

**Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS)
Witty's Lagoon Regional Park
2025**



*Male Cedar Waxwing, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park, 2025.
Photo: Jannaca Chick.*



Prepared by Jannaca Chick
Rocky Point Bird Observatory
Victoria, BC, Canada

Acknowledgements

Rocky Point Bird Observatory acknowledges with respect Scia'new and T'Sou-ke First Nations on whose territory we work, as well as the many other Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples of the region. We recognize their leadership, and that of all indigenous peoples, for time immemorial to protect the land and water for the benefit of birds and people alike.

This project would not have been possible without assistance from the Capital Regional District (CRD) and their staff.

In 2025, MAPS monitoring by Rocky Point Bird Observatory was conducted primarily by volunteers. Personnel include MAPS Coordinator Cathy Reader, Volunteer Coordinator Robyn Byrne, Bander-in-Charge Jannaca Chick (contractor) and Mark Byrne (Bander Trainee). Station setup, monitoring efforts and education liaison were completed with the volunteer help of Melissa Anderson, Amber Billard, Dan Burgin, Mark Byrne, Robyn Byrne, Jannaca Chick, Beth Christopher, John Costello, Anne Cotter, Craig Emes, Skyler Freeman, Sonja Futehally, Erin Haydl, Max Hellicar, Christina Lam, Dallas MacNeill, Rekha Marcus, Josh McCallum, Storm Morgan, Jo Motek, Mike Motek, Ann Nightingale, Kimberly Parno, Cathy Reader, Adam Ross, Heather Tocher, Maddy Vallee, Mark Walker, and Robyn Yoshida.

332.9 volunteer hours of field work, plus 122.5 hours of setup and take down, total volunteer 455.4 hours for the 2024 MAPS season at Witty's Lagoon. This does not include administrative volunteer hours or bander's compensation. Without everyone's generous donation of time, the season would not have been possible.



*The final banding session at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park, August 2025.
Photo: Robyn Byrne.*

Summary

2025 marked Rocky Point Bird Observatory's (RPBO) sixteenth consecutive year running the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park in Metchosin, BC.

Sampling was conducted between 1 June 2025 and 1 August 2025 (MAPS periods 4 to 10), for a total of seven sessions, one for each 10-day MAPS period. Ten mist nets were used to capture birds; mist nets were deployed, and birds extracted, banded, and processed according to the MAPS protocol (DeSante et al. 2025) developed by The Institute for Bird Populations (IBP). Breeding status was determined by observing the body condition of individuals while in the hand, by location of active nests, and by the formulae prescribed by IBP. Each sampling day, detections of birds seen or heard were also recorded in accordance with the MAPS protocol.

In addition to following the MAPS protocol, RPBO also participated in two studies at both MAPS stations:

- 1) The Bird Genoscape Project, conducted by Amanda Carpenter, MSc, Lab & Collections Manager, Rugg Lab, at Colorado State University.
- 2) Kimberly Parno, Queens University master's student, blood sampling of Vancouver Island Swainson's Thrushes.

In total, 251 individuals of 26 species were banded, 71 birds of 16 species were recaptured, and 4 birds of 4 species were unbanded. A total of 326 individuals were processed. The most frequently banded species were Chestnut-backed Chickadee (42), and Rufous Hummingbird (42), followed by Bewick's Wren (32). Of the total number of birds banded and recaptured, 65.5% were hatch year (HY). For new birds banded, the percentage of HY birds was 70%.

Concurrently with banding procedures, 74 species were observed on site throughout the season. Highlights were our first Hudsonian Whimbrel, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Pacific Loon and flyovers of a Green-winged Teal and Common Nighthawk.

Background

The Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program was established in 1989 by The Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) in California, USA. The program was designed to standardize collection of demographic data (vital rates) of North American landbirds. Analyses of MAPS data provide critical information relating to landbird ecology that can be applied to conservation and management initiatives.

The purpose of the MAPS project is to inventory breeding songbird populations using standardized methodology, and to record sightings of other species occurring at these locations to facilitate comparisons of populations and avian diversity at the site with those in similar habitats across North America. The data are submitted to Environment and Climate Change Canada (banding), Birds Canada (banding) and to The Institute of Bird Populations (banding,

observation, breeding status, and habitat structure) to be made available to researchers and others.

