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# Western

# Regional

# News

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## Western Bird Banding Association

Founded 1925

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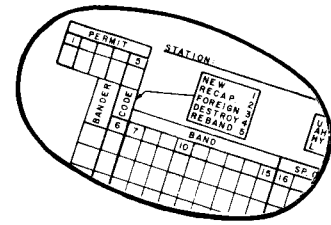
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Recent Literature	Richard W. DeHaven	Worksheets	Dr. Charles T. Collins
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Applications for membership in the Western Bird Banding Association should be sent to the Treasurer. All classes of membership receive *North American Bird Bander*, the joint publication of Eastern Bird Banding Association and Western Bird Banding Association. Membership classifications are: Active Member, \$6.00 per year; Associate Member, \$6.00 per year; Sustaining Member, \$12.00 per year; Student Member, \$4.50 per year; Life Member, \$150.00. Outside the U.S., add \$2.00 to each membership class except Life Member.

## From the President



"Many of us who are banders are able to give this work only part time. Other duties demand our main energy outlay. Available time, therefore, becomes a matter of prime consideration in [any] serious banding effort. It seems proper, then, that we appraise our time outlay. Is all our banding time being spent profitably? Does all our conventional technique carry us forward, or does some of it retard progress? Could we with profit . . . revise certain of our methods, thereby conserving time and energy that could profitably be applied elsewhere? Could we not, with the time thus saved, realize better on the data which we are obtaining?"

The above sentiments were written by J. Eugene Law in the 1929 volume of *News From the Bird Banders*. They could just as well have been written today; the problem of maximal utilization of time while obtaining more and better data is still with us. Mr. Law's comments in 1929 were the preface to some suggestions regarding record keeping and I would like to use them for the same purpose in 1977.

Any visit to a friend's banding station or a quick check of the number of field record sheets that are available should convince anyone that there is no uniformity in how field data are recorded. This is true even if the exact same measurements and notes are made on a bird handled.

The result is that banders are apt to have their own "pet" data sheet. Extracting data for others to use, as part of a regional analysis for instance, involves laborious transcription to another page. In addition to taking a great deal of time, something in short supply for all of us, there is always the increased chance of errors being made while transcribing long lists of figures. One answer would be for more of us to utilize some standard field sheet for recording the data on all birds we handle. Hopefully this field sheet would be maximally adapted for mechanical data processing and computer analysis. At first glance this smacks of "big brother-hood" and unnecessary bureaucracy. However, the benefits for ornithology and the banding program are great and thus it merits our

attention. The forms I have in mind are not some far off thing of the future; they are available and in use today. The Manomet and the Point Reyes Bird Observatories have used them for years. Dr. L. Richard Mewaldt had the various participants in our WBBA White-crowned Sparrow Cooperative Project use them for the past two winters.

At first glance, the forms seem intimidating. However, a full set of printed instructions is available and quickly clears up the mysteries of entering single numbers or letters in each column. Students and observatory volunteers who have never been exposed to other less formal schemes learn to work with these sheets in fairly short order. The sheet is set up so that data, without transcription, can be presented for key-punching on the cards which are used for computer analysis. Cooperators can exchange photocopies of data sheets and know that the data are in exactly the same format and ready for analysis. If the data are already key-punched, the cards can then be mechanically duplicated almost as fast as the original sheets can be photo-copied. The potential for increasing the exchange of field data is fantastic.

The point of all of this is that by utilizing such a record sheet, data on various species can be obtained in uniform fashion on a regional or national level and easily compiled for a broader analysis. This will greatly increase the value of data derived from the banding program. Better still, it does not in any way depend on the almost miniscule re-encounter rate we know to be characteristic of the many small passerines most of us handle. We will soon be starting a new WBBA joint project and asking cooperators to use these new data sheets. Hopefully others will consider adopting them in anticipation of making their data maximally available for analysis.

I will be happy to provide samples of the data sheet and instructions to interested banders. Data processing and computers are here to stay and will unquestionably play an even greater role in years to come. Let's move banding into the future with them.

Charlie Collins