
Warner Parks Bird Information Research and Data (B.I.R.D.) Program

2023 ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT



Photo by Charlie Curry.

B.I.R.D. PROGRAM SUPPORT

The BIRD Program is a partnership between Friends of Warner Parks, the Warner Park Nature Center, and Nashville Metro Parks and Recreation.

The program is fully funded by Friends of Warner Parks thanks to the generosity of donors, partners, and sponsors, notably, the Andrea Waitt Carlton Family Foundation and the Barbara J. Mapp Foundation.



2023 Research Highlights

YEAR EST.	PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS
1927	Nashville Chapter Tennessee Ornithological Society Bird Counts Project to assess long-term population trends. Number of species observed for Warner Parks bird count: 104 in spring, 70 in fall, and 50 in late December.
1936	Bluebird Nesting Team of 7 volunteers and staff monitored 49 boxes where 199 bluebirds hatched from 249 eggs and 174 fledged – 70% nest success compared with 57% in 2022. Of those banded: 155 bluebird nestlings and 9 adults with 6 adult recaptures. Other fledged cavity nesters: 3 Carolina Wrens and 12 Tree Swallows. These results are reported to the North American Bluebird Society.
1982	Long-term Fall Migration Bird Banding During 18 banding sessions: 261 birds were captured, 58 of those were recaptures. American Robin was the most common new banded bird. A very dry fall season but some water remained in Vaughn’s Creek.
1983	Long-term Winter Bird Banding A warm winter season with 8 banding sessions captured 323 birds, 208 of those recaptures with lots of Downy Woodpeckers and White-breasted Nuthatches.
1983	Long-term Spring Migration Bird Banding 6 banding sessions with 92 birds captured, 38 of those recaptures. Weather conditions were variable with some cold and windy mornings and some beautiful days. Of significance, invasive plant species were removed in the banding area at the original trailhead and the dissecting trail closed in July.
1985	Breeding Bird Survey Documented 337 birds of 50 species. There have only been 5 years with 50 species or more (2004, 2008, 2018, 2022, 2023). Highlights were Wood Thrush and Blue Grosbeak with few grassland species. The 25 observation locations were geo-referenced and digitally mapped.
1991	Monitoring Avian Productivity & Survivorship (MAPS) Continent-wide research program in partnership with the Institute for Bird Populations – WPNC station is one of the oldest in Southeast. 10 banding sessions captured 147 birds of 26 species, 44 of which were recaptures including a male-female pair of Kentucky Warblers at least 8 years old, tying the male Bird Banding Lab and setting the female longevity record in North America.

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1997	Project FeederWatch In partnership with Cornell Lab of Ornithology & National Audubon. From November 2022 to April 2023, 13 volunteers observed up to 22 bird species and an average of 42 birds during 44 sessions. Results submitted to Project FeederWatch.
2002	Hummingbird Migration Banding 10 sessions with team of 13 volunteers captured 143 hummingbirds, including 12 recaptures. On 10 Aug, recaptured an adult male first banded by our team on 09 Aug 2022.
2002	Purple Martin Nest Success At WPNC, 11 active nests with 55 eggs and 52 fledged (95% fledge rate, up from 70% in 2022). Banded 55 and radio-tagged 25 nestlings at WPNC, Ellington Agriculture Center, and Bells Bend. Results submitted to Purple Martin Conservation Association.
2007	Northern Saw-whet Owl Migration No owls captured despite our biggest effort to date (137 net hours) thanks to a grant from the Tennessee Ornithological Society for equipment at a second, simultaneous capture location.
2015	eBird Results from each banding session for birds banded and seen/heard are reported to eBird managed by Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
2015	Bird Genoscape Project Contributed 45 feather samples from 8 species to the Bird Genoscape Project where they use genetic information from the tip of birds' feathers to identify the breeding origin of birds captured during migration.
2018	Barn Swallow Nest Success Monitored 31 nests and banded 34 nestlings at WPNC and Steeplechase to assess nest success – the only 2 locations in the park with active nests. Nest success was 61% at WPNC and 69% at Steeplechase. Concerned by fewer birds and lower nest success within Warner Park.

