

Learning about the migration of America's favorite backyard bird

The American Robin may be a common bird, the early bird that catches the worm, and all that jazz – but it turns out they are a complete black box when it comes to migration! Would you like to have your backyard robins contribute to helping unlock the mysteries of American Robin migration?! Read more about the project below!

Who is doing the study? This research is part of a joint Georgetown University and Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center study on American Robin migration lead by PhD Student Emily Williams.

What will it entail? Emily and field assistants will visit backyards and public parks to set up nets, capture robins, take samples, and tag individuals with GPS tags. These tags will transmit locations throughout the year, providing critical



A color-banded robin with a GPS tag (tag is hidden on back of bird) feeding young.



An early morning mist-net set up. Researchers use fine mesh nets to capture birds.

information about where and when the birds migrate. Emily and her team will re-visit sites throughout the summer to look for tagged and banded birds and also find and monitor their nests.

When will it occur? Emily and her team will be doing this fieldwork between March-August of each summer. They will start capture efforts and surveys very early in the morning – usually by 5 am. Most visits to parks, yards, and neighborhoods will last ~2-6 hours.

Where will it happen? This fieldwork will take place across backyards and public parks in Virginia, Maryland, Washington DC, Indiana, Alaska, Georgia, and Florida.

Why is this important? Because robins are such a widespread bird, understanding more about their migration will help us learn how they can deal with environmental change. American Robins can serve as important sentinels for threats to other birds and wildlife across many different habitats and ecosystems.

How to get involved: If you would like to have your yard or site be a part of this study, please contact Emily Williams with your name, contact information, and address to ejw75@georgetown.edu. You can reach her on her cell at 321-720-4778.

This work is permitted by local, state, and federal permits and conducted by trained personnel. Copies of permits available upon request.



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