

News Release



Southern Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Service seeking public's help in locating banded burrowing owls

LAS VEGAS — In the summer of 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the Red Rock Audubon Society (RRAS) captured burrowing owls and placed color leg bands on them at several locations in Pahrump and at Floyd Lamb Park in Las Vegas. Service biologists are now asking the public to report any banded burrowing owls they see in backyards, around town, or when hiking in the desert.

Western burrowing owls are small, long-legged, ground-inhabiting owls that are often seen during the daytime resting outside of their burrows. They appear earless and have large yellow eyes. They eat mostly insects, small rodents, and lizards. These owls are found in open areas with very little vegetation. In the fall and winter, the young burrowing owls move to new areas. Some remain in southern Nevada year round, while others migrate south or go to other areas where there may be more food for the winter.

The western burrowing owl is considered a species of conservation concern due to loss and degradation of habitat. At Floyd Lamb Park, the Service and RRAS enhanced habitat for the species by installing artificial burrows to replace natural burrows lost through development of surrounding land. For the past seven years, volunteers have monitored these owls when they are nesting to estimate the number of young each burrow produces, and now it will be possible to recognize individual owls because each banded owl has its own number.

Banding birds is a tool that wildlife biologists use to mark individuals so that a bird can be recognized over time. This will allow Service biologists to study the owls at Floyd Lamb Park and in Pahrump more thoroughly to better understand where the banded young owls go when they leave their parents' burrow. This information will improve the Service's ability to conserve burrowing owls in southern Nevada.

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Each banded owl has a blue metallic band on its left leg and a silver band on its right leg. The Service asks the public to try to read the number on the blue band, which will be a two digit number above a letter. Binoculars or a spotting scope should be used to read the number at a distance because the owls will fly away when they are approached too closely. The location of the owl is to be noted, either to the closest cross streets or its GPS location. Participants are asked to call the Southern Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office at 702-515-5230 to report a banded owl, whether or not the number can be read.

Banded birds of many species pass through southern Nevada during migration. Anyone who reads the band on a bird or finds a dead banded bird can report it at www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/ or may call 1-800-327-2263.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/cno>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#), and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).