



ers in Illinois are actively banding; nor can it report how many birds were banded and

tific data collection is permitted in a well-organized network of scattered banding stations nationwide.

Peter Dring of the Little Red School House in Cook County's Palos

*Lee Johnson of the Sand Bluff Bird Banding Station in Rockford sets up a mist net.
Photo by Ruth Little.*

how many recoveries were received from Illinois.

The office is redefining its goals. "We're here to accept the data banders provide by mandate of the Migratory

Bird Treaty between the U.S. and Canada. Thus far, that is the extent of our duties. There is a popular myth among bird banders that they are volunteers for the government and are doing the migratory bird office a service by providing all this data. "But that's wrong," said Bystrak. "We deal with the data because we have to, not because the information is intended to be used for some purpose."

All the data the office receives for banded birds, except for that from a few specific projects is "purely recreational, non-necessary, and non-useful," he said. "Frankly, the permitting office is trying to discourage random backyard bird banding. In the future, we will probably see a big increase in the amount of non-game bird banding going on, but it will be purposeful, organized, and standardized across the country."

Bystrak said America is likely to move to the point where only scien-

Forest Preserve, sees that happening in Illinois. The Northeastern Illinois Bird Banding Association, a social and educational organization, disbanded as people aged or loss interest. Banders are also recognizing that "the federal government really want results nowadays to justify their work and the more independent bird bander is getting squeezed out," said Dring.

Illinois Banding and Research Projects

Most Illinois banding is now associated with research projects, said Vernon Kleen of the Illinois Department of Conservation. "Project bird banding is very necessary now to help us answer many conservation questions in the state. We need specific data to answer very specific questions," said Kleen, noting that in 1990, there were 49 master permits, 34 subpermits, and 8 institution permits issued in Illinois.

The Chicagoland Bird Observatory in Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve in DuPage County, near Argonne National Laboratory, is one the state's newest banding stations. It was established in 1990 by Dennis DeCoursey and his wife, Leslie, as a federal Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship project known as MAPS.

all new permits issued will require that bird banders submit all data on computer disk.

Data Crunching

But Danny Bystrak, a staff biologist at the migratory bird management office, said computerization "will be a godsend for us." Computerized data submissions will enable the office to handle five times the data with half the current staff. The office, which issues 2,000 permits can not keep up with the data that must be manually entered regarding the 1.1 million to 1.2 million birds banded yearly in the U.S. Nor can it easily process the average yearly band recovery on 50,000 birds.

The office also can not easily tell, except through laborious paper work and slow computer data retrieval, which of the 112 permit hold-