



Calvert County NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 11, 2013
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Bird Population Study Established at Flag Ponds Nature Park

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – June 11, 2013 – A new bird banding research project is taking place at Flag Ponds Nature Park this June and July; data will be gathered to help determine the impact of changes in sea level and major weather events on the breeding bird population.

The Monitoring Avian Productivity and Success (MAPS) Program gathers data on the ecology, conservation and management of North American land bird populations. Ms. Jo Lutmerding, the volunteer MAPS coordinator for the Flag Ponds station, is interested in the response of breeding birds to environmental changes.

Birds are banded with thin, lightweight aluminum bands. The bands include a unique number that is recorded, along with the species, weight, wing length, sex, age, body fat and feather wear of the bird. The information is entered into a national database so recovery of a banded bird can be documented.

The project will occur about every 10 days and began June 2, starting at dawn and ending before noon. Volunteers and visitors will be allowed to participate in the program in limited numbers. Volunteers will carry equipment, record data, survey the area for other birds and take photographs. Contact the office for details and to request a spot on the study day.

Remaining research dates include June 13, 23 and 30; and July 10, 21 and 31. The North Ridge Trail will be closed to dog walkers until noon on those dates to minimize disturbance of the study site.

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The MAPS program is coordinated by the Institute for Bird Populations, a California nonprofit corporation dedicated to research on the abundance, distribution and ecology of birds, as well as facilitating scientifically informed conservation of birds and their habitats.

Flag Ponds Nature Park, managed by the Calvert County Division of Natural Resources, is a remnant habitat of coastal scrub and mature hardwood forest on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay that hosts diverse bird species. This vulnerable habitat is experiencing sea level rise at a much faster rate than other coastal regions, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Of the 500 MAPS stations in North America, Flag Ponds Nature Park is the only one on the Chesapeake Bay, providing valuable breeding and survival information on Kentucky warbler, worm-eating warbler, ovenbird, yellow-throated warbler, wood thrush, scarlet tanager and summer tanager.

The Calvert County Natural Resources Division preserves, manages and operates natural resource areas to provide compatible outdoor recreation and educational opportunities for the public. Flag Ponds Nature Park is located at 1525 Flag Ponds Parkway in Lusby. For more information about Flag Ponds Nature Park, please contact the park office at 410-586-1477. Please note that groups of 10 or more are required to make reservations prior to visiting the parks. For reservations at the park or additional information about the Calvert County Natural Resources Division, please call 410-535-5327 or visit www.co.cal.md.us/naturalresources.

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Calvert County is Maryland's smallest county in land area with 213 square miles. It is home to nearly 90,000 people and has one of the highest standards of living in Maryland. Major industries include defense contracting, information technology, tourism, energy, advanced manufacturing and administrative services. Like us on Facebook by searching for Calvert County Government, Calvert County, Maryland.