

2009

## History of Computerization of Bird-Banding Records: An Addendum

C. Stuart Houston

Chandler S. Robbins

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb>

---

### Recommended Citation

Houston, C. Stuart and Robbins, Chandler S. (2009) "History of Computerization of Bird-Banding Records: An Addendum," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 34 : Iss. 3 , Article 4.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol34/iss3/4>

This News Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in North American Bird Bander by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usf.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usf.edu).

These findings meet the Bird Banding Laboratory's policy that age and sex criteria are at least 95% reliable to be recommended for use in determining age and sex of birds. Still, we advocate using these criteria in combination with existing ageing criteria to enhance the confidence of a bander's age determination, especially during the winter and spring when degree of skull pneumaticization is no longer a reliable indicator of age. We encourage banders to examine other *Dendroica* warblers, especially other members of the *Dendroica virens* superspecies complex (Golden-cheeked, Black-throated Green [*Dendroica virens*], Hermit [*Dendroica occidentalis*], Townsend's [*Dendroica townsendi*], and Black-throated Gray [*Dendroica nigrescens*] warblers; Mengel 1964), for presence of these ageing criteria.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank numerous seasonal field biologists for field assistance. This project was sponsored in part by the Department of the Army with The Nature Conservancy through Cooperative Agreement DPW-ENV-07-A-0001. The content of this paper does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Government and no official endorsement should be inferred.

## LITERATURE CITED

- Dwight, J., Jr. 1900. The sequence of plumages and moults of the passerine birds of New York. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 13: 73-360.
- Eckrich, G. H., T. E. Koloszar, and M. D. Goering. 1999. Effective landscape management of Brown-headed Cowbirds at Fort Hood, TX. *Studies in Avian Biology* 18:267-274.
- Mengel, R. M. 1964. The probable history of species formation in some northern wood warblers (Parulidae). *Living Bird* 3:9-43.
- Mulvihill, R. S. 1993. Using wing molt to age passerines. *North American Bird Bander* 18: 1-10.
- Pyle, P. 1997a. Identification guide to North American birds, Part I. Slate Creek Press, Bolinas, CA.
- Pyle, P. 1997b. Molt limits in North American passerines. *North American Bird Bander* 22: 49-90.
- Pyle, P., S. N. G. Howell, R. P. Yunick, and D. F. DeSante. 1987. Identification guide to North American passerines. Slate Creek Press, Bolinas, CA.
- Van Tyne, J. and Berger A. J. 1971. Fundamentals of ornithology. John Wiley and Sons, NY.
- Yunick, R. P. 1984. Toward more effective age determination of banded birds. *North American Bird Bander* 9:2-4.

# News, Notes, Comments

## History of Computerization of Bird-Banding Records: An Addendum

Since the publication of Houston, Robbins, and Klimkiewicz, "History of computerization of bird-banding records," (*North American Bird Bander* 33:53-65, April-June 2008), four omitted or inadequately explained items have come to our attention.

### 1. Calendar years

During the 1920s, the banding calendar year ended 30 Jun (e.g., *Bird Banding Notes* 1, #13, Nov 1924 and *Bird Banding Notes* 1, #28, September 1929). Thus, 1 Jul was the first day of each banding calendar year. Even the transfer of the Bureau of

Biological Survey from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Interior took place on the 1 Jul 1939 (*Bird-Banding Notes* 2, # 17, October 1939), because that was the beginning of the new government fiscal year.

Then, for a few years in the early 1950s, the banding year was changed to end on 30 Apr. This was done to ensure that waterfowl bandings were submitted in time for use in setting that year's hunting season.

Finally, the banding year moved to the standard or normal calendar year through imposition of a one-time truncated eight-month year, 1 May to 31 Dec 1955. That year, an undated and untitled 15-page mimeographed document was sent from the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) to

announce this and several concomitant changes (see #4 below). The advent of computerization made the calendar year more logical.

## 2. Design and size of schedules

Two distinctive changes in the size and shape of banding schedules were omitted by us. In 1942, the Bi-860 banding schedule form was 11 inches wide and 8.5 inches high, standard letter-sized paper used sideways, in what later became known as "landscape" orientation.

In mid-1948, schedules were decreased in width, from 11 inches to 9.375 inches, so they would fit in a portable typewriter but still with a height of 8.5 inches. On a single-spaced typewriter, it was possible to type in 140 lines (in two columns) [Seth Low, *Bird Banding Notes* 4, #1:4-5, June 1948].

## 3. First use of latitude and longitude of banding stations

In 1955, banders were asked to enter, for the first time, the latitude and longitude in parentheses immediately following each STATION LOCATION near the top of the schedule.

In 1961, the 3-860 schedule was revised completely, and printed sideways in "landscape" mode on standard letter-size 8.5 x 11 inch paper, almost an inch narrower. The important change, a first, was a vertical column with a heading "lat-long," to enter the first three digits of latitude and the first four digits of longitude. Houston's banding station in the eastern half of the city of Saskatoon was now entered as 520-1063— within the 10-minute block extending from 52°00' to 52°10' N latitude, and from 106°30' to 106°40' W longitude.

## 4. Age terminology

Until 1949, "the terms 'juvenile' and 'immature' . . . [were] loosely and interchangeably used." That year BBL Chief Seth Low decreed that I for Imm was to be applied to birds able to fly but less than one year old. N was acceptable for a nestling still in the nest. The new term, Local, shortened to Loc or L, was introduced to indicate a flightless bird reared locally (Seth Low, *Bird Banding Notes* 4, #2:7, August 1949).

Jul. - Sep. 2009

The 1955 15-page document mentioned above in #1, also contained a three-page Glossary of Banding Terms, three pages concerning Report Forms (prohibiting the use of J for Juvenile and initiating use of L for Local flightless young, and S for Subadult), one page about Traps and Supplies, a five-page Appendix A listing AOU numbers and recommended band sizes, a two-page Appendix B about an all-purpose trap, and Appendix C, the names and addresses of the secretaries of the four regional banding associations holding office in 1955 and 1956.

On 9 Jun 1967, *Memorandum To All Banders* #7, signed by Earl B. Baysinger, introduced the final change in age codes, to come into effect immediately for all birds banded after 30 Jun 1967. Added to continued use of Local for flightless young, the new age classes included HY (Hatch Year, but flying and no longer "local"), AHY (After Hatch Year), ASY (After Second Year), etc.

We regret the sudden death of our co-author, M. Kathleen Klimkiewicz, on 6 Nov 2008.

**C. Stuart Houston**  
863 University Drive  
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0J8  
stuarthouston@usask.ca

**Chandler S. Robbins**  
USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center  
12100 Beech Forest Road  
crobbinsusgs.gov

## Updates to Four-letter and Six-letter Alpha Codes based on Revisions by the American Ornithologists' Union in 2009

Pyle and DeSante (2003) derived alpha codes based on the English and scientific names of 2030 species recorded in the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) 1998 check-list and supplements through 2002. They also derived codes for 91 non-species taxa including subspecies, unidentified taxa,