

1995

## Books

North American Bird Bander

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### Recommended Citation

North American Bird Bander (1995) "Books," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 20 : Iss. 4 , Article 3.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol20/iss4/3>

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# Books

**D'Veck Field Logs.** L. D'Veck. 1985. The D'Veck Co., P.O. Box 19538, Seattle, WA, 98109. U.S. \$18.95 (+tax for WA residents).

The purpose of this 5-1/2" x 9" field notebook is to provide a systematic way of recording species specific data. The sturdy plastic, six-ring binder contains five types of data sheets that include a wide variety of options for recording data. The objective of providing a way to record field data in a consistent fashion is worthwhile; however, this system has limited application to bird banding stations.

The first two data sheets are similar. The second sheet has 30 lines to record information compared to ten on the first sheet. Observers who recorded 100 species in a day would use at least four sheets and more if they changed location during the day. Some of the heading information is standard (e.g., date, time, location) but includes spaces for additional detail (type of cloud and barometric pressure). After recording the number of each species, the observer is encouraged to record the creatures' activity in great detail. Thirty-three activity codes, which include stand, walk, hop, run, fly, swim, wade, perch, sing, call, etc., seem too detailed for all but a specific behavior study. The third form is similar to the first except that the detailed behavior columns are blank so observers can fill in their own codes. The fourth data sheet includes a useful line diagram of a bird and 40 blank spaces to record details of an unidentified or rare bird. However, this form lacks space for some of the basic details of an unidentified or rare bird. However, this form lacks space for some of the basic details of any observation, such as time and observer. The last form is a simple grid above blank lines which is to be used to map the location and route of the observer, an unnecessary task for most bird watching trips.

If a conscientious observer was to record all the details of each bird on a trip, the time to record details of sightings could exceed the time spent on observations. Add to this large time commitment,

the cost of almost \$.10 for each page and the bulky size of the binder (larger than my jacket pockets), and this field book would have drawbacks to many observers. The log system underlines the importance of adequately documenting wildlife observations with adequate detail to make them useful at a later time. Its main value would be to help observers learn the types of data that can be recorded in the field and to develop better field recording habits. Once trained, observers would be more efficient carrying a pocket-sized, inexpensive notebook to record their observations, although it is not possible to sort them in that format. The D'Veck log sheets can be sorted easily and stored by date and location. Banding stations would not find this system appropriate. Predetermined data sheets are more efficient for permanent banding operations.

The log system is still available at the same price as in 1985! A software program called "IT'S FOR THE BIRDS"© uses the D'Veck log system format and allows users to enter, edit, browse, and report their data on a dBASE(c) compatible format. I did not review the 1988 software which is available from W.S. Boulton, Salmon Bay Software, 7015 14th Ave., N.W., Seattle, WA 98117, for US \$79.95 (+tax for WA residents).

**Geoffrey L. Holroyd**

