

# Project OwlNet: Northern Saw-whet Owl 2022 Annual Report

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Flag Ponds Nature Park Banding Station  
Calvert County, Maryland

**Project Leader: Gene Groshon** [gene.groshon@calvertcountymd.gov](mailto:gene.groshon@calvertcountymd.gov)

Banding assistant training: Scott Clark

Volunteers: Gabe LaCount.

Calvert Stewards assist with the establishment and operation of a Northern Saw-whet Owl banding station at Flag Ponds Nature Park

**Objective:** To capture Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWO) during the fall migration with the purpose of banding, recording critical data, and successfully releasing. Capture, lure, and data collection techniques are outlined by Project OwlNet. Project OwlNet is a continent-wide program designed to gain an understanding of the population dynamics and migration habits of the Northern Saw-whet Owl.

<http://www.projectowl.net/>



## SKILLS NEEDED

Ability to walk trails in the dark with a headlamp and commit to a minimum of 6 hours per night.

## DUTIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Assist with the opening and closing of nets
- Assist with the hourly inspection of nets
- Assist with the accurate recording of data
- Maintain confidential and sensitive information of banding details

## TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

- An orientation is required for qualification
- Volunteers are selected by Gene Groshon based on volunteers that have helped with other bird banding projects. There isn't anything regular volunteers can do to help with this project at this time. However, Gene is working with volunteers that have helped with other bird research projects that he knows can handle the responsibility and can learn the skills of extracting birds from the net, banding them and taking the measurements.

## SUMMARY OF 2022 BANDING ACTIVITIES

Dates: Opened on 10/27/2022 Closed on 11/17/2022

Total number of days of operation: 10 days

Total number of days closed: 12 days

Total number of NSW0 captures: 18 (17 New bandings, 1 Foreign Recapture)

Total number of non NSW0 captures: 1 Eastern Screech Owl red

Gene worked with Scottie Clark to get more banding experience. He was able to come out 1 night this season.

Gene had Gabe LaCount out to help with data recording. He was highly recommended by Sherman Suter as an avid teen birder that is possibly interested in a career with birds.

This report contains a general analysis of the data collected based on the following criteria:

- Capture per net hour
- When was the peak of the banding season?
- Wind direction vs number of captures
- An overview of recaptured owls.

# RESULTS

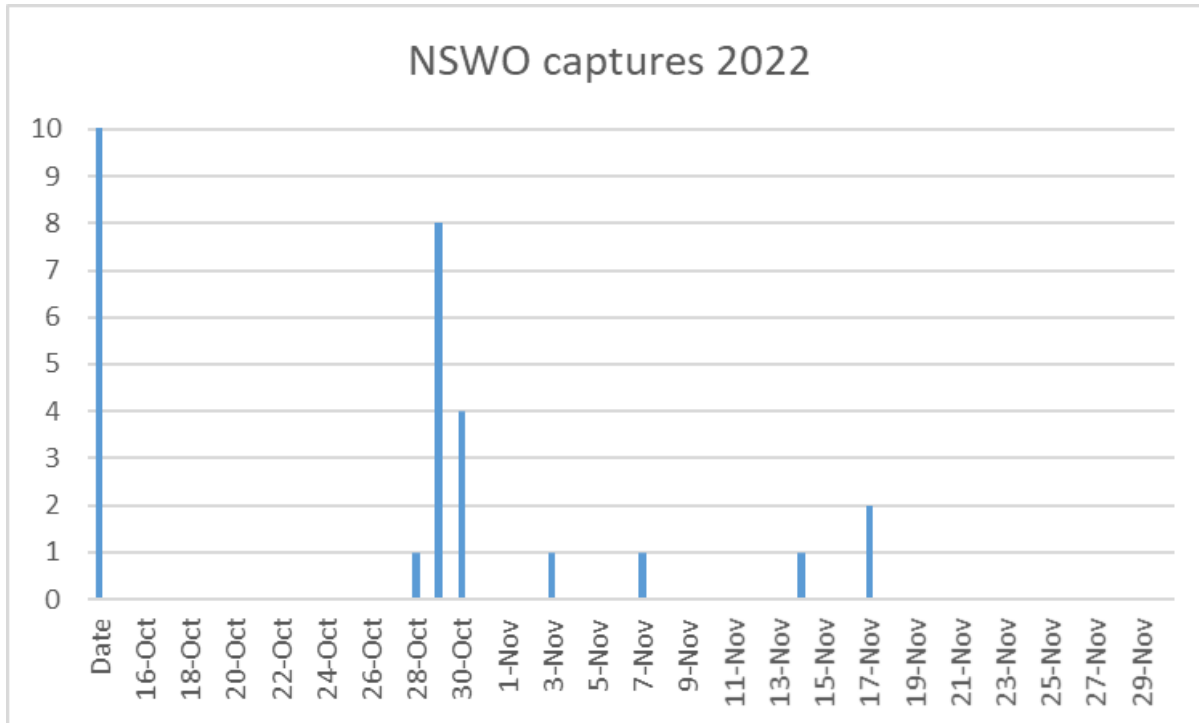
## Capture Per Net Hour

This compares the amount of effort used to the number of birds captured. Net hours are calculated by multiplying the number of nets open on a given night by the amount of hours open that night, adding up all of the nights gives us total net hours for a season. Besides 2018 which was a abnormal year with 70 captures, 2022 was our most efficient year with 35.33 net hours per capture. In 2022, Gene focused on opening the nets only on nights when the conditions were favorable. While this could miss owls that come through on less favorable nights it still captures likely the majority of the birds coming through while reducing staff hours.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
hours	182	123	153	187	208	75	53
# of nets	6	6	12	12	12	12	12
total net hours	1092	788	1836	2244	2496	900	636
number of captures	25	3	70	14	35	12	18
hours per capture	43.68	262.67	26.22	160.28	71.31	75	35.33