MAPS data collection is a collaborative effort involving a network of banding stations run by government agencies, non-government organizations, and individuals throughout North America. Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO) staff and volunteers have collected data for MAPS since 2003. The southern Vancouver Island banding stations at Rocky Point and Royal Roads University served as RPBO's MAPS sites until 2009, when Witty's Lagoon Regional Park was added and monitoring at Royal Roads was discontinued. In 2011, MAPS at Rocky Point was discontinued, and a second site was established at Madrona Farm in Saanich, BC. Monitoring at Madrona Farm was discontinued after 2019. In 2021 we started a new MAPS site at Power To Be on Prospect Lake. These five stations have provided data for over 200 species in previous monitoring years.

Witty's Lagoon is a 56-hectare estuarine area managed by the Capital Regional District (CRD), which purchased the land in the late 1960s from the Witty family. The area inland of the beach where RPBO banding operations are conducted was historically an agricultural site. CRD classifies Witty's Lagoon as a Regional Conservation Area, an area containing sensitive ecosystems that support rare or endangered plant and animal species, where recreational activities are limited to those that are minimally disruptive (CRD 2000).

As required by the CRD, an annual scientific research permit is obtained for this project at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park.

This summary report includes data collected at Witty's Lagoon in 2025. A summary report has also been prepared for our MAPS site at Power To Be on Prospect Lake, Victoria, BC.

Site Description

The banding station at Witty's Lagoon is accessed via the stairs from the small parking area at the end of Witty Beach Road. It is in a disturbed riparian corridor in the southwest area of Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. There is a variety of native and introduced vegetation, including fruit trees. The surrounding area beyond the park is mainly rural residential development and agriculture. The banding area consists predominantly of temporarily flooded deciduous shrubland, where Nootka rose, Himalayan blackberry, European hawthorn, and grasses are abundant. On the east side of this habitat is the beach of the peninsula that contains the lagoon. Scotch broom dominates the vegetated portion here. The remaining habitat is mixed needle-leaved evergreen cold deciduous woodland, containing two forest subsets of Douglas-fir woodland and poplar grove (Figure 1).

Habitat types (>=5% cover of station)

A Nootka Rose, Himalayan
Blackberry / Seasonally flooded
Shrub & Grassland

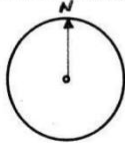
B Douglas Fir / Deciduous
Broadleaf woodland

C Tidal Temperate
grassland

D _____

E _____

Indicate North with arrow



Indicate scale in meters
(normally 30m per block)

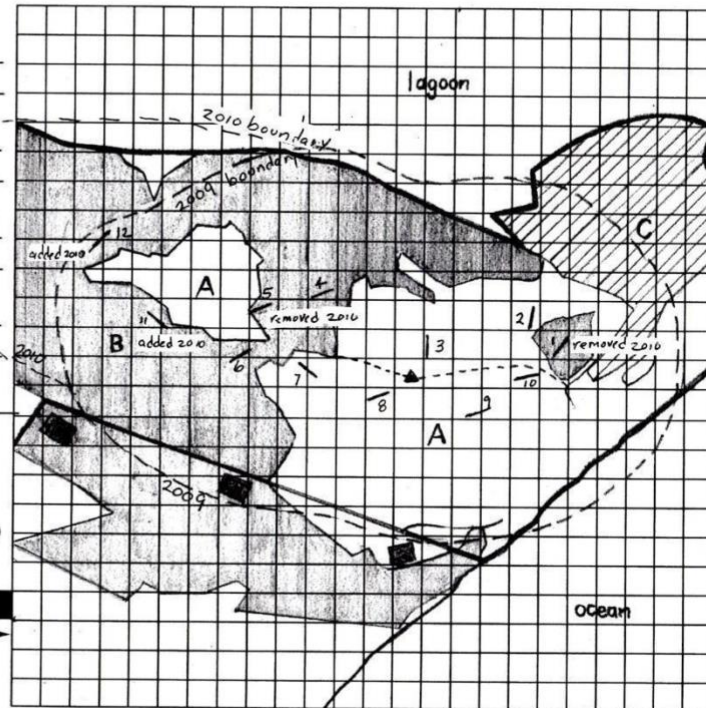
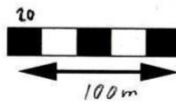


Figure 1. Map of the Witty's Lagoon MAPS site with habitat structure types.