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YEAR EST.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

2020

Motus

Radio-tagged 43 birds (5 Gray-cheeked Thrush, 4 Swainson's Thrush, 4 Hermit Thrush, 5 Wood Thrush, 25 Purple Martins). Highlights: A male Wood Thrush first radio-tagged by us in 2021 returned in 2022 and was detected again this year in Warner Parks. During fall migration, one of our Swainson's Thrush was detected in Mexico and a Purple Martin was detected in Costa Rica. Our stations detected a Chestnut-sided Warbler tagged in Pennsylvania and an Eastern Whip-poor-will tagged in Ontario, Canada. A grant from the Barbara J. Mapp Foundation continued to support this research.



Tennessee State University intern Aspen Sanders searches for a radio-tagged Hermit Thrush, photo by Laura Cook.



A 20-day-old Purple Martin nestling with a new radio transmitter, photo by Laura Cook.

2023 Program Highlights



Interns Anna Sawyer and Amelia Browning help band a barn swallow nestling.



A just-banded Downy Woodpecker, photo by Graham Gerdeman.

- BIRD continues as a founding member of Bird Safe Nashville, a coalition of citizens supported by Harpeth-Cumberland Audubon Society, who work to ensure a city where migratory and resident birds thrive.
- Core team member of the Urban Bird Treaty Program – a US Fish and Wildlife Service program to improve habitat, reduce hazards, and increase education for birds in urban areas. On May 13th, celebrated Nashville as a UBT city – the 31st city in the nation and first in Tennessee to receive this designation. Assisted Shelby Bottoms Nature Center to host a World Migratory Bird Day event that included a formal signing of the UBT with the Mayor’s Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and Nashville partners.
- Leah LaRocco volunteered and trained with us to receive her federal hummingbird banding permit. Volunteer Rachael Payton trained with us to receive her bluebird banding permit and has applied for her Master Bander permit for the Nashville Zoo. Volunteer Patty Ghertner is training to receive her hummingbird federal sub-permit with us.
- Tennessee State University’s Aspen Sanders interned during the spring. From Lipscomb University – Lexi Price volunteered during spring and Anna Sawyer, Amelia Browning, and Anna Money were summer interns assisting with Barn Swallows, MAPS, and Motus.
- A shout out to our Bird Feeder Volunteers who maintain clean and full feeders at WPNC throughout the year, including the many hummingbird feeders, to attract birds to the campus for our research and public engagement.
- Fabulous and well-attended events at WPNC - Winter Bird Day, Spring Nature Fest & the Hummingbird Celebration, Bird Walks during winter, spring and fall migration.

2023 Program Highlights

- BIRD Program presentations to Garden Clubs, Beaman Park Nature Center, the La Petit Salon Club, Wild Birds Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy webinar series, Nashville Club for good, [FYI Naturalist Program](#) Motus research.
- Collaborated with the Mayor's office on Purple Martin roost location issues. Jessa Tremblay with Metro Parks coordinated the public outreach and engagement at the martin roost this year. Purple Martin press included [WKRN Channel 2](#), [WPLN](#), [Margaret Renkl's New York Times article](#), [The Tennessean](#), [NashToday](#), [Axios Nashville](#), and [USFWS](#).
- Hosted the Inland Bird Banding Association's annual conference. Plenary presentation on the BIRD Program, led a Motus workshop, and interns Anna Sawyer and Amelia Browning presented their research during the poster session. A very successful event thanks to FOWP, WPNC staff, and our fabulous volunteers.
- Hosted well-attended Ollie Vanderbilt Adult Learning bird classes taught by Belmont University's Stacy Elliott in spring and fall.
- The Amelia R. Laskey Collection has been at the nature center for over 20 years and has been transferred to the Special Collections Division of the Nashville Public Library where it will be cataloged and eventually available online.
- After 4 years of relentless volunteer hours and coordination by Nancy Cole, all WPNC banding is in a master database. Thanks to generous donations, we have contracted to have this data analyzed and published next year.
- Our 40 years of fall bird banding data was used in an analysis for a paper in the Journal of Animal Ecology. Six decades of North American bird banding records reveal plasticity in migration phenology (Horton et. al 2023).

