

The History of the East Cascades Bird Alliance Pinyon Jay Banding Project

Kevin Smith, an ECBA member, started the Pinyon Jay Banding Project in 2014 driven by curiosity about where the jays came from and where they went after visiting his Crooked River Ranch home. Ken Hashagen, ECBA member and a Master Bander for the USGS, joined the project in 2018, when together they began banding the jays.

Kevin and Ken work with local residents in the Crooked River Ranch and the Sisters area who are willing to have a trap set up in their yard and have jays coming to their feeders on a regular basis. On an agreed upon day, the resident closes the trap after baiting it with black oil sunflower seeds. If and when birds enter the trap, the resident closes the trap, puts a sheet over the trap to keep the birds calm, and then calls Kevin and Ken, who quickly drive to the site to band the birds. Banding consists of placing a USGS aluminum band on the right leg – each band is individually numbered. A colored plastic band is placed above the USGS band. The color indicated the location the bird was banded, for example, yellow for Sisters, red for Crooked River Ranch. An additional colored band is placed on the left leg to indicate the year the bird was banded.

Data from the banded birds is sent annually to the USGS Banding Lab, a requirement of the Lab's banding program. Data at the Lab is available to qualified researchers. Data is also sent to ODFW, to fulfill the requirements for the annual Take Permit which must be purchased annually by the project bander. Kevin and Ken do not know how ODFW utilize the data.

Any questions about the Banding Project may be directed to either Kevin (kevinsmithnaturephotos@gmail.com) or Ken (khashagen@hotmail.com).