



Duck Detectives Bird Banding

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Researchers band ducks to learn more about them. It is important to protect the habitats they need to nest, find food, rest during migration, and to spend the winter.



The people who band birds are trained and they must have a permit to do this work.



Bird banding tools include different-sized leg bands (carried on the small poles pictured above). The tool box holds special pliers, a ruler, a weigh scale, a notebook and other tools that the researchers might need.



Ducks are captured in different ways. Here grain is spread inside a netted area to attract them. The ducks enter through a small opening that makes it hard for them to find their way back out.



The ducks are moved into a special box. Researchers can reach through the box's opening and take out the ducks one-at-a-time for banding.



The researcher selects a band and gently fastens it around the duck's leg. When this duck is found, the band's number can be used to find out all the data that has been recorded about it.



Researchers note the species (for example, mallard), sex, age and measurements, and record this along with the band number, the location and date. This data will be stored on a computer so it can be shared with others across North America and around the world.



Sometimes researchers put electronic transmitters on the birds so they can track them and learn more. For example, we now know some migrating birds fly 2,500 km non-stop in 36 hours. This shows how important it is to have a safe resting and feeding area at the end of this long journey.