

MEMORANDUM

TO : All Banders

April 16, 1969  
MTAB-12

FROM : Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory  
Migratory Bird Populations Station  
Laurel, Maryland 20810

- SUBJECT:
1. "Spring Cleaning" - An Edit and Verification of the North American Bird Banding Computer Files
  2. Temporary Moratorium on Requests for Banding Data
  3. "Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace" - How Can the Recording and Submission of Banding Data Be Simplified?
  4. Will We See You? - The Regional Bird Banding Associations' Annual Meetings
  5. Who Are "the Rest of You"?

1. "Spring Cleaning" - An Edit and Verification of the North American Bird Banding Computer Files.

The systems for maintaining the North American Bird Banding Files have undergone a continual series of modifications since 1920 when the responsibility for their maintenance was transferred from the American Bird Banding Association to the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife (then the Biological Survey). The increases in volume of data handled (about 790,000 birds banded during the 12-year period 1920 through 1931 compared to about 1,269,778 records received during calendar year 1968); the complexity of uses to which these data are put; and the increasing number of persons who wish to analyze data from our files have forced the system to evolve from the original hand-written 3"x5" card-per-bird file system through a series of increasingly sophisticated, partially automated systems to our present magnetic tape-oriented computer system.

About the only thing that has remained constant during these five decades is a continual shortage of adequate funds and personnel to:

- a. Keep up-to-date in handling current incoming data and requests for data from the master files

- b. Get the "bugs" out of whatever "new" system was currently being implemented
- c. Modify the files of data fed in under "old" systems so they were completely compatible with files consisting of data fed in through "new" systems, or
- d. Maintain a satisfactory level of accuracy in incoming data or a satisfactory degree of compatibility between incoming and existing data.

This situation has allowed many small problem areas to grow to the point where portions of the files are unreliable for many research purposes.

Although we are still severely limited in both personnel and funds, we have (with the cooperation of "most of you"--see MTAB-11 and Subject 5 of this MTAB) made significant progress in both a and b above.

We now plan to tackle c and d.

All of our files are now on magnetic tape, thus making it possible to check these data more closely than ever before. This summer we plan to subject our files to a massive "edit and verification" check. This check will involve data in:

- a. The Game Bird Summary File - This file contains the summarized banding data for all "game birds" banded prior to January 1, 1967.
- b. The Non-game Bird Summary File - This file contains the summarized banding data for all "non-game" birds banded during the period 1955 through 1966. Data pertaining to non-game birds banded prior to 1955 have never been entered into the machine files.

These two files (a and b) will also be reformatted and combined into a single file.

- c. The Banding "Tub" File - This file contains individual records for all birds banded since January 1, 1967 (see MTAB-10).
- d. The Recovery Statistical File - This file contains one record (with both "banding" and "recovery" data) for each "recovery" report processed.

In addition to many other checks, we will:

- a. Check each code in each record against "tables of acceptable codes."
- b. Check certain codes in certain records against other codes in the same record. For example, we will check:
  - (1) The "date banded" vs. "date recovered" to insure that the bird didn't "die before it was banded." (You'd be surprised how many "do.")
  - (2) "Flyway/State" codes vs. coordinates to insure that the coordinates fall within the geographic boundaries of the "state."
  - (3) Band size vs. AOU number to help detect erroneous "AOU" numbers. (We have informed at least one duck hunter that he shot a rufous hummingbird! How closely do you double check the "AOU numbers" on your schedules?)
- c. Check records in one file against other records in that same file. For example, we will check each record in the Recovery Statistical File against every other record in that file to insure that we have only one record for each dead recovery. (Some birds--especially those which make the newspapers--are reported to the Banding Laboratory by as many as eight to ten different persons.)
- d. Check records in one file against records in other files. For example, we will check the banding data portion of each recovery record against the banding summary and tub files to insure that at least one record exists in the banding files for each record in the recovery file.

In all, we will make about 300 different checks and comparisons against the data in about 5,750,000 records representing about 23,000,000 birds. We anticipate that these checks will reveal discrepancies in hundreds of thousands of records. Each will have to be manually checked against source documents (your banding schedule or the correspondence reporting the recovery) and corrected or verified before we re-enter the data into the files.

WE PREDICT THERE WILL BE MANY THOUSANDS OF DISCREPANCIES WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE CORRECTED OR VERIFIED BY THE BANDER HIMSELF. We will request your assistance in resolving any such discrepancy detected in data pertaining to your birds.

IT WOULD PROBABLY BE A GOOD IDEA TO REVIEW YOUR FILING SYSTEM SO YOU CAN GET BACK TO YOUR FIELD NOTES IN THE EVENT SUCH ASSISTANCE IS REQUESTED.

In other words, we are going to clean out "Grandma's attic." Please have your mop and bucket ready!