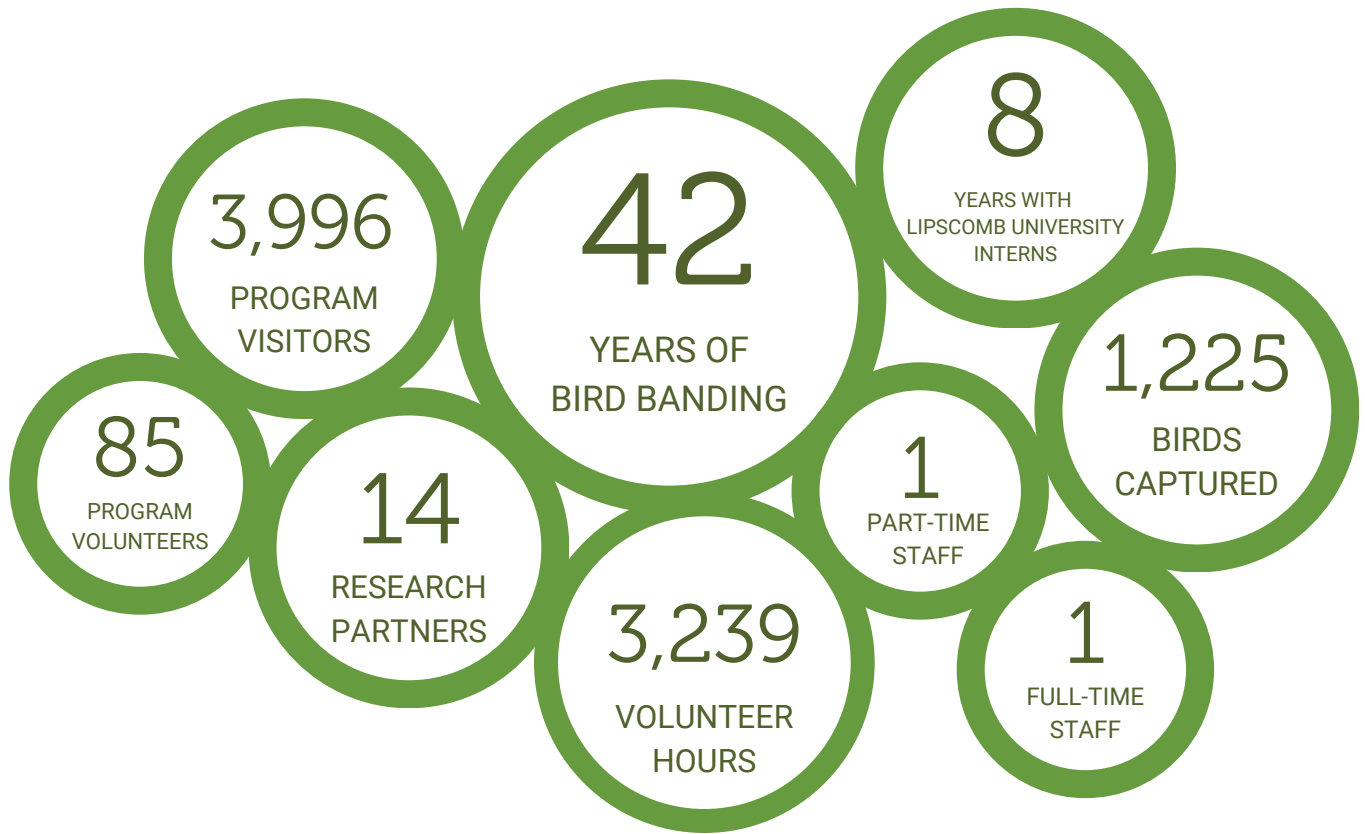


Intern Azia Tank, volunteer Lexi Price, intern Emery Minor help with bird banding public education, photo by Laura Cook.



