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## News, Notes, Comments

**ERRATA-Omission: NABB Jan-Mar 2014 Vol. 39 No. 1, page 27, 2nd column last line of ACKNOWLEDGMENTS should be as follows:** Dan Anderson, and Walter Sakai for helpful reviews of earlier drafts of this manuscript. This is Point Blue Conservation Science contribution #1964.

### Guidelines for Prioritizing Bird Safety during High Capture Events.

As responsible bird banders, we must anticipate, mitigate and minimize any potential danger to the birds we capture and process. The purpose of most banding operations is to sample a population, which does not necessarily include capturing every possible bird. There is always the potential to catch large numbers of birds and contingency plans should be in place to ensure that bird safety is never compromised. Certainly large numbers of birds can be caught and banded safely, but there is a fine line between a safe operation and a potentially harmful one. Ensuring bird safety requires training, constant vigilance and assessment of our actions.

The purpose of this article is to provide a synopsis of strategies and methods used to help banders manage potentially busy situations that may be outside an operation's normal comfort zone. Our most important recommendation is that banders use the information within to help prepare and develop their own strategies for handling potentially high volume events.

#### BE PREPARED

***Know the limits of an operation and work within them*** - Being prepared to handle large numbers of  
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birds can drastically improve efficiency and overall safety of birds on both the busy and not so busy days. It is important that banders know their own limits and strive to work within them. Every banding site is different, but the size and skill level of the team will always be two of the greatest limiting factors to an operation. Knowing the limits of a team is essential to maintaining a safe operation. Having lots of help is not necessarily an invitation to band more birds, as a lot of inexperienced help is far worse than few experienced assistants. Short-handed situations may require modifications to protocols, such as opening *fewer* nets and banding *fewer* birds.

The greatest Bander-In-Charge (BIC) is not measured by how fast they can band or extract a bird, but by the quality of their team and the level of explicit focus on bird safety and data quality in every aspect of the operation. Banders should never be placed in a situation that they cannot handle, and they should not be afraid to tell the BIC that this is so. BICs may wish to reassure less experienced team members that, although they are extremely busy, the situation is under control and offer advice on how to improve efficiency. Depending on the site, it may be important for protocols to address specifically preferred methods or deviations in busy situations to maintain data integrity while prioritizing bird safety.

***Importance of Protocols*** - General practices and guidelines of bird banding on a busy day are no different from a normal day. However, the potential consequences of not following them are amplified significantly on busy days. Guidelines