2. Temporary Moratorium on Requests for Banding Data.

The "file edit and verification" described in the preceding pages will tie up most of the personnel and facilities of both the Bird Banding Laboratory and the Migratory Bird Populations Station's Automatic Data Processing Section for an extended period. During this period, many of the files will be either incomplete or inaccessible.

For these reasons, we will be unable to honor routine requests for data from our master files (see "Bird Banding Notes," Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 23) until further notice. We will attempt to honor urgent requests for such data when possible. If you have such a need, please accompany your data request with a detailed outline of your need for the data. If the files containing the data you need are complete and accessible, we will attempt to schedule your data extraction or arrange to have it accomplished by a commercial data processing firm. If the latter alternative is utilized, there will probably be a charge for the data extraction services.

You will be notified via "Bird Banding Notes" or another MTA5 when the files are again available.

3. "Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace" - How Can the Recording and Submission of Banding Data Be Simplified?

Frequently, during the past few years, we have received questions from banders as to:

- a. Why do we do this or that?
- b. Why don't we do this or that?
- c. Why don't we do this that way instead of doing that this way?

Our stock reply has been:

"We have to keep doing it that way because we have been doing it that way and we can't change now."

During the next year we will have an opportunity to make some major modifications. After the data files have been edited and verified, we plan to pass them through the computer and modify some of the

existing codes. For example, we plan to adopt a revised series of "Status and Additional Information" codes which will be easier for both the bander to use in recording his data and the analyst to use in specifying which data to include and which to exclude in his analysis.

We are also considering the revision of our present "Flyway/State" codes into a more usable series of "area" codes which, among other benefits, will permit us to enter into our files the coordinates of bandings or recoveries which occur in Mexico.

WE ARE SOLICITING ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE CONCERNING BANDING FORMS, CODES, PROCEDURES, OR ANYTHING ELSE WHICH APPEARS TO YOU TO BE CUMBERSOME, CONFUSING OR OBSOLETE.

Please try to phrase your comments as suggestions rather than questions. From the comments in the preceding subjects, it should be obvious that we would prefer not to increase materially our correspondence load. (For example, I still average about one letter every one and a half hours of every working day. We sometimes wonder whether we are biologists or "ornithological Ann Landers.")

Although we obviously won't be able to act favorably on everyone's suggestion or answer everyone's questions, we will take them all into consideration.

4. Will We See You? - The Regional Bird Banding Associations' Annual Meetings.

During recent years, personnel from the Banding Lab have been fortunate in being authorized to travel to the annual meeting of the various banding associations. Although we very much enjoy the opportunity to renew old acquaintances, we would also like to make some new ones among the banding fraternity.

If you have never attended a banding association meeting, why not plan on doing so this year? Here is a chance to "sharpshoot" the "bureaucrats from the Banding Lab," meet the people whose names you've seen in the banding literature and share experiences and problems with banders and birders from other areas. You don't have to be a member to attend, and I've been assured that the "welcome mat" is out to state, federal and other conservation agency personnel. This year's annual meetings will be held as follows. Additional information can be obtained from the association secretary.

Northeastern Bird Banding Association--Drumlin Farm, South  
Lincoln, Massachusetts--October 25.

Secretary: Mrs. Frank Howard  
Massachusetts Audubon Society  
Lincoln, Massachusetts 01773

Eastern Bird Banding Association--University of Delaware,  
Newark, Delaware--April 18-20.

Secretary: Miss Wilde R. Mellencamp  
223 Matsonford Road  
Radnor, Pennsylvania 19087

Inland Bird Banding Association--Davenport, Iowa--November 14-16.

Secretary: Mrs. John Lueshen  
Wisner, Nebraska 68791

Western Bird Banding Association--University of Arizona,  
Tucson, Arizona--April 25-27.

Secretary: Mrs. Allegra Collister  
705 Hover Road  
Longmont, Colorado 80501

5. Who Are "the Rest of You"?

Last December in MTAB-11, we described our problems in securing data from many banders and pointed out some of the problems created by your failure to submit records or a "negative report."

As of this date--nearly two and a half months after the date your data were due--we still apparently have received neither records nor a "negative report" from about 226 banders!

This year, for the reasons described elsewhere in this MTAB, we will be unable to prepare and mail our usual series of follow-ups and reminders to coax records from reluctant banders.

Following is a list of the permit numbers and names of those persons or organizations from whom our files indicate we have not yet received either their 1968 banding records nor a "negative report." These data are listed in permit number sequence. Please check the list for your permit number and name. If they are present and:

- a. you have submitted your 1968 data, please let us know. Indicate the approximate date you mailed your schedules and some of the band numbers. We will triple check (we double checked before we prepared the list) to make sure your schedules didn't slip by our check-off system.
- b. you accomplished no bandings during 1968 and did submit a "negative report," please let us know the approximate date you submitted your report so we can again triple check our files.

