

Southeast Coast Network

National Park Service
Inventory & Monitoring Program



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) #1.4.28

Training Procedures for Monitoring Wintering and Migratory Shorebirds

Version 2

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Summary

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes the training procedures and required skills for field implementation of the Southeast Coast Network (SECN) Migratory, Wintering, and Beached Shorebird Monitoring Protocol. This SOP supersedes the training procedures included in SOP #2 of the Byrne et al. (2009a) SECN wintering and migratory shorebird monitoring protocol.

Revision Log

Previous Version #	Revision Date	Author	Changes Made	Reason for Change	New Version #
	2/2009	M. Byrne	Original version		1.0
1.0	1/2013	M. Byrne	Edited for clarity; previously aggregated with other instructions and now moved to a unique SOP	Field crew feedback	2.0

Overview

Training occurs prior to data collection and the amount of training time necessary is dependent upon the experience and skill level of field personnel. Training is implemented by park staff with support from the Network staff as necessary, and is generally a combination of self-study and guided study. Training involves a protocol overview, target-species identification, proper implementation of line-transect methodology, use of the range finder, habitat-type identification, data entry and data management procedures, Park operations, public interactions, and general safety guidance (e.g., emergency-contact procedures, vehicle operation).

The field lead for the protocol should have several tiers of training materials prepared and available, dependent upon the species monitored that year and the experience level of the individual. Several media are available: bird-identification software packages, books, quick guides, and many websites. Generally, the quizzes in bird identification software packages are the most effective and easiest to setup and use. Field trips and birding excursions with experienced personnel should also be used. These excursions should also be used to review the habitat types identified in this protocol and their associated general locations and characteristics. Trainers should directly evaluate field personnel through field trials (e.g., simultaneous counts made by the trainer and the trainee) prior to official data collection. Proper identification of habitat types should also be evaluated during the field trials. If distance sampling is implemented, distances are measured and not estimated; therefore training is limited to proper use of the range finder. The range finder's accompanying user's guide should be read to ensure proper operation.

The field lead should evaluate the abilities of all field personnel to identify target species and implement the protocol methodology prior to the commencement of data collection. The duration of training depends on the individual. It is imperative that trainers are confident that field personnel can properly and consistently identify target species prior to initiating data collection. Misidentification of birds is a serious issue and inconsistent or incorrect identification should preclude sampling efforts. By keeping the number of target species small, this protocol is designed to be implemented by personnel with minimal experience (i.e., interns, technicians). It is recommended that if personnel with minimal birding-experience are chosen to implement this protocol, that only a few species are selected to be monitored and the number of species is increased as experience and confidence increases.

General reconnaissance of the Park and all sampling units should be conducted by field personnel to further increase the familiarity of the park by field personnel, and experience the associated logistical issues involved with site access.

The protocol should be read in its entirety by all field staff prior to data collection. Any questions or need for clarification can be posed to SECN personnel.

Recommended Bird Identification Resources

Books:

- Paulson, D. 2005. Shorebirds of North America: The photographic guide. Princeton university press, Princeton, New Jersey.
- O'Brien, M., R. Crossley, and K. Karlson. 2006. The shorebird guide. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, New York.
- National Geographic. 2002. Field Guide to Birds of North America, Fourth edition. National Geographic, Washington, D.C.
- Sibley, D.A. 2000. The Sibley guide to birds. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, New York.
- Sibley, D.A. 2002. Sibley's birding basics.

Software:

- Thayer Birding Software (PC/Mac): <http://www.thayerbirding.com/>
- ibird (iPhone, Android, PC, Mac): <http://ibird.com/>
- Sibley Birds of North America (Windows phone 7.5, and 8):
<http://www.windowsphone.com/en-us/store/app/sibley-birds-of-north-america/c03fce67-d408-4666-a07f-f7d5934baa49>
- North American Birds (PC), Simon and Schuster

Websites:

- Cornell Lab of Ornithology: <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/Page.aspx?pid=1189>
- Patuxent Bird Identification InfoCenter. Gough, G.A., Sauer, J.R., Iliff, M. Patuxent Bird Identification InfoCenter. 1998. Version 97.1. Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD. <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/infocenter.html>
- eNature Bird Field Guide:
<http://www.enature.com/fieldguides/intermediate.asp?curGroupID=1>
- National Geographic Backyard Bird Identifier:
<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birding/backyard-bird-identifier/>
- Birdzilla: <http://www.birdzilla.com/>