

M.A.P.S. Bird Banding

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The Monitoring Avian Productivity & Survivorship program (MAPS) is a bird banding research project run in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Bird Banding Laboratory. This is a national collaborative effort to assist the conservation of birds and habitats through demographic monitoring at designated MAPS stations. Flag Ponds Park is one such banding station, and a biologist from the Bird Banding Laboratory will lead Natural Resources staff and volunteers to check the 10 mist nests set up along a hiking trail in the park. If a passing bird is caught in a net, the biologist (who is a certified bander) will carefully remove the bird, take measurements and notes on the bird, and apply a lightweight band to the bird's leg before releasing it. The collected data is submitted to the USGS where it is analyzed to track bird demographics, health, and migration patterns.

MAPS bird banding volunteers will be able to get an up close look at the bird banding process while helping carry tools and take notes for the banders. This is a vigorous and detail-oriented project, so please carefully read the description and duties below before signing up to volunteer for this project. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact the project leaders.

PROJECT DETAILS

- This is an 8 day project at Flag Ponds Park during June and July. Volunteers will work as a group led by a biologist and certified bander.
- The net check days are set in advance, and volunteers will sign up for specific days and sessions
- Each net check day has 2 sessions; the earlier sessions tend to have more birds
 - First session: approx. 6:30am-9:10am (exact times based on sunrise)
 - Second Session: approx. 9:10am-11:40am (exact times based on sunrise)
- Each session can have up to 4 volunteers
- Each session involves 4 rounds of net checks
 - Each round is a vigorous 1-mile loop hike with a long uphill section, so expect to hike about 4 miles each session.
- Participants may be exposed to ticks, mosquitoes, poison ivy, bad weather, uneven terrain, cranky birds, and other wild life

VOLUNTEER DUTIES

- Commit to specific net check sessions, arrive on time and ready to go
- Dress for the weather and in proper attire for vigorous hiking. *Good things to remember: rain jacket, hat, water bottle, snacks, insect repellent or protective clothing, sturdy shoes, clothes that can get muddy/wet/torn, towel, and change of clothes.*
- Assist the biologist/naturalist by carrying tools, recording data, setting up and taking down nets, and other assistive duties as assigned.
- Follow all park, trail, and banding policies and protocol.

Please note: **To ensure the safety of the birds, hikers, and to keep net checks on schedule:**

- The nets are only open on days of the net checks.
- Only the certified bander(s) can remove birds from the net and attach the leg bands. Volunteers will definitely get an up close look at the birds and the banding process, and may be able to release birds once banded at the discretion of the bander.
- Photographs are permitted once a bird has been removed from a net and is in the hand of the bander. Please, no photographs of birds still in the net.
- Volunteers **may not bring friends or family members** unless previously approved by the naturalist in charge.
- The group needs to move swiftly from net to net in order to stay on schedule; please save any wildlife watching, plant ID, or leisure hiking for after the session ends.