

World Migratory Bird Day at Belle Isle in May

The Oakland Owlet's families and friends celebrated World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) on May 10 at Belle Isle. Belle Isle is a beautiful place to observe this year's WMBD theme



which is “**Shared Spaces**” or creating bird friendly cities and communities. Belle Isle Park is large urban park adjacent to the city of Detroit. Owlet's families and friends were treated to a special experience with bird bander Allen Chartier. Allen is a great bird bander along with being an exceptional educator. Allen recently started a new banding project at Belle Isle Bird Observatory. Allen's banding work provides valuable information about the birds utilizing Belle Isle. Belle Isle is a critical stopover site for migratory

birds. In addition to his research, Allen helps visitors learn about birds, bird conservation and biology.

Allen along with a small crew of volunteers operates a banding station in a parking lot near the nature center. By the time the Owlets arrived, Allen had already banded several birds. They started at daybreak. Allen set up several banding nets nearby. His crew regularly checks the nets and brings the birds in white cloth pouches to the banding station where data is collected, and the birds are released.

Everyone was amazed and impressed to see the birds closely and hear about them. Each bird banded by Allen provided a chance for owlets to learn essential information about the bird. This male Magnolia Warbler is only five inches long, but everyone had a chance to view its field marks along with other identifying features.



Other birds banded that morning included Blue Jays, Baltimore Orioles, Wood Thrush, and Gray Catbirds. With each bird Allen answered everyone's questions. Families and friends stayed at the banding stations while the volunteer crew would check the nets periodically. We kept an eBird checklist of the birds that



Allen banded plus the birds that we saw near the parking lot. Although Allen did not band White-crowned Sparrows, they were nearby. A complete list of the birds banded that day is on Allen's Banding Blog. Here is a link [Michigan Hummingbird Guy: Bird Banding](#)

[Blog](#). On May 10th, Allen banded 38 birds from 19 distinct species.



Some birds were already banded and what are referenced as recaptures.

Later that morning, Allen took the group on the trails so they could see where the nets were placed. Mist nets were placed near the trail but were concealed by vegetation. Allen



established a half mile loop for the banding nets. Nets along the path are sufficiently separated in six places. Allen follows long standing protocols for the net placement that he had used at previously banding stations. Luckily, it was a beautiful, sunny day, making time outdoors enjoyable. In between watching Allen band birds, the group observed birds that could easily be seen and heard.

Owlet's families and friends also visited the Belle Isle Nature Center that morning. It was within walking distance of the banding station. Mike Reed, naturalist from the Nature Center and Zoo also talked to the group about programming at the nature center. Mike works closely with Detroit youth.



A small group also took a hike to the historical lighthouse nearby. A few new birds were added to the owlet's checklist near the river. The eBird Checklist submitted for this program tallied 44 species including some of the birds banded. **A special thank you to Allen Chartier for sharing his time and expertise with the Oakland Owlets** along with his volunteer crew. Allen posts a spring banding summary for the public. Here is the link

[2025 Spring Banding Summary.pdf - Google Drive](#)



Photo Credits - Kathleen Dougherty and Heather Klish.