
Representing the Western Bird Banding Association on the North American Banding Council

The North American Banding Council (NABC) is an incorporated non-profit group representing organizations whose members utilize bird banding as a tool. NABC promotes sound and ethical banding principles and techniques by providing certification and training materials for banders. The Council is made up of representatives from all 18 of the major North American ornithological organizations. Each of the banding associations in North America appoint representatives to NABC, and in 2005 I continued serving on the Council in the Western Bird Banding Association's seat.

My activities as a representative on the Council include serving as chair of the Evaluation and Certification Committee and sitting on the Latin American and Caribbean Committee. With my colleagues at the Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO) and US Forest Service Redwood Sciences Laboratory (RSL), I work to promote NABC by providing certification opportunities, offering training programs that focus on NABC standards, and supporting the development and publication of NABC manuals, handbooks, and other materials. This article summarizes the NABC activities that I have been involved with during 2005 as the WBBA representative on the Council and as an NABC-certified trainer actively involved with banding and training programs.

The NABC Evaluation and Certification Committee: The NABC Evaluation and Certification Committee actively supports organizations and individuals who sponsor certification sessions. In 2005 four certification sessions were held. In August, Barbara Carlson chaired a certification session for hummingbird banders in association with the Motte Rimrock Reserve in Perris, California, and Tom Bartlett chaired the Black Swamp Bird Observatory and Magee Marsh Wildlife Area session for landbird bander certification in Oak Harbor, Ohio. In October, two sessions for landbird bander and trainer certification were held. Betsy Brooks chaired a session in association with the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory

in Rochester, New York, and Kim Hollinger chaired a session in association with KBO, RSL and the Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory in Arcata, California.

Alternative certification procedures - The Evaluation and Certification Committee is also developing alternative processes for certification and re-certification, and we are working to improve the certification materials. A process has been put into place where candidates can become certified by going through an individual evaluation process with two trainers. Bob Frey, with KBO, has tested this "individual" evaluation process, certifying several banders and trainers in 2005. Though less efficient than a group session with regards to a trainer-day to candidate ratio, the logistics involved with completing an individual evaluations can be less complex and the process can take place in a setting that is more like a normal bird-banding effort.

Banders are certified for five years, and at that point need to be re-certified. David Okines, re-certification sub-committee chair, has developed a NABC-approved system through which individuals can become re-certified before their status as an NABC bander or trainer expires. Before certification expires, NABC banders and trainers can now qualify for re-certification through a written application process. See the NABC website (<http://www.nabanding.net/nabanding/>) for more details on individual evaluations and re-certification.

Certification materials - Members of the committee continue to develop and improve the materials for and processes of NABC certification. Buzz Hull, raptor certification sub-committee chair, has completed the raptor certification materials, and a group of newly appointed raptor trainers are now able to put on individual or group evaluations. Brenda Dale, bander certification sub-committee chair and Kim Hollinger, trainer certification sub-committee chair, have been incorporating suggestions from NABC trainers, as well as

candidates who have taken part in group sessions, to improve the certification materials and streamline the session process, while maintaining high standards, simplifying the scoring system, and minimizing the subjectivity of the evaluation process.

Latin American and Caribbean Committee: In 2005 the NABC Latin American and Caribbean Committee was active. We refined the committee's mission which is to build capacity for sustained bird monitoring and banding efforts that promote science and conservation in the new world tropics. In addition we identified objectives for the committee, including: developing training and mentoring opportunities and education and outreach programs in the Neotropics, and supporting infrastructure for banding programs in the Neotropics.

NABC Training: KBO and RSL offer comprehensive internship positions and training workshops that focus on promoting NABC standards. *The North American Banders' Study Guide*, *The Instructors' Guide to Training Passerine Bird Banders in North America* and *The North American Banders' Manual for Banding Passerines and Near-passerines*, all products of the NABC Publications Committee, serve as the core for our curriculum. The NABC bander's code of ethics and a checklist of skills with which an individual should be proficient are among the tools from these materials that we use for training bird banders. This October we took our NABC-based curriculum on the road, participating as co-sponsors of a comprehensive two-week training course hosted by ProAves Colombia and the American Bird Conservancy on Isla San Andres, Colombia.

Education and outreach using banding: Finally, KBO promoted NABC by working with Southern Oregon University and PRBO Conservation Science to support graduate student Melissa Pitkin, who authored the draft manual *Mist Netting with the Public*. This manual was created to meet two goals: connect the public with science, scientists, and conservation, and improve the quality and quantity of education programs delivered in conjunction with mist netting research. The guidelines contained in the manual are based on feedback through surveys from 25 organizations that conduct outreach in conjunction with banding programs in North America, as well as professional experience from conducting education programs with mist netting at Klamath Bird Observatory and PRBO Conservation Science. Near completion, this manual will be a product of the NABC Publications Committee.

NABC's success depends on the participation of certified banders and trainers. By supporting their NABC representatives, the organizations that make up the Council help to promote ethical and rigorous banding principles and techniques throughout the Americas. NABC increases the recognition that the science of bird banding can be used as a sound and effective tool for bird conservation. I have enjoyed serving as WBBA's representative on the Council, and very much appreciate your continued support both of NABC and of my participation.

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The Institute for Bird Populations and the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program

The summer of 2005 marked the seventeenth season of The Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) and the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program. MAPS is a cooperative effort among public and private agencies and individual bird banders in North America to operate a continent-wide network of constant-effort mist-netting and banding stations. The purpose of the MAPS program is to provide

annual indices of adult population size and post-fledging productivity, as well as annual estimates of adult survivorship, recruitment into the adult population, and population growth rates at multiple spatial scales for many landbird species. In 2005, 493 MAPS stations operated throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Two hundred thirty one of these stations were operated in states and provinces included in the area covered by the