**River Point Bird Observatory**

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**Bird Banding Demonstration**

**Biodiversity Research Institute**

**276 Canco Rd.**

**Portland, ME 04103**

Thank you for scheduling a Bird Banding Demonstration at River Point Conservation Area. This handout will give you some background information about River Point, our organization, the bird banding program and some interesting facts about birds.

Introduction

In 2011, Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) began a wildlife monitoring effort at River Point Conservation Area with the primary goal of establishing a migratory bird monitoring station. In collaboration with the Town of Falmouth, BRI biologists set up mist nets to capture birds, which are then banded for tracking purposes and released unharmed. In just a few short years, researchers have banded over 7,000 songbirds, trained handfuls of interns, developed strong collaborations, and shared their works with thousands of students and community members, just like you!

What to Expect

River Point Conservation Area is an outdoor park where BRI conducts wildlife research and a bird monitoring program. Visitors can expect exposure to the days weather so appropriate clothing is recommended. Also, there are biting insects and ticks on the property so insect repellent and clothing appropriate for walking outdoors is recommended. Guests may want to bring binoculars, a field notebook, and a field guide to North American Birds, water and snacks. Cameras are also welcome as pictures are allowed throughout the day as time allows. Bathrooms are not readily available in the property but there is a Hannaford or Dunkin Donuts within walking distance.

Getting There

River Point is located on Route 100, just east of Falmouth Crossing Shopping Center. The physical address of the Hannaford in the Falmouth Crossing Center is 65 Gray Road, Falmouth, Maine. River Point is located at the far end of the shopping center. A limited number of parking spots are available in front of the walking bridge but additional parking is available at the Hannaford next door. The banding station is located across the walking bridge in the barn where you will be greeted by the BRI staff and volunteers upon your arrival.

Your Program

We will discuss birds, ecology, bird migration and our research methods with your group. We will cater the presentation to the age and interests of students and allow the observations and questions of the day to guide our discussion.

Pre-trip Topics of Discussion for Students

1. Get them to talk about what birds they have seen and what they have been doing (eating, flying, sleeping, etc..)
2. Talk about what makes a bird a bird
3. What birds have you seen in the summer but not in the winter? Where do they go? Why?
4. List some questions you would like to ask our biologist about birds or nature?
5. Please let us know ahead of time if you would like us to address any particular topics about birds during your program
6. Tell them they will be visiting River Point , meeting our biologists and talking about birds with the opportunity to see live birds up close

Some important terms you may hear:

**SPECIES:** a group of animals that have common characteristics and qualitites

**BIOLOGIST:** a scientist who studies living organisms, often in their environment

**ORNITHOLOGIST:** someone who studies birds

**HABITAT:** the natural surroundings where a plant or animals lives

**ADAPTATION:** features of an animal or plant which help it live in its habitat ( ex. Cardinal’s thick, strong beak is adapted for eating seeds)

**PLUMAGE:** the feathers on a bird’s body

**CAMOUFLAGE:** a means of concealment that creates the effect of being part of the natural surrounding

**MIGRATION:** the regular season journey undertaken by many species of birds, where they travel from their wintering grounds to their nesting places in the spring and then in the fall they travel back to their wintering grounds.

**PREDATOR:** an animal that hunts and eats other animals

**PREY:** an animal hunted or caught by another animal for food

**MOLT:** the loss or shedding of old feathers to make way for new a new growth. Usually a regular part of a bird’s life cycle

**COMMON NAME VS. SCIENTIFIC NAME:** the common name of an organism is a name based on the normal language of everyday life vs. the scientific name is the name of the same organism in scientific terms, usually consisting of the genus and species. (ex. Common Loon- *Gavia immer).*

**RESEARCH:** investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts. The collecting of information about a particular subject.

Bird & Banding Briefs

* Oldest bird – an Arctic Tern banded as a chick in Maine was recovered in Maine as a breeding adult 34 years later.
* A Traill’s Flycatcher that was banded on 9/25/11 at the Maine Coastal Islands NWR near Milbridge, ME was recovered at River Point the next day 9/26/11. That’s 191 miles in one days.
* On 5/25/11 a Common Yellowthroat that was banded on 5/27/08 on Plum Island in MA was recaptured at River Point.
* In 2014, the staff at River Point banded a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on 4/25 which is the earliest recorded banding date in Maine.
* River Point is one of the few nesting locations for Blue-winged Warblers in Maine. On 5/31/11, the staff here banded an adult male and 3 years later that same male was recaptured here at River Point on 8/21/14.
* There are about 10,000 different species of birds in the world
* There are about 900 species throughout North America
* There are about 450 species throughout the state of Maine
* 162 species have been observed at River Point

Book List for Children

* Sibley, David The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North

 America

* Stokes, Donald and Lillian Stokes Guide to Bird Behavior 1, 2, and 3
* Willis, Nancy Carol Red Knot: a Shorebirds Incredible Journey
* Swinburne, Stephen Swallows in the Birdhouse
* Garelick, May What Make a Bird a Bird
* Peterson, Roger Tory Peterson’s Field Guide to Birds of North America