

Vancouver Avian Research Centre

Stimulating your interest in wild birds and nature



Banding Station Training Volunteer Levels



**Above all else,
the well being of *every* bird
is the top priority at *all* times!**

VARC Volunteer Levels

Updated November 4, 2009

General - Level 1

Level 1A - Visitor

Any guests to the station with no or unknown banding/bird handling ability. Not able to participate in activities unless closely supervised by BIC (i.e. holding their first bird for release etc.)

Level 1B - Nestling

Guests who may have visited the station on multiple occasions (i.e. spouses, significant others of regular volunteers etc.), helped out with net lane clearing or other tasks etc. Know their way around the station but have not taken the banding course. No extraction or banding allowed. These individuals may hold birds but only with direct supervision. They may be introduced to data collection and other non-handling related activities at the station.

Level 1C – Fledgling

Volunteers who have taken the banding course and know the terminology and the basics of aging / sexing / identification. Demonstrates the ability to safely hold a bird in the Bander's grip and remove birds from bird bags. No banding or extraction allowed.

Extraction - Level 2

Level 2A – Hatch Year - Trainee

Fledging that is involved in training program – no extraction without direct one-on-one supervision from trainer. (Must have completed course OR already worked at a banding station,)

Level 2B – Second Year - New Extractor

Fledgling that has completed training program – may perform net extraction of birds that are not badly tangled but must still be supervised by level 2D or any level 4 Volunteer.

Level 2C – ASY - Intermediate Extractor

Able to extract most species of birds unsupervised but willing and understand the need to call for help when needed.

Level 2D – AHY - Advanced Extractor

Able to extract all birds, unsupervised – can lead net rounds.

Banding - Level 3

Level 3A - HY- Trainee

Fledgling that is involved in training program – no banding without direct one-on-one supervision from trainer. (Must have completed course OR already worked at a banding station,)

Level 3B – SY- New Bander

Fledgling that has completed training program – may band birds supervised by level 3D or any level 4 Volunteer.

Level 3C –ASY - Intermediate Bander

Fledglings who have banded a significant (several hundred) number of birds of multiple species. Can age and sex birds fairly reliably and has shown due care in the recording of biometrics. Can accurately identify the majority of local species. Can band with minimal supervision but not independently - ageing/sexing/id /band must be confirmed with bander 3D or any level 4 Volunteer before bird is released. Ability to hold birds in multiple grips.

Level 3D – AHY - Advanced Bander

Banders who have continued to work on their skills and have banded a large number (several thousand) of birds of most of the species we are reasonably expected to encounter. Must have banded in all four seasons of the year and show

complete familiarity with banding terminology and station protocols. Able to identify all local species of birds and show an ability to use the resources to identify possible rarities. Accurate with biometrics and with molt limits, skulling and other aging and sexing techniques. Able to use all handling grips quickly and safely. Ability to band and release birds unsupervised. Ability to record accurate data and know the common biometric ranges of local species.

Level 4 - Supervisors

Level 4A -Bander-in-Charge

Advanced Bander's who have worked at the station for multiple seasons and know (and follow!) all station protocols. Able to open and close the station independently. Thorough knowledge of bird ID, resources, molt limits, skulling, aging / sexing techniques and project history.

Have obtained at least a sub-permit to band. Advanced net extraction skills. Knowledge of bird physiology and stress level indicators. Ability to use sound judgment and reasoning to make tough decisions independently. Shows basic people management skills and ability to correct bad techniques and yet maintain a fun atmosphere at the station.

Complete familiarity with data recording and overseeing data accuracy. Able to coach and supervisor beginner banders. Answerable to any problems that may happen under their supervision.

Ability to take on a leadership role in VARC and organize independent banding projects and work party projects to get necessary work done. Able to talk to media and guests to the station and represent the project accurately and make sure first impressions of the operation are beyond reproach. Able to give off-site public talks and attend events on behalf of VARC and speak about the banding operation and results.

Level 4B – Banding Trainer

Banders of BIC level who show strong teaching skills and ability to work with others in a positive manner. Must be able to be good mentors to future advanced banders and BICs and have an eye for the banding training / learning process.

Level 4.C – Extraction Trainer

Extractors of BIC level who show strong teaching skills and ability to work with others in a positive manner. Must be able to be good mentors to future advanced extractors and BICs and have an eye for the training / learning process.

Level 4D - Bander-in-Charge : Project

Basically Derek. The person overseeing the entire operation. Have the final say in any important decisions - decide on who to make BICs. Monitor growth and finances of the project. Make sure protocols are being followed. Report findings to Metro Vancouver and other organizations (Bird Banding Lab, Bird Studies Canada etc.). Report data to BBL. Order bands and make sure needed supplies are there. Organize work-load sharing (i.e. Data entry / net lane clearing). Oversee volunteer projects with the help of BICs.

Level S – Survey Participants

Level S1 – Beginner

Can identify few species – all recordings must be confirmed by S3/S4.

Level S2 – Intermediate

Can identify at least 75% of expected species - sightings of species in-range need not be confirmed but out of range sightings and records based on song/call must be confirmed by S3/S4.

Level S3 - Advanced

Can identify all of expected in-range species – records based on both sightings & song need not be confirmed but out-of range species require confirmation by a second S3 or S4.

Level S4 - Expert

Can identify all in-range species and has additional North American experience which enables them to identify out-of-range species.

All records will be accepted without confirmation.