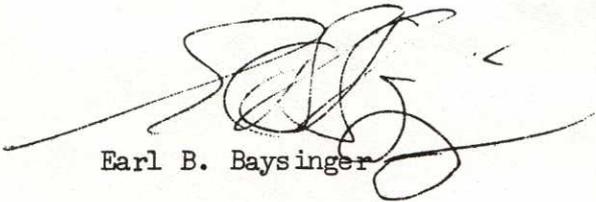
c. you have not yet submitted your 1968 data nor a "negative report" for your permit number, please do so before May 12.

THE BANDING PERMIT OF ANY BANDER FROM WHOM WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED 1968 RECORDS, A "NEGATIVE REPORT" OR A GOOD REASON WILL FIND HIS PERMIT SUSPENDED EFFECTIVE MAY 13, 1969.

<u>Permit #</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Permit #</u>	<u>Name</u>
00648	Wasserfall, W.	06757	Austing, G. R.
00652	Lowther, J. K.	06784	Meade, G. M.
00690	Gilbert, B.	06810	Borden, R.
00903	Spofford, W. R., Dr.	07012	Tompkins, W. A.
02525	Swanebeck, H. E.	07036	Hayes, R. C.
03305	Saunders, G. B., Dr.	07045	Waite, J. R.
03745	Allison, R. T., Mr. & Mrs.	07092	Hatton, L. M., Mrs.
03992	Sibley, N. O.	07109	Hitchner, J. G.
04257	Hyson, H. E., Dr.	07122	McDermott, J. J.
04910	Howell, J. C., Dr.	07211	Kessel, B., Dr.
05233	Hochbaum, H. A., Dr.	07223	Merced NWR
05305	Merovka, L. J.	07309	Grether, D. F., Prof.
05453	Sibley, C. G., Dr.	07336	Munson, H. A.
05455	Lacey, T. C., Mrs.	07361	Hewitt, O. H., Dr.
05517	Rodgers, T. L., Dr.	07366	Hawes, W. D., USGMA
05538	Lowery, Jr., G. H., Dr.	07384	Walcott, C., Dr.
05636	Wolfson, A., Dr.	07416	Harris, R. S., USGMA
05844	Knorr, O. A., Prof.	07460	Desert National Wldf. Range
05971	Guild, E. R., Capt.	07471	Stapp, W. B.
06080	Aransas NWR	07481	Small, A.
06131	Ricard, R.	07490	Baker, E. J., USGMA
06253	Delta NWR	07491	Seelye, O. E., USGMA
06268	Havasu Lake NWR	07549	Noll, E. M., Mr. & Mrs.
06277	National Elk NWR	07562	Long, N. H., USGMA
06281	Wichita Mts NWR	07565	Gallo, T. R., USGMA
06316	Long Lake NWR	07584	Edwards, W. R., USGMA
06401	Sanderson, K. H.	07589	Cole, P.
06489	Rice, J. N.	07629	Natchitoches Nat. Fish Hatchery
06503	Thompson, F. A., USGMA		
06506	Utah Coop Wildlife Res. Unit	07641	Niemeyer, A. E., USGMA
06569	Arkansas Game & Fish Dept.	07660	Morgan, H. M., USGMA
06585	Glasgow, L. L., Dr.	07685	Sullys Hill NWR
06622	Hutchinson, E. G.	07686	Lake Ilo NWR
06639	Webster, C. G.	07711	Meyer, R. E., USGMA
06705	Jensen, G. H.	07714	Kriebble, D. W., USGMA
06706	Lynch, J. J.	07730	Dempster, R. T., Dr.
06707	Peters, H. S.	07732	Archbold, R.
06709	Stoudt, J. H., BSFW	07769	Crowley, L. D.
06730	Eaton, S. W., Dr.	07775	Eaton, G. W., Mrs.
06732	Miner, D. R.	07813	Sullivan, E. G.

