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### Memorandum to All Banders, 37

George M. Jonkel

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MEMORANDUM

MTAB-37

June 28, 1978

TO : All Banders

FROM : Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory  
Office of Migratory Bird Management  
Laurel, Maryland 20811

SUBJECT: Auxiliary-marking Birds

An increasing number of researchers are using auxiliary markers on birds. In cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ron Reynolds, Bird Banding Lab Biologist, coordinates the auxiliary marking program. To aid him and you, the bander, we list the following points for your consideration when requesting, using or reporting auxiliary markers:

A. Requests for auxiliary marker authorizations should be submitted in writing and include a project outline to document the need for the authorization. Send your request well in advance of your anticipated use of the marker. The request must include (1) area involved in both the banding site and anticipated recovery locations, (2) species and number to be marked, (3) objectives of and justification for marking, (4) duration of project, (5) desired marker type, style, color, and codes, if any, (6) arrangements for acknowledging observations, and (7) other pertinent details. If you request other than a standard colored plastic leg band, please furnish the BBL a sample marker.

B. Avoid requests for use of potentially dangerous or feather damaging markers, including radios or wing tags on cavity nesters, wing clipping, paint, dye or bleach on primary feathers, paint or dye on the heads, leg markers on vultures, and nasal saddles on geese. Be conservative with wing markers on birds having a fast wing beat. Do not request authorization to auxiliary-mark rehabilitated birds except for endangered species.

C. Do not use unauthorized auxiliary markers. Check your authorization for expiration date and auxiliary marker description. Refer information on injuries of marked birds and conflicts of authorizations to the BBL. Request authorization from the BBL if you need to continue auxiliary marking beyond the expiration date indicated on the permit. If such a request is not received, the auxiliary marking authorization will be terminated.

D. Auxiliary-marked birds have different survival rates compared to "normal wild birds." For this reason, auxiliary-mark as few individuals as is necessary to meet the study objectives. For individually numbered markers, record the marker numbers on the banding schedules in the Common Name column next to the corresponding U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band number. The marker color, type, etc., should be described in the Remarks section of the schedule.

E. Because of the interest in auxiliary marking, protocols are being established for many species. The Bird Banding Lab will coordinate these protocols with the Canadian Wildlife Service and welcomes comments and suggestions from banders. Presently, protocols are being considered for Merlins, eagles, Sandhill Cranes and vultures. Protocols have been established for geese, swans, some raptors, and Purple Martins. Protocols may restrict the number of authorizations and flexibility of some projects, but this is necessary to minimize confusion between researchers.

F. Report auxiliary-marked bird sightings to the BBL, and send a copy to the person who marked the bird, if known. Such reports should include species of bird, marker type, color, code (if any), location and date of sighting. If a bird is reported that is individually marked, the Banding Lab will obtain the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service number from the bander or determine it from records. The band number will then be processed using the information provided by the observer, and a report sent to the bander and the observer. If the marker cannot be traced to an individual band number, the BBL will notify the bander of the observation. The bander should acknowledge all marker reports by furnishing a brief study outline to the reporter. Form letters are acceptable for this purpose. Your own individually auxiliary-marked birds sighted out of the 10-minute latitude/longitude block of banding should be reported to the BBL with the corresponding U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band number. These reports are processed into the files, but are subjected to some editing to eliminate repeated sightings in the same blocks during the same season.

*George M. Jonkel*  
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