



# The North American Banding Council

<http://www.nabanding.net/netbanding>

Promoting Sound and Ethical Banding Principles and Techniques

## Bander Certification – Why?

At meetings during the last few months I have heard the question, “What is the point of becoming a certified Bander? What value is certification to me?” The following are my thoughts on the subject.

Let us look at these questions from the viewpoint of two different groups. First, there are the well-trained subpermittees and other skilled assistants who do not have master permits. For this group, certification as a Bander will serve in lieu of references when applying for a master permit. In addition, we do have certification available at three levels, as a Trainer, Bander, and an Assistant Bander.

The second group is banders with a master permit. The advantages of certification for this group may appear less clear. While bander certification is available through group sessions conducted by various banding organizations or observatories, it is also available by interacting with NABC trainers on a one-to-one basis.

Since the primary purposes of the NABC are to upgrade skills of current banders and to improve consistency in the collection of banding data, all banders should want to take advantage of this. Certification as a Bander is a direct indication to the banding community that you support these goals and have demonstrated that your banding skills are at the level required for certification. In other words, certification is good for your ego. It also will help to increase the acceptance of bird banding projects to the general public.

On a personal note, initially I was most interested in one-to-one certification, rather than group sessions. However, I have found participation (as a Trainer) in certification sessions (eight to date) an extremely rewarding experience. Each session has been a learning experience, as banders from different areas and backgrounds share techniques and experience. Learning goes many ways: from trainer-to-candidate but also from candidate-to-trainer and trainer-to-trainer. I have heard similar thoughts expressed by other trainers and candidates.

For those who have the opportunity to work with novice banders or wish to participate in certification sessions, bander certification gives you the opportunity to go one step further and become certified as a Trainer. The knowledge and expertise expected of Trainers is higher than that needed at the Bander level. Trainers must be certified as Banders before (or at the same time) they receive Trainer certification. Trainer certification then permits one to participate in certifying banders outside of organized sessions. All of this makes for better banders, better data collection, and increased welfare of the birds.

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