Methodology

Methodology followed the MAPS Manual 2025 Protocol (DeSante et al. 2025). Landbirds were captured in mist nets and banded during standardized sampling sessions conducted once in every ten-day period during the nesting season, from 31 May to 2 August. The safe handling and banding of birds followed the applicable sections of Rocky Point Bird Observatory's Field Protocol (RPBO 2022) and the MAPS Manual 2025 Protocol (DeSante et al. 2025). A component of the RPBO protocol is the Bander's Code of Ethics developed by the North American Banding Council, which emphasizes bird safety over data collection (NABC Revised March 2021).

Each sampling session involved the use of ten mist nets (12m x 2.8m, with 30mm mesh size; Figure 2) for a six-hour period commencing at dawn. If necessary, nets were closed in poor weather if winds exceeded 15 km/h or if there was significant precipitation. Nets were checked every 30 minutes, or more frequently if weather conditions warranted. Captured birds were removed from the nets and taken to a central location for processing. Each bird was then identified to species, assigned an age class according to criteria compiled by Pyle (2022) and banded with an aluminum U.S. Fish and Wildlife leg band with a unique nine-digit number. A series of morphometric measurements was collected from each bird including wing chord,

stage of breeding development, amount of fat deposit, age of each feather tract, feather wear, and mass. Sex and age were determined, if possible, in accordance with criteria in the MAPS Manual 2025 protocol. Date, time, and capture-net code were also recorded. Once processed, local-aged birds incapable of sustained flight were released near their capture net. Flocks of mixed ages captured simultaneously in the same net were released together to facilitate regrouping of family units.



Figure 2. Map of the Witty's Lagoon MAPS site.

Breeding status of each species encountered at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park was determined using multiple criteria. During each session, staff and volunteers observed bird behaviour and evidence of breeding birds. A bird is considered a breeder at the site if evidence such as a nest or recent fledgling is found, but also if other related behaviours such as territorial singing or carrying food are observed over an extended period. Breeding status is not limited to a single session or season, but rather is determined by observations over all MAPS periods, late May to early August. Recapture of an adult bird more than seven days after original banding is used as an indicator that the bird is on breeding territory.

Results

A total of seven sampling days were conducted between 1 June and 1 August (Table 1). This resulted in a total of 420 net hours for the season. A total of 326 birds of 26 species were captured (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Daily summary of 2025 mist net effort and total captures at Witty's Lagoon. New captures per net hour do not include repeat captures of the same banding day.

Date	New	Recaptured	Unbanded	Total	Net Hours	New per net hour
June 1	26	8	0	34	60.00	0.43
June 11	28	4	0	35	60.00	0.47
June 21	66	16	4	59	60.00	1.10
July 1	34	7	0	54	60.00	0.57
July 12	36	15	0	35	60.00	0.60
July 24	24	10	0	42	60.00	0.49
August 1	37	11	2	59	60.00	0.62
Total	251	71	4	326	420.00	0.60

All birds that were captured and processed were categorized as new bands, recaptures, or unbanded. Of the total captures, 77.1% were newly banded, 21.7% were recaptures, having already been banded, and 1.2% were unbanded. Of the 71 recaptures, 17 were on the same day (24%). A total of 326 birds of 26 species were captured during this year's efforts and RPBO achieved an average of 0.60 newly banded birds per net hour (Table 1).



*Second year and hatch year Chestnut-backed Chickadees.
Photo: Robyn Byrne, July 2025.*

Table 2. Summary of 2025 captures by species and capture category at Witty’s Lagoon. The top species banded are highlighted in **bold**.

Species	New	Recaptured	Unbanded	Grand Total
American Robin	12	1	1	14
Anna’s Hummingbird	10	2	1	13
Bewick’s Wren	32	7	0	39
Black-headed Grosbeak	2	1	0	3
Brown Creeper	7	3	1	11
Bushtit	7	2	0	9
Cedar Waxwing	3	0	0	3
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	42	20	0	62
Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)	1	0	0	1
Downy Woodpecker	5	1	0	6
Fox Sparrow	1	0	0	1
House Finch	1	0	0	1
MacGillivray’s Warbler	4	0	0	4
Northern Flicker (Red-shafted)	1	0	0	1
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	2	0	3
Pine Siskin	1	0	0	1
Purple Finch	28	6	0	34
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	0	0	3
Rufous Hummingbird	42	0	1	43
Song Sparrow	15	5	0	20
Spotted Towhee	5	2	0	7
Swainson’s Thrush	5	10	0	15
Western Flycatcher	3	1	0	4
White-crowned Sparrow (Puget Sound)	9	2	0	4
Wilson’s Warbler	10	6	0	16
Yellow Warbler	1	0	0	1
Total	251	71	4	326

Of the 251 banded birds, 175 (69.7%) were hatch year (HY), 15 (6%) were after hatch year (AHY), 38 (15.1%) were second year (SY), 23 (9.2%) were after second year (ASY). (See Table 3).

