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Remembering Kathy Klimkiewicz- 1943-2008

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**Remembering
Kathy
Klimkiewicz
1943 - 2008**

Almost every bird bander in North America is aware that much of Kathy's adult life was devoted to birds and particularly to the banding of birds. For 35 years Kathy was one of the USGS Bird Banding Laboratories' biologists and through her correspondence and telephone calls banders were encouraged and, in perhaps her greater role, called onto the carpet for forms not submitted, improper age and sex codes, questionable identifications, poor handwriting, and any general lack of integrity in banding record keeping. As a teenager I was one of several of Kathy's young banding protégées and can attest to her demand for neat handwriting, careful data collection, organization, and the penalties for failure to perform.

Few, however, know that Kathy came to be a government biologist more through passion than a traditional science career. While obtaining a Masters at Radford College in 1965 she took an ornithology course by Dr. Donald Messersmith who propelled her into the serious study of birds, and by 1966 she had obtained her Master Banding Permit. By the end of her active banding career she and her subpermitees (at least 13) had banded over 100,000 individuals of 171 species.

After graduating, Kathy moved to the Washington, DC, area and began teaching in the public schools. During the summers she would volunteer at the Bird Banding Lab and in 1973 she began working full time for the Lab.

During her time at the Bird Banding Laboratory she was also active in the local birding community, taking young birders (like me) bird watching and actively participating in the Maryland Ornithological Society. She was active in all of the early bird atlas projects, Christmas Bird Counts, and regional bird projects. While her activities became more circumscribed as her health deteriorated, she ran Breeding Bird Survey routes, despite her lack of mobility, until the year of her death; running 103 different surveys across 11 different routes.

Particularly early in her career Kathy was very active in Eastern Bird Banding and Inland Bird Banding Associations, attending meetings and working on various collaborative projects. While not a requirement of her position, she managed to produce or coauthor 28 scientific publications. North American bird banders all knew Kathy. She and a few of the other biologists, rather than the four Lab directors she worked under, were the persons who banders corresponded with and became the face of the program. Her impacts reached every bander and her passing will affect banders and the Bird Banding Laboratory for years to come. Because of Kathy's generosity, several of us have gone on to become biologists (with very neat handwriting) in our own right and are now passing on similar lessons.

- Sam Droege