



U.S. Forest Service  
Redwood Sciences Laboratory



Newsletter of  
**LANDBIRD MONITORING NETWORK  
OF THE AMERICAS**

<http://www.klamathbird.org/lammna/>

June 2007

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**Message from the Banding Data Coordinator  
Leo A. Salas**

Bird population monitoring has been typically done by counting observed (seen or heard) birds. While the sheer abundance of locations and numbers reported of bird counts allow for powerful data mining and analysis tools for monitoring, there are some important drawbacks. Some species are cryptic and difficult to detect through observation methods; in many species males and females are indistinguishable to the observer; most importantly, the age of the bird remains unknown. Banding data can assist in closing these knowledge gaps.

The Avian Knowledge Network (AKN), a network of partner institutions dedicated to the study and monitoring of avian populations based in the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, has developed and made publicly available large datasets and tools to mine, retrieve, analyze and visualize observation and counts data through the web. LaMNA became an important partner to the AKN to provide new banding data datasets. Our goal is to make available the same or similar tools for data exploration and analysis for banding data, and eventually to show the complementary value of banding data to observation and count data. We have been hard at work toward this goal, which requires compilation of all datasets into one common format (a process known as "data federation"), data tracking and management, outlines of data storage and retrieval procedures, data ownership, privileges and sensitive data control. We have developed and tested applications (soon to be made available for download) that help compile datasets and help export datasets into the AKN format. We are also planning to develop data entry applications with common error checks that will store and make available datasets in the appropriate format.

The Redwood Sciences Laboratory and the Klamath Bird Observatory already have setup a web server with the databases and tools to share data with the AKN. Indeed, the RSL-KBO server has become a regional node of the AKN. These databases have been successfully tested and will be soon loaded with banding and observation datasets. Meanwhile, we have also begun the design of a LaMNA database to contain all the data shared with the AKN and additional datasets and information. Because the banding data and other datasets date back to more than two decades and are stored in a variety of formats, we will federate these one by one, initially bringing them as individual data files within a "library" before exporting them to the LaMNA master database and making them available over the web.

## **Our Name Has Changed, But the Mission Remains the Same**

As you may have noticed on the letterhead, due to popular demand, LaMMNA has now become LaMNA! We have changed the first part of our name from “Landbird Migration Monitoring” to “Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas” to more truly reflect the entire network. There are many of you already in our network that do more, some much more, than migration monitoring and we wanted to be inclusive of all of you and to bring in a wider membership.

Migration will remain a very important focus of LaMNA; however, we will now include breeding season data not covered by IBP, as well as post-breeding and wintering seasons.

We will be updating our web page, logo, and web links over the next few weeks, so don't be surprised if the extra “M” hangs around for a while (or if the network coordinator's fingers continue to add the second M).

### **LaMNA Node and Banding Data Schema Update**

As we reported in our last newsletter, there are several steps to get a Node up and running for you to contribute your banding data with us and the Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology. We are pleased to report that we have completed most of the steps in the process, and now have the Node's server in place with both a census and banding database. With the help of the Cornell staff, we tested the interface between the Avian Knowledge Network and the Node. The AKN successfully harvested the first of the census data from the Node using the program DiGIR (Distributed Generic Information Retrieval). So, we are now poised for the AKN to harvest banding data once the unique banding data variables have been added to their schema in the next week.

### **The ‘Boat House Group’ Meeting On LaMNA at Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon**

A group of LaMNA principals met on May 26 and 27 on Upper Klamath Lake outside of Rocky Point, Oregon to discuss a number of issues related to the banding data node and planning for the future of the LaMNA network. In a restful lakeside setting, enjoying Black Terns flying by, as well as a Bald Eagle perched (almost) overhead, folks from the Klamath and Humboldt Bay Bird Observatories, as well as Redwood Sciences Lab met. John Alexander, Keith Larson, C. J. Ralph, Josée Rousseau, and Linda Long participated in the meeting. Below is a brief summary of the discussions and issues. We will revisit these and other items at the Cooper meeting in a couple of weeks in Moscow, Idaho. We welcome email questions and ideas.

- Some possible ‘visions’ for LaMNA's future
  - Put on data management workshops to prepare data for uploading to the Node and harvesting by DiGIR to the Avian Knowledge Network.
  - Give cooperators tools to better visualize, analyze, and manage their data.
  - To get nodes running and make them functional so that people may freely and easily share data.
- Data sharing policy, privacy and security
  - We discussed the concerns that data owners have about security so that they get proper credit for analyses and papers when data are on an open source. We discussed ways that the data might be secured, especially on a case by case basis for sensitive data, and how we could secure data for “conditional use”. There might also be opportunities about how data are used in visualizations.

- Tools for banders, including web-based banding data checking are being developed by Dr. Leo Salas, the LaMNA coordinator.

## **Avian Influenza Update – Processed Results are Coming In!**

Another season of influenza sampling has just ended and the completed spring 2007 samples are arriving back at the lab. This marks the second year of the project which began last spring, involving banders from both the LaMNA and MAPS networks.

Our biggest news is that we are starting to get back results from sample processing. Samples are processed in batches of 100 samples. The first batch had two samples that tested positive for a low pathogenicity avian influenza virus. We want to remind everyone that this does not mean that the “high path Bird Flu” (as widely covered by the media) has arrived. Instead, recall that there are many forms of avian influenza viruses in bird populations and only one particular strain of H5N1 causes the Bird Flu, which has not been found in the Americas. So, these positive tests are encouraging in that the process is indeed able to detect avian influenza viruses from the samples so many of you have diligently collected. The next step will be to take these two and any additional positive samples and submit them to further testing to determine what strain of virus was collected.

We will update each cooperator with results of their station’s samples testing as they are known. We will also be sharing a generalized summary through our newsletter and web page.

## **LaMNA Meeting at the Cooper Ornithological Society Annual Meeting**

We will be holding a LaMNA organizational meeting in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Society in Moscow, Idaho. The meeting will be held in the Appaloosa room at the Best Western University Inn on Friday, June 21 from 12:00 to 1:30. One of the main focuses will be on our progress in getting the banding database installed on the data node and related projects such as the web interface, governance of LaMNA, data visualizations, and data tools. We would also like to have your input on tools or visualizations that would be useful to you for processing and analyzing data. Please contact C. J. Ralph (cjralf@humboldt.edu; 707-825-2992) for more information. All who are interested are encouraged to attend.

## **Soliciting Articles, Abstracts, and Additional Contributions**

We would like you to consider this *your* newsletter. To that end, we would like to ask you to send information on subjects related to bird monitoring and research. These can be abstracts of publications, articles – non-copyrighted reprinted short articles or self-written articles, web links, or other information that you would like to share. Please send all information to Linda Long at llong@fs.fed.us, or by surface mail to USFS Redwood Sciences Laboratory, 1700 Bayview Drive, Arcata, CA 95521.

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**Interested in membership or learning more about LaMNA?** See our web page at <http://www.klamathbird.org/lammna/> for details and a membership application form.