



NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and* RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
8601 ADELPHI ROAD COLLEGE PARK, MD 20740-6001  
[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

February 7, 2019

Ms. Christina Bartlett  
Department of the Interior  
U.S. Geological Survey  
12201 Sunrise Valley Dr., MS159 RM 4B114  
Reston, VA 20912  
[cbartlett@usgs.gov](mailto:cbartlett@usgs.gov)

Dear Ms. Bartlett:

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has become aware through an anonymous source of the potential unauthorized destruction and unlawful removal of federal records at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC). We have received a claim that proper records management practices are not being followed and that at least one employee took records home in an effort to prevent destruction (whether records were eligible for destruction or not is unclear), though the records may have been subsequently returned to the agency.

I am requesting that you investigate this matter through your contacts at PWRC to determine what, if any, records are being destroyed, and if destruction is in compliance with federal records retention regulations, or if federal records have been unlawfully removed from federal agency custody at any time.

If federal records have been unlawfully removed or are being destroyed without proper authorization from NARA, removal and destruction must cease immediately, and as required in 36 CFR 1230.14, promptly report to NARA any unauthorized removal, alteration or destruction of agency records.

In accordance with 36 CFR 1230.16(b), please provide us with a response within 30 calendar days that includes a complete description of the records (including an approximation of the volume and dates of all destroyed and/or unlawfully removed records); a statement of what safeguards have been put into place (or will be put into place) to prevent any future unauthorized disposition or unlawful removal of agency records; exact details of the circumstances surrounding the any unauthorized destruction or unlawful removal of records; and an outline of any actions taken to retrieve or recreate the records.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Sherman-Fells, Records Management Oversight and Reporting Program, at 301-837-2083 or by email at [dawn.sherman@nara.gov](mailto:dawn.sherman@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government



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***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

June 6, 2019

Ms. Christina Bartlett  
Department of the Interior  
U.S. Geological Survey  
12201 Sunrise Valley Dr., MS159 RM 4B114  
Reston, VA 20912  
[cbartlett@usgs.gov](mailto:cbartlett@usgs.gov)

Dear Ms. Bartlett:

Thank you for investigating the allegation of potential unauthorized destruction and unlawful removal of federal records at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC). Your investigation confirmed that 180 cubic feet of paper bird banding records, dating from the 1960s to the 2000s from the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL), were destroyed after being scanned. Another 65 cubic feet were removed, after scanning, from the agency by an employee, taken to their home, and subsequently returned due to this investigation. These records are currently unscheduled in USGS, but were previously scheduled under the predecessor Fish and Wildlife Service schedule NC1-022-78-01, item 28, as permanent records. The investigation also confirmed the removal of Works Progress Administration timesheets during the 1990s by an employee and donated to the Department of the Interior Museum. Through the investigative process, four unscheduled series of records were identified.

To prevent further loss PWRC staff were advised to cease all destruction and removal of paper records. The Records Management Program is coordinating with the Center Director and the previously designated records liaisons to provide center-wide training to educate staff on basic records management responsibilities. Two training sessions are scheduled for June 11, 2019, and another is planned for the Fall 2019.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) accepts your report and risk mitigation strategy and considers this matter closed. However, we remain concerned about records management practices at PWRC. Please work with your NARA appraisal archivist to immediately begin the scheduling process for these unscheduled records. We also recommend you develop and implement a disposition request process for the disposal of records to ensure that the agency records management program is able to review and approve appropriate disposal actions to mitigate future risk.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We value your commitment to records management.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence R. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'B'.

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government