Table 3. Proportion of birds by age at Witty’s Lagoon in 2025. Recaptured includes same day.

Age	New	Proportion of new	Recaptured	Proportion of recaptured	Total proportion
HY	175	69.7%	36	50.7%	65.5%
AHY	15	6%	2	2.8%	5.4%
SY	38	15.1%	12	16.9%	15.5%
ASY	23	9.2%	21	29.6%	10.6%

Of the total 71 birds recaptured, 29 were from previous years and 25 were from this season. Of the 38 same season recaptures, 17 were same day (captured more than once during the same banding period). Four birds were released unbanded, either due to escaping or being released by the handler because of signs of stress.

One Chestnut-backed Chickadee (a recapture banded in 2024 as HY) was caught and processed on 1 June 2025, but looked poorly; the bird, which was in heavy moult, was put in the hospital but later died. One Chestnut-backed Chickadee was taken to WildARC (Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre) on 12 July when it didn’t fly upon release; this bird was later euthanized due to a broken clavicle and other fractures. On 1 August 2025, we caught a Fox Sparrow, aged AHY, which wouldn’t fly at release; the sparrow was taken to Wild Arc where it was later euthanized due to an old fracture at the right shoulder and the bird was in very poor condition which was noted at the time of banding. There was a total of three mortalities this year.

There were 2 injuries this year. On 1 June 2025, a recaptured Chestnut-backed Chickadee, banded in 2022, suffered a broken leg in the net. The leg was splinted and taped, after which the bird was kept in the bird hospital for 10-15 minutes; the bird flew fine upon release. A Purple Finch banded on 22 June 2025 would not fly upon release; the bird was put in a hospital from where it managed to escape.

Recapture highlights include: a Bewick’s Wren banded in 2018 aged HY (in its eighth year); a male Orange-crowned Warbler banded in 2021 and aged SY has been recaptured every year (now in his sixth year); a male Song Sparrow banded in 2020 as ASY has been recaptured every year except 2021, making him at least 8 years old: two Swainson’s Thrushes banded in 2024, an after second year male and female. For a complete 2025 recapture history from previous years, please see Table 4 below.

Table 4. Recapture history of bird captured at Witty’s Lagoon in 2025.

Year banded	Recaptures (including banding date)	Species Age when banded
2018	4	1 Bewick’s Wren (HY)
2020	1 7	1 Chestnut-backed Chickadee (ASY) 2 Song Sparrow (1 ASY, 1 HY)
2021	6 2	1 Orange-crowned Warbler (SY) 1 Bewick’s Wren (HY)
2022	4	2 Chestnut-backed Chickadee (1 HY, 1 SY)
2023	1	1 Chestnut-backed Chickadee (AHY)
2024	6 1 1 3 11 4 2 2 2	2 Swainson’s Thrush (2 ASY) 1 Anna’s Hummingbird (AHY) 1 Bewick’s Wren (ASY) 1 Brown Creeper (HY) 5 Chestnut-backed Chickadee (3 HY, 1 SY, 1 ASY) 2 Purple Finches (2 HY) 1 Song Sparrow 1 Spotted Towhee (HY) 1 Wilson’s Warbler (ASY)

Since the start of the MAPS program at Witty’s Lagoon in 2009, a total of 112 species of birds have been observed on site. In 2025, 75 species were observed. This year the following new species were observed: Hudsonian Whimbrel, Pelagic Cormorant, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Common Nighthawk, Green-winged Teal, Pacific Loon, and Fox Sparrow. As per the updated IBP 2024 Breeding Status List for Witty’s Lagoon, 13 species have been determined to be regular breeders, 10 are usual breeders (>1/2, not all years), 49 species are occasional breeders (<1/2 years), 13 transient (in breeding range, but not breeding at the MAPS site), and 14 are migrant species (outside of known breeding range) (Table 5). This includes all birds ever captured or encountered up to 2024.