<u>Permit #</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Permit #</u>	<u>Name</u>
07825	Stockton, F. W., Mrs.	08787	Schwartz, F. J., Dr.
07833	Snow, W. D., USGMA	08797	Davis, C. G., Miss
07889	Blair, R. E.	08805	Rush, W. D., USGMA
07902	Slater, K. R.	08817	Olsen, T. D.
07971	Laguna Atascosa NWR	08836	Fish, J. L.
07982	Jehl, Jr., J. R.	08855	Martin, A. J.
07997	Smith, J. P.	08875	Smith, M. M., BSWF
08035	Oring, L. W., Dr.	08885	Stocek, R. F.
08044	Brann, W. A., USGMA	08906	Mayne, B. R., Dr.
08059	Reynolds, E. W.	08928	Harrell, B. E., Dr.
08064	Carney, S. M.	08934	Heath, F.
08084	Woodard, D. W.	08937	Von Dane, R., USGMA
08085	Randle, W. S.	08958	Baepler, D. H., Dr.
08117	Scott, O. K., Dr.	08967	Starzyk, M. J., Dr.
08122	Mulligan, J. A.	09009	Stribling, C. R., USGMA
08177	Martin, F. W., Dr.	09013	Kern Pixley NWR
08197	Hogue, J. H., USGMA	09021	Boyd, D. S.
08251	Kirkpatrick, R. D.	09043	Hamnett, W. L.
08277	MacDonald, M. A., Mrs.	09045	Bridges, R., Mrs.
08320	Valentine, Jr., J. M.	09048	Hall, B., Mrs.
08321	Graham, C. E., USGMA	09056	Quay, T. L., Dr.
08373	Kopp, W. K.	09064	Sumrell, J. A.
08427	Kimmich, J. M. & R. B.	09066	Merritt Island NWR
08452	Dudley, E. S., Mr. & Mrs.	09071	Kennedy, W. H., USGMA
08453	Holyoke, J. B., Dr.	09082	Ralph, C. J.
08490	Low, W. G., Mr. & Mrs.	09096	Combs, D. W.
08492	Fuchs, W., USGMA	09184	Lord, R. D., Dr.
08506	Chamberlain, J. L., Dr.	09247	Talpey, W. B., Mrs.
08514	Gangel, F.	09258	Kadlec, J. A., Dr.
08533	Evans, R. N.	09270	Bell, D. H.
08536	Below, Sr., T. H., Mrs.	09290	Wilson, L. G., Dr.
08568	Matlock, J. M., Pilot	09309	Taylor, W. K., Lt.
08577	Haller, C. J., Mrs.	09312	Schreiber, R. W.
08593	Catahoula NWR	09321	Smylie, T. M.
08597	Teer, J. G.	09326	Burger, J., Miss
08615	Moeding, J. E.	09332	Pfitzer, D. W.
08645	Witt, R. T.	09342	Lindvall, L. C., USGMA
08660	Griffin, D. N., Dr.	09344	Tennessee Valley Authority
08670	Pursley, A. G., USGMA	09346	Abraham, G. R.
08675	Estes, R. R.	09349	Brewer, R., Dr.
08682	Seabloom, R. W.	09374	Pee Dee NWR
08687	Reynoldson, L. J., USGMA	09390	Skarda, R. G., Fr.
08702	Ouray NWR	09394	Francis, G.
08713	O'Neill, E. J.	09425	Kalma, D. L.
08724	Pinkham, H. P., USGMA	09428	Alexander, R. M.
08731	Tolman, C. F.	09434	Cody, M. L., Dr.
08737	Moeller, R.	09439	Turner, J. F.
08757	Koplin, J. R.	09454	Karrenbrock, J., BSWF-WS
08781	New York Coop. Wildlife Research Unit	09459	Gnagy, D. C.
		09468	Lorge, L. L.

<u>Permit #</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Permit #</u>	<u>Name</u>
09490	Reddinger, L. D.	09608	Hayes, J.
09494	Abram, R. G.	09621	Cedar Island NWR
09496	Wiens, J. A., Dr.	09623	Godin, A. J., BSW-WS
09497	Weeks, J. A.	09627	Lehrman, D. S.
09507	Miller, D. D.	09640	Spitalny, G. L.
09513	Brooks, W. S., Dr.	09660	Davis, F. W., Dr.
09516	Kirkland, D., USGMA	09661	Kleiner, E. S.
09521	Pielou, W. P., Dr.	09665	Bowman, W. F.
09522	Rintamaki, S. E., Mrs.	09670	Smith, G.
09545	Means, R. L.	09678	Bollengier, Jr., R.M.
09556	Wieser, G., Fr.	09685	Turner, Jr., C. W.
09561	Jackson, J. J.	10109	Guay, J., Dr.
09562	Johnson, D.	10116	Story, D. E.
09565	Lundgren, R. W.	10121	Kuhn, L. D.
09576	Vendel, C. G., USGMA	10122	Vass, S. E.
09581	Reilly, W.	10135	Charlton, W. H.
09582	Vourax, M.	10144	McKeating, G. B.
09583	Stokes, Jr., F. J.	10154	Harvey, J. M.
09585	Kootenai NWR	10158	Tasker, R. R., Dr.
09586	Ridgefield NWR	10180	Dedrick, M. L.
09587	San Luis NWR	10203	Northcott, T. H.
09589	Umatilla NWR	10210	Gage, S. H.
09590	Anderson, S. H.	10213	Sparkes, D. L., Miss
09594	Conway, J. C.	10220	Clark, C. G., Dr.
09604	Edwards, R. F.		

  
Earl B. Baysinger

