

Alaska Songbird Institute
Creamer's Field Migration Station Volunteer Job Description



Summary: Migration station volunteers assist in the operation of mist nets to capture and band migrant and resident birds at Creamer's Field Migration Station (CFMS) in Fairbanks. Volunteers work under the supervision of ASI biologists. The station is open approximately April 25-June 5 and August 1-September 25, Monday through Friday, and some weekends.

Duties:

- Assist with mist net operation (opening/closing, adjusting tension, mending nets, net lane maintenance, etc.)
- Remove birds from mist nets (extraction) and transport birds to banding lab
- Recording data (scribing)
- Help with banding station maintenance, including tidying station at day's end
- Welcome visitors; answer questions and assist with banding demonstrations if desired
- Note other birds detected in the area

Note that as a rule, volunteers generally cannot band and process birds unless they have gone through a dedicated ASI training program. We may offer apprenticeship training opportunities to volunteers interested in learning banding skills. Please contact the CFMS Program Director (see details below) for more information.

Responsibilities of Volunteers:

- Become knowledgeable about the CFMS policies and procedures (attend meetings and training events if available, review handouts and ask questions)
- Be aware of your surroundings and considerate of the safety of birds, other humans, and yourself
- Commit to the schedule for which you sign up and arrive on time
- Communicate to ASI staff if you can't make your scheduled day or time
- Follow all instructions given by ASI staff; accept help when offered
- Know your limitations, evaluate whether you are physically capable of walking briskly over uneven terrain several times a day and consult your doctor if you have any health concerns
- Inform ASI staff of any concerns you have, including personal health issues, or concerns about volunteer/bird safety
- Attempt to learn/improve basic bird identification skills
- Be courteous to visitors; become familiar with ASI to help you answer visitors' questions

ASI Responsibilities:

- Provide training and materials outlining migration station policies and procedures, mist netting and scribing
- Be respectful of volunteers, provide constructive comments and solicit feedback
- Communicate with volunteers regarding schedule changes
- Provide a stimulating learning/working environment

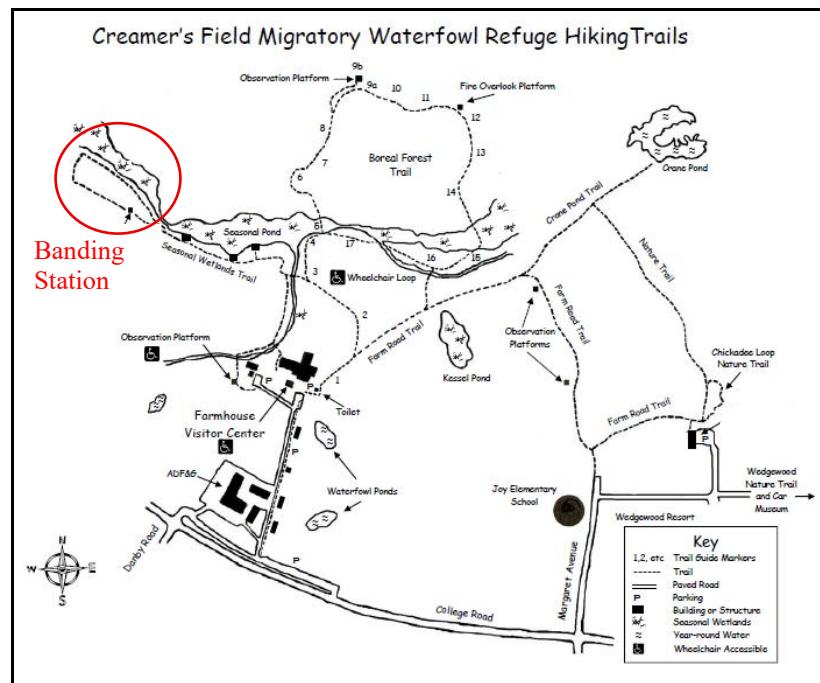
Other Opportunities: Sew bird bags, trail work/site maintenance, data entry/proofing; leading educational programs and tours, creating outreach and/or social media content.

Time Commitments and Scheduling:

Volunteers sign up for shifts on a shared Google Drive calendar provided by ASI staff. Our mist netting schedule generally occurs from early mornings into early afternoons, weather permitting; we do not operate during significant precipitation, wind, or excessive heat, cold, or smokey conditions. Daily meeting times vary from 5:30 AM to 7:00 AM throughout the banding season. A ‘full’ day can demand over 7 hours of time commitment. We greatly appreciate volunteers who can commit to a full day; however, volunteers are welcome to schedule ‘partial’ shifts to accommodate personal schedules. We ask that volunteers signing up for partial shifts commit to at least 3 hours. There is no set number of days volunteers are required to attend each season, but a regular commitment of at least one day per week can greatly facilitate familiarity with CFMS operations and developing mist net operation, extraction, and data recording skills.

What to Expect in the Field:

As with spending any time outside in Interior Alaska, volunteers can expect to experience a wide range of weather conditions, soggy trails, and biting insects in the late spring and early fall. We expect volunteers to provide adequate clothing and footwear for the elements, as well as their own food, water, and medications as needed. We do provide some modest creature comforts: our banding station features a “weatherport” tent that gets heated with a propane heater on cooler mornings, and an outhouse is available on site.



If you are interested in signing up to be a volunteer or have more questions, please contact Robert Snowden (CFMS Program Director): asi.science@aksongbird.org