

# Bird Banding Fact Sheet

KLAMATH BIRD OBSERVATORY  
www.KlamathBird.org



## ***What is bird banding?***

Bird banding is a method used by scientists to study birds. Birds are safely caught by scientists and given an identification band. A band is a small aluminum ring that fits around the birds' leg like a bracelet. The band is engraved with a unique number allowing scientists to keep track of each individual bird. No other bird will have the same number.

## ***Why do scientists band birds?***

Putting a band with a unique number on a bird allows scientists to keep track of each individual bird when it is caught again. This is important for answering questions (testing hypotheses) about birds. Some of the questions bird banding allows scientists to answer include: How long do birds live? Where do birds go?, What birds are present at this site?, How are bird population numbers changing over time?, and How many baby birds were born each year?. Answering these questions provides information useful in protecting birds and their habitats.

## ***How do scientists catch the birds?***

The birds are gently caught in soft, fine nets called mist-nets. These nets are stretched between two poles, usually among trees and bushes. The birds cannot see the nets and fly into them. Scientists carefully remove the birds from the nets so they can be banded and released unharmed.

## ***Who bands birds?***

Scientists from bird observatories, government agencies, research organizations, and graduate schools band birds as part of their research programs. In order to band birds you must have a permit and be trained to safely handle and band birds. All the data collected on birds banded in North America is kept by the Bird Banding Laboratory of the US Department of the Interior and is available for any scientist to access.

## ***How many birds are banded each year?***

Each year approximately 1.1 million birds are banded. In total, 57 million birds have been banded throughout history.

## ***What do I do if I find a banded bird?***

If you find a banded bird report it to **1-800-327-BAND** or on the web at [www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/homepage/call800.htm](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/homepage/call800.htm).