Table 5. Breeding status of birds observed at Witty’s Lagoon from 2009 to 2024.

Species	Breeding Status	Species	Breeding Status
American Crow	Usual	MacGillivray’s Warbler	Occasional
American Goldfinch	Usual	Marbled Godwit	Migrant
American Robin	Breeder	Merlin	Transient
Anna’s Hummingbird	Breeder	Mourning Dove	Transient
Audubon’s Warbler	Occasional	Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	Usual
Bald Eagle	Usual	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Occasional
Band-tailed Pigeon	Occasional	Northern Waterthrush	Migrant
Barn Swallow	Occasional	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Usual

Barred Owl	Occasional
Belted Kingfisher	Usual
Bewick's Wren	Breeder
Black-and-white Warbler	Migrant
Black-headed Grosbeak	Occasional
Black-throated Gray Warbler	Transient
Black Oystercatcher	Occasional
Brewer's Blackbird	Occasional
Brown Creeper	Breeder
Brown-headed Cowbird	Breeder
Bushtit	Usual
California Gull	Migrant
California Quail	Usual
Canada Goose	Occasional
Caspian Tern	Migrant
Cassin's Vireo	Occasional
Cedar Waxwing	Usual
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Breeder
Chipping Sparrow	Occasional
Cliff Swallow	Transient
Common Loon	Migrant
Common Merganser	Migrant
Common Raven	Occasional
Common Yellowthroat	Occasional
Cooper's Hawk	Occasional
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	Usual
Double-crested Cormorant	Transient
Downy Woodpecker	Breeder
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Occasional
European Starling	Occasional
Evening Grosbeak	Transient
Glaucous-winged Gull	Occasional
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Occasional
Great Blue Heron	Occasional
Great Horned Owl	Occasional
Greater Yellowlegs	Transient
Hairy Woodpecker	Occasional
Hammond's Flycatcher	Occasional

Orange-crowned Warbler	Breeder
Osprey	Transient
Pacific Wren	Usual
Peregrine Falcon	Transient
Pigeon Guillemot	Transient
Pileated Woodpecker	Occasional
Pine Siskin	Occasional
Purple Finch	Breeder
Purple Martin	Transient
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Breeder
Red-breasted Sapsucker	Occasional
Red Crossbill	Usual
Red-tailed Hawk	Transient
Red-winged Blackbird	Occasional
Rock Pigeon	Transient
Rufous Hummingbird	Breeder
Savannah Sparrow	Occasional
Semipalmated Plover	Migrant
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Transient
Short-billed Dowitcher	Migrant
Short-billed Gull	Migrant
Song Sparrow	Breeder
Spotted Sandpiper	Occasional
Spotted Towhee	Breeder
Steller's Jay	Transient
Swainson's Thrush	Breeder
Townsend's Warbler	Occasional
Traill's Flycatcher	Occasional
Tree Swallow	Transient
Trumpeter Swan	Migrant
Turkey Vulture	Transient
Violet-green Swallow	Occasional
Warbling Vireo	Occasional
Western Flycatcher	Breeder
Western Kingbird	Migrant
Western Sandpiper	Migrant
Western Tanager	Occasional
Western Wood Pewee	Occasional

House Finch	Occasional
House Sparrow	Occasional
House Wren (Northern)	Occasional
Hutton's Vireo	Occasional
Killdeer	Occasional
Least Sandpiper	Migrant
Marbled Godwit	Migrant
Mallard	Occasional

White-crowned (Puget Sound) Sparrow	Breeder
Willow Flycatcher	Occasional
Wilson's Warbler	Breeder
Yellow Warbler	Occasional
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Occasional

The Bird Genoscape Project

The Bird Genoscape Project (BGP) harnesses the power of genomics to connect bird populations across North America. A genoscape creates a map of genetic variation across the breeding range of a species. Genoscapes can then be used to track breeding populations to their respective wintering grounds and the migratory pathways in between. By harnessing recent advances in next-generation sequencing, they can use the DNA contained in a single feather to scan the genome of a bird and identify base pairs that are unique to each bird. Unique combinations of base pairs tend to cluster together and are strong predictors of geographically separated populations. In 2009, with advances in genomics, Kristen Ruegg and Tom Smith created the Bird Genoscape Project with the goal of developing connectivity maps of at least 100 species of North American migratory birds.

