



Flags fly high for migrating shorebirds

by SANDRA SHERMAN

In May 1990, while scouting at Moore's Beach, N.J., for a Delaware Bayshore trip I was leading, I spotted two Semipalmated Sandpipers with flags on their legs.

Each time I would try to get the exact sequence of flags — which leg, what color, etc., all the birds would spook. When they'd land again, I would relocate them and begin the process once more.

At the time, I knew, generally, that the flags indicated where the birds had been banded and that my observations would help the researchers identify migratory flight paths, but I didn't know to whom to send the information. After some research of my own, I sent my observations on to somebody in Long Island, who must have then passed them on to the right person.

Months later, I received an acknowledgement from the folks at the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, who seemed to think I was now a "member," and they promised me more information on my sightings. Fortunately, birding has taught me patience, and in August, 16 months after my sighting, I was rewarded.

The WHSRN's Pan American Shorebird Program has, since 1983, been coordinating color markings for birds migrating through the Western Hemisphere. The organization acts a clearinghouse for banding reports, explained James E. Lyons in his letter to me.

"Our goal," Lyons writes, "is to avoid the duplication of color combinations between banding projects and to gather as much useful information as possible from every shorebird sighting. In this way, we are able to identify migratory routes and the critical wetland habitats important to shorebirds. This knowledge provides support for the conservation of shorebird populations and wetland habitats.

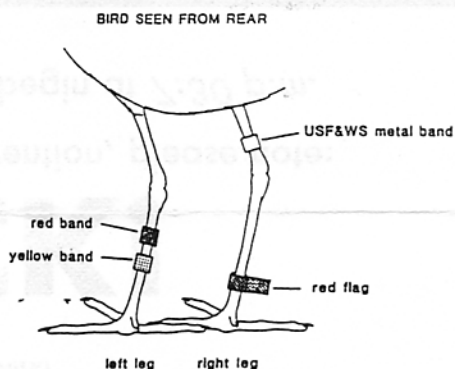
"One of the Semipalmated Sandpipers that you reported was banded in Peru — the one carrying the yellow flag. We do not have the exact banding date and location in our files; much of the banding

in Peru occurs in Paracas, just south of Lima. The other Semi, carrying a green flag, was banded in the United States. It is not possible to determine where or when it was banded because it has probably lost some of its original color combination."

The PASP is a collaborative program of a number of organizations, including the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.

The flags, if you're interested, are made of UV-stable Darvic plastic and, when distinguished in combination with leg bands, may be able to pinpoint the banding location and date. Here's what to look for and a translation:

- Color of flag(s);
- Color of bands;
- Position of each: Left or right leg, above or below the joint.



The following is reprinted from PASP material explaining how to report a color-band combination. The example is reported as:

--,RY:m,Fr

"In this notation the colon (:) separates the two legs and a comma (,) separates bands above ver-

sus below the joint.

"The position of the leg flag is noted with an upper-case "F" followed by a lower-case letter for the color; the example shows a red flag. Color bands are indicated by a capital letter. Dashes are used to indicate positions on the leg that were without bands, and a metal or aluminum band is indicated by a lower-case "m."

For information or to report sightings, write to Pan American Shorebird Program, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, P.O. Box 936, Manomet, Mass. 02345.

SEARCH FOR RARE BANDS ON MIGRATING BIRDS

THE PAN AMERICAN SHOREBIRD PROGRAM



Millions of shorebirds migrate northward from South America each spring to breed in North America. The Pan American Shorebird Program is a project to map pathways for conservation and research purposes.

Banding Sites: Argentina
Chile Mexico
Peru North Carolina
Ecuador Virginia
Brazil New Jersey
Canada Texas
California Venezuela

SANDERLING, RED KNOT, RUDDY TURNSTONE, BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER, SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, PIPING PLOVER, SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER AND WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER

You may see marked shorebirds along North or South American coastlines, particularly on sandy beaches and sandflats. The location of leg bands and colored flags provides the key to where they were captured. Please note the color and location of each marker, and especially leg flags. Then send your observations, including date and place to:

MANOMET BIRD OBSERVATORY
BOX 936
MANOMET, MA 02345



REPORTS OF COLOR-MARKED BIRDS WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED AND ACKNOWLEDGED.

