



# COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

## *Management of the North American Bird Banding Program*

**SUBJECT CATEGORY:**  
Biodiversity / Ecosystems

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:**  
Canada – United States

**FORM:**  
Memorandum of Understanding

**STATUS:**

- Signed by Canada January 13, 2012
- In force in Canada January 13, 2012
- In force internationally January 13, 2012
- Ongoing: The USA and Canada have had a shared agreement on bird banding since 1923
- A Letter of Intent including Mexico was signed April 2015

**LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:**  
**Lead:** Environment and Climate Change Canada  
**Partners:** U.S. Geological Survey; Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad, Mexico

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Web Links:**

[Bird Banding Office](#) website

**Contacts:**  
[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

**COMPENDIUM EDITION:**  
January 2020

### PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Bird banding is an important research tool used by ornithologists in the scientific study and monitoring of wild birds. Uniquely numbered metal bands placed on the leg of the bird allow tracking of individual birds throughout their lifetime as well as tracking of bird movements globally. Bird banding provides data vital for ornithological research, monitoring and conservation by contributing to basic scientific knowledge about birds and the environments in which they live. Bird banding studies help to monitor bird populations and ecosystem health, set waterfowl hunting regulations and protect endangered species.

Migratory birds are protected in Canada by the Migratory Birds Convention Act and Regulations. A permit issued by the Bird Banding Office is required to undertake bird banding activities.

### OBJECTIVE

Maintain a shared bird banding program within North America to support ornithological research and monitoring in North America, leading to improved management and conservation of migratory birds.

### KEY ELEMENTS

Scientific permits to capture and band are issued by the Bird Banding Office. Shared data management; shared standards for bird capture and marking; shared bird bands; coordinated reporting and outreach; enhanced analysis and use of data.

### EXPECTED RESULTS

Coordinated efforts to support research involving bird-banding.

Promotion of best practices in bird capture, handling and marking.

Enhanced reporting of marked birds.

Enhanced use of data for research and management purposes.

### CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

This agreement is important to Canada because it supports ornithological research, conservation and management within Canada and internationally.

This agreement is implemented in Canada in the context of the Migratory Birds Convention Act and its regulations as well as the Species at Risk Act.

Permits are issued, bird bands are distributed and data are managed by the Bird Banding Office of the Canadian Wildlife Service.

The Canadian, USA and Mexican banding offices communicate regularly throughout the year to deliver on the agreement.

## RESULTS / PROGRESS

### **Activities**

This is a continual program in place since 1923. CWS provides leadership in bird marking in Canada, and internationally.

CWS manages over 1000 scientific banding permits annually. Permits are issued to qualified individuals with demonstrated ability to safely and accurately capture, handle and mark migratory birds. Banders include government biologists, researchers at universities, non-government organizations and the private sector, as well as skilled avocational banders ("Citizen Scientists").

The Bird Banding office leads the development of the Pan American Shorebird Program Shorebird Marking Protocol to coordinate marking shorebirds throughout the Western Hemisphere.

### **Reports**

Banding data are incorporated into many different reports by Environment and Climate Change Canada and scientific researchers. Analyses of data are reported in annual evaluations of the status of migratory game birds in Canada to support setting of hunting regulations.

### **Results**

In Canada, about 1000 banding permits are managed each year, with over 300,000 birds banded and 30,000 encounters of banded birds reported each year by banders and the general public.

The shared database has over 70 million records of birds banded in North America and beyond.

Banding office data are widely distributed to researchers throughout North America, and have been used in thousands of scientific publications, as well as contributing to conservation and management of migratory birds.