Amanda Carpenter of Colorado State University is the Lab and Collections Manager for BGP. Amanda requested feather samples be taken during RPBO's 2025 MAPS banding season. Two tail feathers from each bird are collected (one central R1 and one outer R6). All feathers were placed in BGP envelopes with metadata completed. The samples have been sent to Amanda Carpenter via BirdsCanada.

This season at WILA we collected 24 feather samples from: Bewick's Wren (3), Black-headed Grosbeak (1), Bushtit (1), Chestnut-backed Chickadee (6), White-crowned Sparrow (1), Purple Finch (3), Song Sparrow (2), Western Flycatcher (2), Wilson's Warbler (4), Spotted Towhee (1).

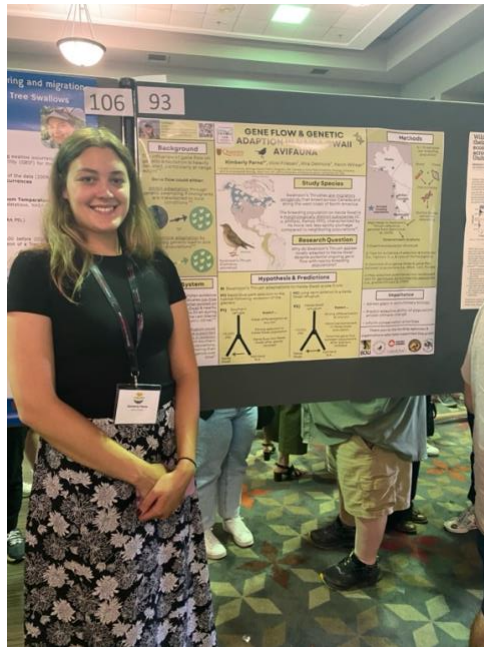
Kimberly Parno, Swainson's Thrush Project, Queen's University

In early 2025, Kimberly Parno and Dr. Vicki Friesen of Queen's University, Kingston, ON reached out to RPBO to ask for assistance in securing blood samples for Swainson's Thrush on breeding territory for Kimberly Parno's research project.

Kimberly Parno is working on her master's project with Dr. Vicki Friesen at Queen's University. This project investigates the roles of gene flow on the genetic adaptation in breeding populations of Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) in western North America. Kim is looking at the evolutionary histories of different populations, mapping the adaptive potential of these species across the landscape and identifying the genomic vulnerability of different populations in order to inform conservation priorities for this species. She will be using whole genome

sequencing to compare populations in Haida Gwaii, Vancouver Island, mainland B.C., Alaska, and Washington. There is a sampling gap in Vancouver Island, so Kim required blood samples from approximately 10 birds on breeding territory. Kim and Vicki reached out to Jannaca Chick and Ann Nightingale for assistance in obtaining samples during our MAPS program. Max Hellicar, our Migration bander for 2025, has blood samples on his banding permit, so he was able to assist Kim with the sampling.

Kim and Max obtained 1 sample from WILA, 4 samples from PTOB and 1 sample from Hummingbird Hill. The remaining 4 samples were obtained during banding operations with Dr. Eric Demers of Vancouver Island University at Buttertubs Marsh, Nanaimo.



*Kimberly Parno, Canadian Society for Ecology & Evolution conference
Sherbrooke QC, July 2025.*

Comments and Recommendations

The sixteenth year of the MAPS program at Witty's Lagoon saw a total of 326 birds processed. The species diversity (29) was the same as last year. The percentage of hatch year birds banded and recaptured was 65.5% for both new and recaptured birds. The percentage of HY birds in previous, recent years is: 2024 (60%), 2023 (47%), 2022 (68%), 2021 (59%), 2020 (69%), 2019 (69%), 2018 (71%).

Chestnut-backed Chickadees were the most numerous species, including new and recaptures, however we saw some injuries with this species this year. On the first day of MAPS, 1 June 2025, the adults we captured were already in heavy moult, which is earlier than usual. This is an

energetically expensive time for birds. In all subsequent sessions, CBCH and all other species showing heavy moult were flagged for immediate processing at the station to minimize risk.