Laura with a radio-tagged Hermit Thrush, photo by Graham Gerdeman.

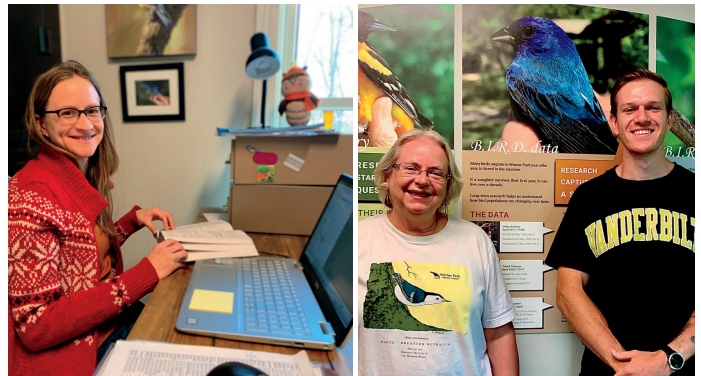
2023 BY THE NUMBERS



Top left photo by Graham Gerdeman: Banding a Scarlett Tanager. Bottom left photo by Terry Cook: The Purple Martins arriving at the Nashville Migration Roost. Right photo by Laura Cook: Sandy Bivens showing Pen Pals students a brood patch on a banded bird.

2023 Volunteers & Staff

THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING TEAM OF WONDERFUL, DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF. THIS YEAR, 85 VOLUNTEERS DONATED 3,239 HOURS TO OUR BIRD PROGRAM.



Amelia Browning
 Amy Pardo & family
 Angi Johnson
 Ann Acheson
 Ann Hoos
 Anna Sawyer
 Anne Snyder
 Barnes Family
 Beth Adams
 Beth Preston
 Bob Parrish
 Camille Beckwith
 Carolyn Crews
 Charlottes Barnes
 Cheryl Brummal
 Cody Cook
 Daniel Charlton
 Darlene Panvini
 David Aborn
 David Hanni
 Deana McNett-Burke
 Debbie Bright

Devin Bickford
 Diana McLusky
 Elizabeth Cook
 Elyse Dilks
 Emily Culbertson
 Evelyn Paret
 Frank Fekel
 Graham Gerdeman
 Gurnoor Majhail
 Heather Gallagher
 Jean Louis Barnes
 Joe McLaughlin
 John Kell
 John Lewis
 Justin Hiltner
 Karen Schneider
 Karl Hackenbrack
 Kassie White
 Kathy Hart
 Kathy Shaw
 Kelli Fly
 Kim Bailey

Kren Teren
 Kristina Savona
 Laura Cook
 Leah LaRocco
 Lexi Price
 Linda Breggin
 Lisa Brown
 Louise Merritt
 Marcus Snyder
 Margie Hunter
 Mary Glynn Williamson
 Mary Griffin
 Maryle Linn
 Matt Jenkins
 Melissa Donahue
 Nancy Cole
 Paige Range
 Patty Ghertner
 Perry Wasdin
 Rachael Payton
 Rachel Anderson
 Robert Windham

Robin Cohn
 Sandy Bivens
 Shannon Alpert
 Starr Nolan
 Stefan Woltmann
 Steve Ghertner
 Sue Shallow
 Susan Bradfield
 Tahira Mohyuddin
 Tammy Gross
 Teresa Marchetti
 Terry Cook
 Thomas Copeland
 Toni Rogers
 Trae Bradfield
 Vera Roberts
 Virginia Barnes
 Virginia P'Poole
 Zak Holden