carefully studied before implementation.

Recommendation 6.1.b. Work towards automation of BBL data-handling tasks to the highest extent possible, including passing responsibility for many tasks, such as data checking and data entry, to users. Specific areas for improvements are suggested elsewhere in the document. Priority for implementation should be determined based on an assessment of current staff time requirements and on areas where maximum gains in efficiency can be obtained.

- The new data-management system for the BBL provides innumerable examples of how automation has been successfully implemented into BBL operations. The BBL continues to identify and implement new approaches that automate data-quality procedures and other aspects of the lab's operations.

Objective 6.2: Maintain or enhance the financial foundation of the BBL to ensure that it can continue to meet its mandate.

Recommendation 6.2.a. Develop a business plan for the BBL that considers all costs and benefits of the program, while recognizing the primary mandate of the Department of Interior for the conservation of migratory birds.

- At this time (2013), the BBL has not taken action on this recommendation.

Objective 6.3: Ensure that the workforce at the BBL continues to meet the needs of an evolving organization.

Recommendation 6.3.a. Develop a staffing plan that recognizes the changing workforce needs of the BBL over time, as increased automation reduces the need for clerical staff but increases the need for more highly trained staff, such as computer programmers to maintain and develop systems, and biologists to develop standards and procedures and to serve as liaison between banders, data analysts, and conservation practitioners.

- A staffing plan exists for the BBL that reflects this recommendation. Staffing changes will have to occur opportunistically through retirements of existing staff members and are limited by current budgetary restraints.

Appendix 2. Scientific Publications Supported by Bird Banding Efforts (2000–13)



2013

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- Conklin, Jesse R., Battley, Phil F., and Potter, Murray A., 2013, Absolute Consistency: Individual versus Population Variation in Annual-Cycle Schedules of a Long-Distance Migrant Bird: PLOS ONE, v. 8, no. 1, article e54535.
- Ishihara, Shingo, Bitner, Jessica J., Farley, Greg H., and others, 2013, Vancomycin-Resistant Gram-Positive Cocci Isolated from the Saliva of Wild Songbirds: Current Microbiology, v. 66, no. 4, p. 337–343.
- Streby, Henry M., and Andersen, David E., 2013, Movements, cover-type selection, and survival of fledgling Ovenbirds in managed deciduous and mixed coniferous-deciduous forests: Forest Ecology and Management, v. 287, p. 9–16.
- Streby, Henry M., Peterson, Sean M., Scholtens, Brian, and others, 2013, The Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) as a Model for Testing Food-Value Theory: American Midland Naturalist, v. 169, no. 1, p. 214–220.

2012

- Adams, Josh, Macleod, Catriona, Suryan, Robert M., and others, 2012, Summer-time use of west coast US National Marine Sanctuaries by migrating sooty shearwaters (*Puffinus griseus*): Biological Conservation, v. 156, no. Sp. Iss. SI, p. 105–116.
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- Bai, M. L., and Schmidt, D., 2012, Differential migration by age and sex in central European Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus*: Journal of Ornithology, v. 153, no. 1, p. 75–84.
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- Beason, J. P., Gunn, C., Potter, K. M., and others, 2012, The northern black swift: migration path and wintering area revealed: Wilson Journal of Ornithology, v. 124, no. 1, p. 1–8.
- Beckett, S. R., and Proudfoot, G. A., 2012, Sex-specific migration trends of northern saw-whet owls in Eastern North America: Journal of Raptor Research, v. 46, no. 1, p. 98–108.
- Behney, Adam C., Grisham, Blake A., Boal, Clint W., and others, 2012, Sexual selection and mating chronology of lesser prairie-chickens: Wilson Journal of Ornithology, v. 124, no. 1, p. 96–105.
- Benson, T. J., Ward, M. P., Lampman, R. L., and others, 2012, Implications of Spatial Patterns of Roosting and Movements of American Robins for West Nile Virus Transmission: Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases, v. 12, no. 10, p. 877–885.
- Bildstein, K. L., and Peterjohn, B. G., 2012, The future of banding in raptor science: Journal of Raptor Research, v. 46, no. 1, p. 3–11.
- Bildstein, Keith L., 2012, The role of banding in raptor conservation: Proceedings of a special session at the 2010 RRF annual meeting, Fort Collins, Colorado: Journal of Raptor Research, v. 46, no. 1, p. 1–147.
- Booms, Travis L., 2012, Banded Alaskan gyrfalcon discovered in Arabian falconry: Journal of Raptor Research, v. 46, no. 2, p. 226–227.
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