There has been an increase in captures of Purple Finches at this site – a total of 28 new this year. They have been experiencing successful breeding seasons for the past several years here, and their numbers are increasing; 2024 (17), 2023 (25), 2022 (12), 2021 (5), 2020 (3). This species is of particular concern during the first month of our Migration Monitoring as they are particularly prone to clavicle breaks. At WILA, there has been the occasional issue, but not to the same extent.

A Downy Woodpecker nest with nestlings was located on the opening day and we were fortunate to band several young woodpeckers from different families during our banding sessions. We banded our third Pine Siskin in this location to date.



*Fox Sparrow, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park, 2025.
Photo: Jannaca Chick.*

It was quite a surprise to catch a Fox Sparrow on 1 August 2025. This species does not breed on southern Vancouver Island and is only a winter resident here. This bird was in very poor condition, quite emaciated, and did not fly when released. It was taken to WildArc where it was later euthanized. WildArc reported that there was an old fracture at the right shoulder and the bird had been in a poor state for some time. It is a mystery why this bird was here at this time of year; perhaps it was in too poor a condition to even migrate at the appropriate time in the spring. This bird appeared somewhat different from the usual subspecies of Sooty Fox Sparrow; photos were sent to Dave Irons in Oregon who weighed in and also sent an email to

Steve Hampton in Washington State, who wrote, “My gut reaction is adult (molting) Slate-colored, probably *olivacea* based on the brown tones in the back. The head seems rather gray and the underpart chevrons blackish (maybe!). And the bill is rather small.” Dave Irons has done research into the bill colour variation in breeding and non-breeding Fox Sparrows. Apparently when on breeding territory their mandible does not show the typical bi-colouration we see here in the wintertime (September-March), but is a uniformly horn colour. This individual had a horn-coloured mandible.

We continue to recapture both resident and migratory breeding birds that return to this site to breed. This provides valuable data. We recaptured an Orange-crowned Warbler banded here in 2021 as SY; he has been caught multiple times every year since 2021, showing great site fidelity. We were fortunate to recapture several older birds this year, including a Bewick’s Wren banded in 2018 now in its eighth year, as well as a Song Sparrow and Chestnut-backed Chickadee both in at least their eighth year. See Table 4 for recapture history.

Capture rates this year were 0.60 birds per net hour (0.57 in 2024, 0.43 in 2023, 0.65 in 2022, 0.67 in 2021, 0.71 in 2020, 0.62 in 2019, 0.63 in 2018). The highest capture rate at Witty’s Lagoon to date was 0.81 in 2017. This does not represent any kind of statistical analysis but is only for general interest in comparative bird numbers between 2024 and the last seven years.

The MAPS protocol advises that a five to ten-year period of data collection is required before meaningful analysis can be initiated by IBP. It is evident that Witty’s Lagoon provides habitat for a variety of breeding birds and birds are regularly recaptured over a period of years. Sufficient data has now been gathered at this site for trend analysis. It is recommended that this be done.

The MAPS program contributed to 2 scientific studies this year. RPBO should continue to look for studies that we can participate in, as well as assist graduate students or government agencies with projects.

The MAPS program provides an excellent opportunity for volunteers and banders to improve their skills. This year, new volunteers were able to join us as scribe/helpers, for net setup and takedown. This year, Mark Byrne volunteered again as a Bander Trainee. Sonja Futehally, one of our Migration Monitoring banders, joined on a few occasions to improve her hummingbird banding skills. Max Hellicar, our Migration Monitoring Bander-in-Charge, joined us for four sessions in order to work on his hummingbird banding skills in preparation for Migration Monitoring.

Over the seven sessions, RPBO had 29 volunteers assisting operations at WILA, for a total of 455 volunteer hours.

We had 25 visitors to the banding station this season, including 4 CRD employees. Janie Chodosh, a writer from New Mexico, who is writing a book on the life of the Rufous Hummingbird visited on 1 July 2025. WILA is an excellent migration staging site for dispersing Rufous Hummingbirds. Janie came to see RUHU being banded and afterwards interviewed

Jannaca Chick and Ann Nightingale. The following day she met with Dr. Alison Moran. This is double the number of visitors we had in 2024.

Every effort should be made to continue the use of this site for the MAPS program.



*Male Purple Finch, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park, 2025.
Photo: Jannaca Chick.*

References

Bird Genoscape Project

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*Witty's Lagoon banding station, 2025.
Photo: Jannaca Chick.*