



Banding Songbirds and Raptors: Livetrapping, In-hand Aging and Sexing, and Data Collection

August 23–29, 2026

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More than 300 species of birds occur in Maine at some point in their life cycle and Maine is a nexus of activity for both breeding and migrant birds. This course has been scheduled to overlap the transition period from the breeding season into fall migration. While this course is designed to help the amateur birder take their interest in birds to the next level, it is also useful for professional or aspiring biologists and students looking to gain experience with the handling and banding skills necessary for many research and monitoring projects. Through a mix of classroom presentations, specimen study, and field mist-netting, participants will learn the operation of mist nets and safe extraction of birds, be exposed to trapping techniques used for raptors, handling skills for a suite of species, in-hand aging and sexing techniques, and data collection procedures. Participants will have the unique opportunity to get up close and personal with birds. In addition to meeting course objectives, this hands-on approach will improve species identification skills and stimulate the learning of avian life habits.

Field work will be supplemented by lectures and discussions covering the history and ethics of bird banding, avian life histories, energetics, molts and plumages, and emerging tracking technologies. Come take advantage of this intensive opportunity to learn new, or hone existing, bird handling and research skills.

Adrienne Jo Leppold (adrienne.j.leppold@maine.gov) is the former state songbird specialist with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. She has her Ph.D. from the University of Maine, completing her dissertation on landbird migration throughout the Gulf of Maine. She has banded/handled over 100,000 birds, primarily working with songbirds, near-passerines, raptors, and seabirds. She is certified as a trainer by the North American Banding Council and has co-authored manuals used by banding stations throughout North America.

David Brinker (dfbrinker@verizon.net) is an ecologist with the Maryland Department of Natural Resource's Natural Heritage Program where he has worked on biodiversity conservation since 1989. He is the founder of Project OwlNet and co-founder of Project SNOWstorm, two highly successful cooperative efforts to study migrating and wintering owls using bird banding and radio telemetry. Since 1994, he has led the Central Appalachian Goshawk Study in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. He holds a federal Master banding permit and has banded thousands of raptors and colonial nesting waterbirds since 1975. He has authored or co-authored papers on Northern Goshawk population change, Red-tailed Hawk migration, Northern Saw-whet ecology and movement, American Oystercatcher distribution, as well as on secretive marsh birds and colonial nesting waterbirds.