

# FOREMAN'S BRANCH BIRD OBSERVATORY SPRING MIGRATION



MARCH - MAY 2024

## SEASON TOTAL: 2,826 INDIVIDUAL BIRDS BANDED OF 94 SPECIES

Since 1998, Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory (FBBO) has used banding to monitor bird movement through our area during spring and fall migration. Our high-volume station contributes to the federal Bird Banding Lab dataset while collaborating with outside organizations on more specific research projects, and educating students and community members on all things birds!

## STANDOUT CAPTURES



Red-tailed Hawk (left) - first since 2016, banded on April 27th. Red-winged Blackbird (center) banded in March 2013 and recaptured this spring at 11 years 9 months old. Cooper's Hawk (right) captured at FBBO in April, banded in Cape May, NJ on October 24th, 2023.

## THE CREW



From left to right: Mirabelle White '24 (glass technician), Phillip Mercier (bander), Natalie Donofrio (bander), Maren Gimpel (Associate Director, FBBO) Gabe Urso (glass technician), Connor O'Hea (bander), Meghan McHenry '21 (avian field technician).

## TOP 10 SPECIES WITH TOTALS

- 1 White-Throated Sparrow: 386
- 2 Common Yellowthroat: 309
- 3 Gray Catbird: 305
- 4 Swamp Sparrow: 119
- 5 American Goldfinch: 106
- 6 Red-Winged Blackbird: 100
- 7 Hermit Thrush: 98
- 8 Northern Cardinal: 84
- 9 Song Sparrow: 77
- 10 Brown-Headed Cowbird: 64

## OUR INTERNS

Lauren Albert '26 (left), and Anna Treadway '25 (right) joined us for the spring migration season and learned to identify, safely handle and remove birds from mist nets. Farren Hauer '26 (center) joined us at the American Bird Conservancy glass testing tunnel facility where they contributed to bird-friendly glass design research. We thank them for their hard work.



## COLLABORATIONS

This spring we deployed radio tags for two projects: on Wood Thrushes (left) for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Eastern Towhees (right) for Shelly Eshleman at University of Delaware.



We collaborate with the American Bird Conservancy to test the effectiveness of bird-friendly glass designs from manufacturers around the world. This season our technicians ran 3,098 test flights.

We would like to thank the volunteers who support our work and The Mill of Kingstown for keeping our birdfeeders full.





# FOREMAN'S BRANCH BIRD OBSERVATORY SUMMER FIELD RESEARCH



**MAY - AUGUST 2024**

## GRASSLAND BIRD RESEARCH

Behavioral studies of the Field Sparrows in the grasslands on Washington College's River and Field Campus continued this summer. Led by Jennie Rinehimer, Associate Professor of Biology, Maren Gimpel, Associate Director, and Meghan McHenry '21, Avian Field Technician, a team of students searched for nests and monitored mated pairs as part of a long-term study on their breeding biology. Adult birds have been color-banded (as seen below, center) since 2014, creating a known-age population of Field Sparrows, identifiable by their unique color band combinations.

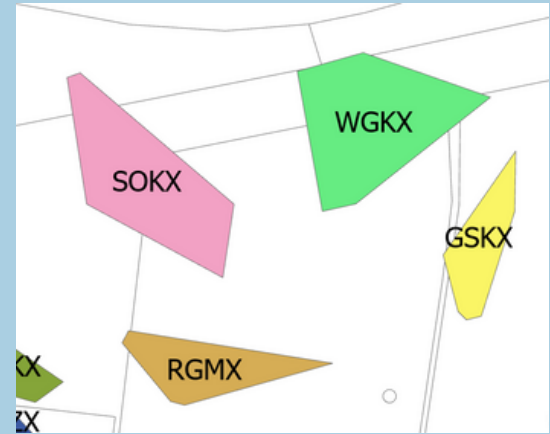


## MEET THE SUMMER FIELD CREW

For 10 weeks this summer, WC interns Gabby Bonds '27 (top), Julianna Shepherd '27 (middle), and Farren Hauer '26 (bottom) joined Maren Gimpel, Meghan McHenry '21, and Jennie Rinehimer in the search for Field Sparrow nests. From dawn to midday, the crew worked to discover 84 nests, color-band 46 individuals, and collect over 1,000 GPS points for adult Field Sparrows while observing parental behavior. The interns learned what field work entails and sharpened their observation and data collection skills while contributing to meaningful research.



## MAPPING TERRITORIES



Each summer, the field crew takes GPS points for Field Sparrows marked with color bands. These points are used to create a map of the territories of individual birds. In the map above, each shape is a different male bird's territory.

## OUR STUDY SITE

The 200-acre experimental grassland on our River and Field Campus provides a home for declining grassland bird species like the Northern Bobwhite. The fields are managed with a rotating schedule of prescribed burns to create a mosaic of micro-habitats which leads to greater diversity of nesting wildlife. The grasslands provide research opportunities for students, faculty, and outside collaborators.



## STAY CONNECTED WITH FBBO!



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