



Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Connecting People, Birds and Land



Photo by Megan Boldenow.

Roger's Grove Park Banding Station 2019 Summary

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Introduction

Our mission at Bird Conservancy of the Rockies is to conserve birds and their habitats through an integrated approach of science, education, and land stewardship. Our bird banding stations allow us to monitor trends in bird migration over time and also serve as an outdoor classroom for local students and the general public. In 2019, with support from Boulder County Nature Association, we established a new bird banding station at Roger's Grove Park in Longmont, CO. This banding station enabled us to host many Boulder County students and residents that may not have been able to make the trip to our other regional banding stations located an hour or more away.

Our primary goals for the 2019 spring and fall banding seasons were as follows:

- Establish and operate a banding station for a pilot season at Roger's Grove Park and evaluate the potential for a long-term station
- Provide an outdoor educational experience for Boulder county students and residents, our goal was 200 student visitors in 2019
- Provide an opportunity for dedicated volunteers to assist with achieving the scientific and educational goals above

Methods

Banding stations are placed in sites where birds congregate in large numbers during migration. These stopovers generally have excellent habitat that offers food and a safe place to rest. Roger's Grove Park has a tall cottonwood canopy with areas of dense willow understory. We set up a total of ten mist-nets (Figure 1) within this habitat to harmlessly trap wild birds. Trapped birds were measured, banded with a small aluminum band around their leg, then released back into the wild. Each band has a unique number on it so that if the bird is recaptured or found later, biologists will know when and where it was banded.

The banding station was open in both the spring and fall, running each Tues. and Thurs. from May 2nd – May 30th (spring season) and Sep. 3rd – Oct. 10th (fall season). Nets were opened within 15 minutes of local sunrise and remained open for five hours, weather permitting. Nets were checked at least once every 30 minutes and birds were held captive no longer than one hour (usually less than 15 minutes). The banding station was run by trained Bird Conservancy biologists under Federal Bird Banding Permit #22415 and CO Scientific Collection License #19BD2631. We also had the help of a team of dedicated volunteers, many of which returned week after week throughout each season.



Figure 1. Site map of net locations at Roger's Grove Park, Longmont, CO. Banding station located at BASE point.

Results

We operated the banding station for a total of five days in the spring and eight days in the fall. Our total effort was lower than expected due to weather; we lost four days to rain in the spring and had early closures due to high temperatures on most days in the fall. In total we banded 111 birds (62 in the spring and 49 in the fall, see appendix for complete list). All banding data were submitted to the federal Bird Banding Lab as well as Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

We measure capture rates at banding stations as birds per 100 net hours (1 net-hour is a single 12-meter net open for an hour). This allows us to compare stations that may have differing numbers of nets or be open for a different duration of time over a season. At Roger's Grove Park, we saw capture rates of 51.9 and 16.9 birds per 100 net-hours in spring and in fall respectively.

We hosted a total of 214 visitors at the banding station in 2019. This includes scheduled visits by schools or



Students help release a Black-capped Chickadee. Photo by Michelle Desrosiers.

community groups and walk-in visitors that signed our visitor log sheet (visitors that did not sign in were not counted). Our total number of visitors was also impacted by the weather, as some groups were unable to reschedule after weather-related cancellations.

Volunteers are an integral part of our banding stations. They help with providing an educational experience to visitors and also assist with the running of the banding station itself. We logged a total of 194.5 hours from 13 volunteers at the station across the spring and fall seasons. Most of the volunteers assisted on multiple days and will likely continue to volunteer at Roger's Grove Park into 2020.



Visitors gather around the banding station. Photo by Michelle Desrosiers.

Discussion and Future Goals

Our capture rate and total number of banded birds were fairly low at Roger's Grove Park. It's likely that poor weather played a role in this, although it is difficult to make such assessments in a pilot year without having previous years' data to compare to. Comparing the banding station at Roger's Grove with the nearby station at Allegra Collister Nature Preserve (located about five miles west), we saw similar capture rates (birds per 100 net-hours) in the spring season (51.9 Roger's Grove vs. 51.2 ACNP) but a much lower rate at Roger's Grove in the fall (16.9 Roger's Grove vs. 36.2 ACNP).

While we did host 214 total visitors at the banding station (126 of which were with school groups), we fell short of our goal of hosting 200 students in 2019. We had some cancellations due to poor weather and several banding days when we were unable to schedule a group. We do anticipate the number of student and total visitors to increase in 2020, as we establish relationships with local schools and teachers. Our other well-established banding stations have many teachers and community groups that return each year to visit.

Our primary goals for the 2020 spring and fall banding seasons are as follows:

- Expand total effort at the banding station, with ten days of banding planned in the spring and 11 in the fall with a 'back-up' day each week to make up for missed days due to weather
- Increase total number of visitors to the banding station by 20% (2019 total of 214 visitors to 2020 goal of 260 total visitors)

Acknowledgements

We thank Boulder County Nature Association for their generous support in establishing this banding station. We also would like to thank the City of Longmont Department of Public Works and Natural Resources in sponsoring our Use of Public Places permit and allowing us to set up a banding station in a city park. Finally, we thank the many volunteers that helped us run the banding station and provide a unique educational experience to our visitors.



Students react as a Blue Jay is banded at the station. Photo by Michelle Desrosiers.

APPENDIX

Species list of banded birds in spring and fall of 2019

Species	Spring	Fall	Total
Mourning Dove	1		1
Downy Woodpecker		2	2
Intergrade Northern Flicker	1		1
Western Wood-pewee		1	1
Least Flycatcher	1		1
Dusky Flycatcher	1		1
Blue Jay		2	2
Black-capped Chickadee	6	1	7
White-breasted Nuthatch	1		1
House Wren	7	2	9
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		2	2
Swainson's Thrush	1		1
Hermit Thrush		2	2
American Robin	12		12
Gray Catbird		3	3
House Finch	1		1
American Goldfinch	1		1
'Gambel's' White-crowned Sparrow		2	2
Lincoln's Sparrow	3		3
Orange-crowned Warbler	8	4	12
Common Yellowthroat	1		1
Yellow Warbler	1		1
'Western' Palm Warbler	1		1
'Audubon's' Yellow-rumped Warbler	4		4
'Myrtle' Yellow-rumped Warbler	9		9
Unknown Yellow-rumped Warbler	1		1
Wilson's Warbler		28	28
Red-winged Blackbird	1		1
Season totals	62	49	111



'Western' Palm Warbler, our rarest banded bird in 2019. Photo by Megan Boldenow.



House Wren, a common breeding bird in Roger's Grove Park. Photo by Megan Boldenow.



'Intergrade' Northern Flicker. Photo by Megan Boldenow

Net locations at Roger's Grove Park in 2019 (decimal degrees).

Net Number	Net Length	Latitude	Longitude
1	12-meter	40.163212°	-105.126727°
2	12-meter	40.163025°	-105.126447°
3	12-meter	40.163031°	-105.126277°
4	12-meter	40.163189°	-105.126316°
5	12-meter	40.163550°	-105.127859°
6	12-meter	40.163461°	-105.127853°
7	12-meter	40.163648°	-105.127538°
8	12-meter	40.163778°	-105.127625°
9	12-meter	40.164153°	-105.127623°
10	6-meter	40.164150°	-105.127870°