If you would like to participate in other shorebird observer networks in your area, please contact us.

PAN AMERICAN SHOREBIRD PROGRAM FLAG CODES

Canada	white
United States	dark green
Central America	
Mexico	red over yellow
Honduras	red over gray
Costa Rica	red over black
Guatemala	red over orange
Nicaragua	red over dark green
Belize	red over light green
El Salvador	red over blue
Panama	red over white
Caribbean Islands	
Haiti	yellow over red
Puerto Rico	yellow over dark green
Dominican Republic	yellow over white
Venezuela	black
Suriname	light green
Northern South America	
Colombia	light green over yellow
Ecuador	light green over red
Guyana	light green over dark green
French Gulana	light green over blue
Peru	yellow
Brazil	blue
Central South America	
Bolivia	orange over red
Paraguay	orange over yellow
Uruguay	orange over blue

PROGRAMS

Meetings are normally held the first and third Thursdays of the month at the Academy of Natural Sciences, 19th St. and Benjamin Franklin Parkway, unless otherwise indicated.

NOTE: In anticipation of a bylaws change, the meeting time will, beginning Oct. 3, be advanced by a half-hour. All meetings will now start at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

OCT. 3, 1991 — ARMAS HILL, birding-tour operator and voice of the Delaware Valley Birdline: "Birds of Spain."

OCT. 17, 1991 — ALISON MOSTRUM HOPPMAN of Tyler Arboretum in Delaware County: "Social Behavior of Carolina Chickadees."

NOV. 7, 1991 — JOHN SERRAO, professional free-lance naturalist: "Wildlife in Winter."

NOV. 21, 1991 — DAPHNE GEMMILL of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Washington, D.C., and a

director of the American Birding Association: "Birding Opportunities With Earth-watch." *This meeting is the Annual Banquet and will be held at Cannstatter's, 9130 Academy Rd. For reservations and information on time, menu and cost, call Chris Dooley, 215-547-1834.*

DEC. 5, 1991 — DR. MATTHEW PERRY: "Endangered American Species Research at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center."

DEC. 19, 1991 — ALAN and CAROL GEHRET of Mill Grove, Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary: "Birds and Other Wildlife of Belize."

JAN. 2, 1992 — Annual meeting and election of new officers. Results of Christmas Bird Counts will be discussed, and refreshments will be served.

For information, contact Dr. John Harding, program chairman, 215-642-6394 (home) or 215-221-3353 (work).

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 5 and 6: DVOC Weekend. Barnegat Light to Cape May. Meet at Barnegat Lighthouse State Park on Saturday morning at 7:30. Leaders: Don Jones, 609-859-0281 (home) or 215-785-8010 (work), or Earl Harrison, 215-592-7950 (home) or 215-842-6315 (work).

Saturday, Oct. 12: Island Beach State Park. Meet at state park entrance in Seaside Heights, N.J., at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Paul Guris, 215-348-4295 (home) or 215-362-0966 (work).

Sunday, Nov. 3: Bake Oven Knob. Meet at the lookout parking lot at 9 a.m. for traditional day of hawk-watching. Leader: Chris Dooley, 215-547-1834.

Saturday, Dec. 14 to Thursday, Jan. 2: Audubon Christmas Count period. For information, call Sandy Sherman, 215-237-6814 (home) or 215-893-5739 (work).

Saturday, Dec. 14: Alan Brady's pelagic trip to Hudson Canyon. **SOLD OUT.**

For information on any of these trips, contact the members listed.

Philadelphia Larus

Send information you would like considered for publication in Philadelphia Larus to:

Sandra Sherman, editor
912 North St.
Collingdale, Pa. 19023
215-237-6814 (home)
215-893-5739 (work)

DUCK!

Now that we have your attention, please note:

Regular meetings will now begin at 7:30 p.m.

DVOC
c/o Academy of Natural Sciences
19th St. and the Parkway
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103