

MAPS Bird Banding Program 2020 report

Project Leader: Gene Groshon gene.groshon@calvertcountymd.gov 410-535-5327

JoAnne Lutmerding is also a project leader and guides us in running the station, providing the bands and banding equipment as well as helping out on banding days.

MAPS stands for Monitoring Avian Production and Survivorship. This is a bird banding research project that focuses on studying the population of birds in their breeding habitat. The data gathered during this project help to determine the productivity, recruitment and survival of different bird species. We follow a very specific protocol established by the Institute for Bird Populations. This is a continent wide project with more than 1,200 MAPS stations spread across nearly every state and Canadian province, having collected more than 2.5 million bird capture records since 1989.

This project involves capturing birds with mist nets in order to collect the data needed. Mist nets are made of a very fine material and are difficult for the birds to see. The nets are checked every 40 minutes and any birds captured are carefully extracted by trained staff. Once the bird is extracted it is given a small metal leg band that has a unique number stamped into it. This helps us to identify the bird if it gets recaptured. After determining the species and sex we take several measurements and then the bird is released. Photos are taken of some notable species or ones that are difficult to age. Often times there is not time for photos as we need to ensure the nets are getting checked on time.

We open the nets at sunrise and run 7 net checks every 40 minutes. The 12 nets are placed along a 1 mile loop through the park so we typically hike 8 miles a day often at a rigorous pace. The trail is narrow, sometimes wet and lined with sticker bushes and poison ivy so pants and sturdy hiking shoes/boots are recommended.

During our time operating the station we keep track of every bird species that is seen or heard within our banding area and take note of any breeding behavior. New volunteers help with these observations.

SKILLS NEEDED

- Need their own reliable transportation
- Be able to hike 8 miles at a rigorous pace on varied terrain
- Able to identify local birds by sight and song (helpful)

VOLUNTEER DUTIES

- Assist with spotting and identifying birds seen and heard
- Recording data during banding process

REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

- Arrive at start time (about 5:30 to 6:00am) to assist with opening the nets
- Hike 6-7 mile on uneven terrain (sometimes at a fast pace if it's a busy day)
- Work in hot and humid conditions for 6-7 hours with no time indoors

TRAININGS

- New volunteers should email gene.groshon@calvertcountymd.gov to set up a day to come out and observe. In 2020, we did not accept new volunteers due to social distancing limitations concerning COVID-19
- Once trained, volunteers receive a certificate that can be uploaded as a Qualification on their profile on <https://calvertstewards.galaxydigital.com>. This will allow them to respond in related opportunities.

PROJECT DATES

- Late April- Early May: Possible trail clearing days and net setup day
- Late May- Early August: There will be 8 banding days from sunrise till about 11:30am

Summary of 2020 Activities

We banded 137 birds and recaptured 11 birds that were previously banded by us either in the same year or prior years. On our opening day 5/24/2020 we had a record day with 59 birds banded and an additional 20 birds captured that were not banded since they were migrants and would not be breeding at Ward Farm. Some notable species that we banded in 2020 include Yellow Billed Cuckoo, Prothonotary Warbler, multiple families of Eastern Bluebirds, Orchard Oriole. We included a small number of volunteers due to Covid social distancing protocols.

Volunteers: Karen Anderson, Mary Bell, Joanna Lutmerding, Scott Clark

Staff: Gene Groshon and Shannon Steele

Future Plans

We need to decide if nets 8-10 will remain in the same location after the pond/dam restoration project is over. For 2021 we will try to run some public programs for families to come out and view the banding station.

JoAnna Lutmerding recording data while Scott Clark processes an Indigo Bunting



Adult male Indigo Bunting



Supporting Calvert County's nature parks and natural spaces



CALVERT STEWARDS

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

A partnership between Calvert Nature Society and Calvert County Natural Resources Division

2020 Annual Report

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CALVERT STEWARDS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
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Volunteer Portal: <https://calvertstewards.galaxydigital.com/>

Calvert Nature Society: www.calvertparks.org

Calvert County Natural Resources Division:
www.calvertcountymd.gov/NaturalResources

