

# HBF FUNDS NEW "MAPS" BIRD BANDING STATION AT HBS

WINTER GARY, COMMUNICATIONS & EVENTS COORDINATOR, HIGHLANDS BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Although it's been an unconventional summer here in Highlands, the Highlands Biological Foundation continues its dedication to research here on the Highlands Plateau. The Foundation annually supports research at HBS, and over the past 10 years, we have awarded over \$300,000 in scholarships and grants to visiting researchers who have come to Highlands to study various aspects of our ecologically significant region. Most recently, the Foundation funded HBS's newest research endeavor as it became home to a new bird banding station for the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program - an initiative that began just over 30 years ago to assess trends in avian demographics in a wide range of habitats in North America.

HBS's bird banding efforts are being led by the non-profit organization Blue Ridge Bird Observatory (BRBO) (formerly known as Southern Appalachian Raptor Research) which has successfully operated several banding stations at other locations in western NC as part of the MAPS program. The bird banding will take place at the Station every 10 days or so between May and August over the next several years. Biological data such as age, sex, feather condition, wing measurements, and any signs of disease or injury will be collected from birds, and each bird will be fitted with a USGS-issued aluminum band featuring a unique ID number used to identify that individual. MAPS banding stations allow researchers to better understand the underlying causes of bird population trends while also serving as an educational opportunity for bird ecology and conservation.

Next summer, if you come for a morning stroll through the Botanical Garden and notice staff working at the bird banding table on campus, please stop by. This is an excellent opportunity to engage in real and relevant science in our community.

This project is made possible thanks to the knowledge and experience of BRBO's staff, facilitation by HBS Associate Director Jason Love, and funding provided by the Highlands Biological Foundation. For more information about this research, visit BRBO's website at [www.bigbaldbanding.org](http://www.bigbaldbanding.org) and the Institute for Bird Population's website at [www.birdpop.org](http://www.birdpop.org).

## HIGHLANDS MAPS 2020

Total birds handled: 149

Total species: 21

Resident species: 8

Neotropical migrant species: 13

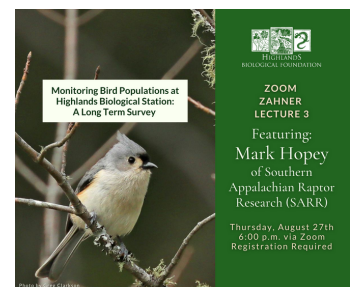
Warbler species: 8

Thrush species: 3

Sparrow Species: 2

Most abundant banded bird: Slate-colored Junco

*If you'd like more details about bird banding, you can watch our virtual Zahner Lecture with BRBO Biologist, Mark Hopey, on our YouTube channel! Just search 'Highlands Biological' and look for this thumbnail:*



### 2020 Bird Banding Photographs:

1. BRBO staff measure wing of Worm-eating Warbler.
2. Staff collect data for an American Robin.
3. Staff analyze the feather condition of a hatch-year Wood Thrush's wing.
4. Glamour shot of a Hooded Warbler.
5. Glamour shot of an Ovenbird.
6. Staff release a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird.
7. Staff finish fitting a Black-throated Blue Warbler with a USGS aluminum band.

Photos courtesy of Clay Bolt, Greg Clarkson, Paige Engelbrektsson, and Winter Gary