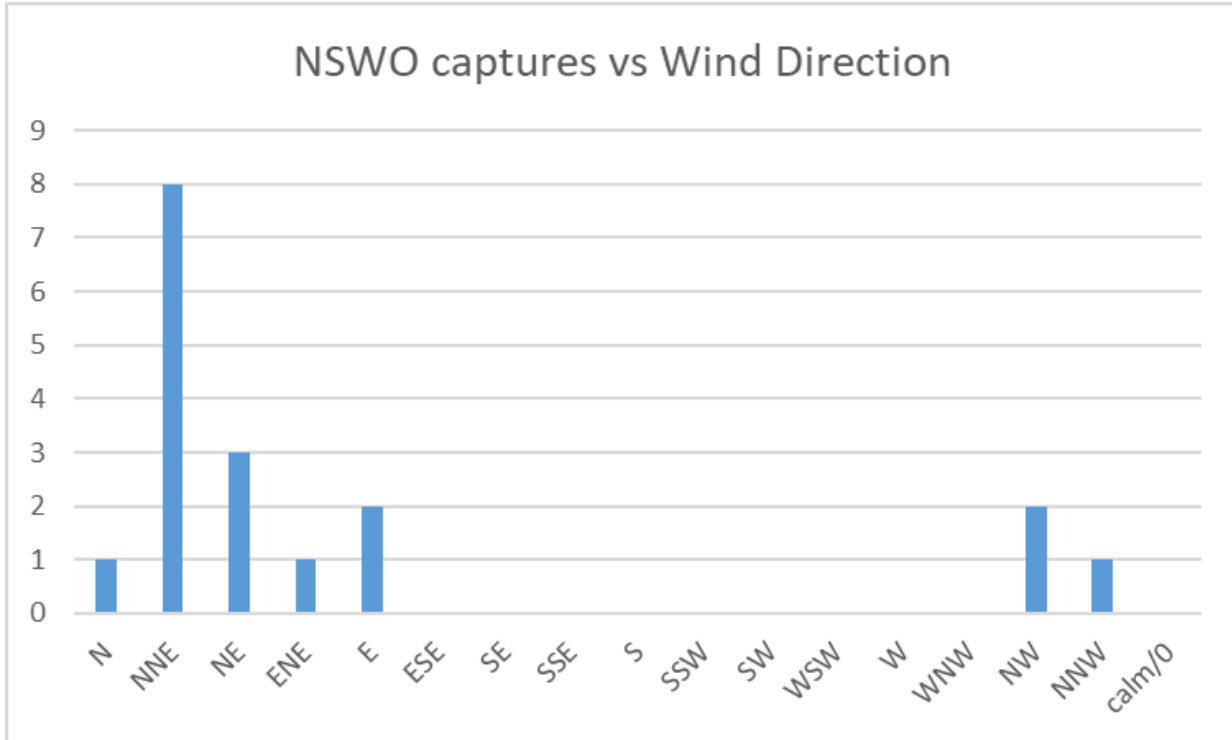
## When was the peak of the banding season?

The peak of the banding season was the night of Oct 29-30, 2022 with a total of 9 NSW0 captured which is 50% of the total captures for 2022.



## Wind Direction vs Number of NSWO Captures

As expected, the birds prefer to migrate on nights with winds out of the NE through NW



## Recaptures

We captured one foreign recapture. The bird was originally banded 752 miles away in Tadoussac, Quebec, Canada on 10/02/2022. This bird was also incorrectly banded with a 4 lock on band and should have been banded with a 4 short which was specifically designed for Northern Saw Whets. This was reported to the Bird Banding Laboratory.

No local recaptures from previous years.

## FUTURE PLANS

Gene will decide if the station will be run in 2023 due to limited staff time and development of a volunteer component. There are concerns with the support from Project OwlNet. They do not appear to be doing any work with the data. Although they put out a call for help with their website, they haven't updated their station map on their website since 2010. If the station continues, it will need to determine how to involve volunteers such as teens and people that show an interest in obtaining a wildlife management or banding career.

2022 photos



Northern Saw Whet Owls



Scottie Clark preparing to measure the tail length of a Northern Saw Whet Owl



Eastern Screech Owl captured and banded by Gene this season



Gabe LaCount getting to experience his first Saw Whet Owl banding.

*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*

# 2022 Annual Report

Date of Issue March 2023

CALVERT STEWARDS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM  
c/o Natural Resources Division  
2880 Grays Road  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
(410) 535-5327

Volunteer Portal: <https://calvertstewards.galaxydigital.com/>

Calvert Nature Society: [www.calvertparks.org](http://www.calvertparks.org)

Calvert County Natural Resources Division:  
[www.calvertcountymd.gov/NaturalResources](http://www.calvertcountymd.gov/NaturalResources)

