

AMJV SCIENCE AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE ANNUAL WORKSHOP



APPALACHIAN
MOUNTAINS
JOINT VENTURE

SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2025

Breaks Interstate Park

627 Commission Circle, Breaks VA

Virtual attendance option available

REGISTRATION INFORMATION



VIRTUAL MEETING INFORMATION

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7873827534?
pwd=TTFKdXRLSWtYakJSdnJUVjJhRlJMQT09&omn=85294230825](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7873827534?pwd=TTFKdXRLSWtYakJSdnJUVjJhRlJMQT09&omn=85294230825)

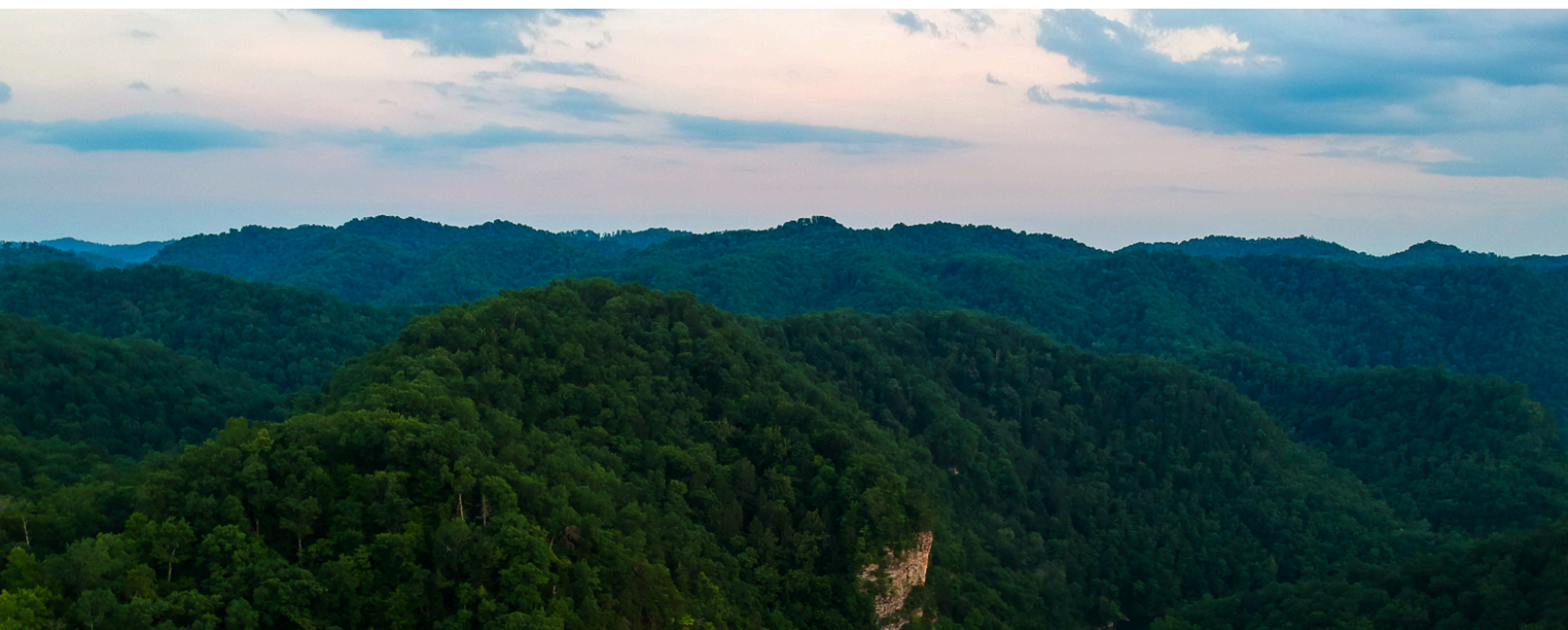
IN-PERSON MEETING REGISTRATION

After September 1, contact Amanda Duren (aduren@abcbirds.org) to register to attend the meeting in person.

LODGING INFORMATION

Discounted rooms are available to meeting attendees at the rate of \$116.05 per night, plus a 5.3% room tax and single \$6.00 reservation fee for each room. In order to receive the discounted room rate, please call the Park Guest Services at 276-865-4413 and request a room under the group Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture in either the Goldenrod or Hemlock Lodge. **Room block will be held until August 15th, 2025.** This is a popular season for the park, so after this date, rooms may no longer be available. If this time frame is an issue for you in receiving travel approval, please contact Ashley Peele (apeele@abcbirds.org) for assistance.

Other accommodations (guest cabins, cottages) are available through Breaks Interstate Park's online booking system, but are not eligible for the group discount: <https://www.breakspark.com/lodging-main-page>



WORKSHOP AGENDA



DAY 1: MOTUS WORKSHOP

Tuesday, September 16th



Learn about and gain hands-on experience with the components, operation, maintenance, and trouble-shooting of existing Motus stations. This workshop is open to any attendees, but participation from staff of partners with a primary role in supporting Motus in the AMJV geography is prioritized. **Virtual attendance is not available for this session.**

- 9:00 am Introduction to Motus and its applications
- 9:30 am Breaking down core components of a Motus station
- 10:00 am *Break*
- 10:15 am What makes a good Motus station site and station examples
- 11:00 am Station maintenance
- 12:00 pm *Lunch*
- 1:30 pm Site visit to Breaks Motus station
- 2:30 pm Data management
- 3:30 pm Open Q & A

DAY 2: COMMITTEE MEETING DAY 1

Wednesday, September 17th

FOCUS ON MOTUS

- 8:00 am **Arrival and networking**
- 8:15 am **Welcome and meeting logistics, Zoom meeting opens**
- 8:30 am **Traveling with Eastern Towhees: Tracking Migration Timing and Pathways of a Declining Songbird.** Michelle A. Eshleman, Willistown Conservation Trust and the University of Delaware
Eastern Towhees (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) are considered a short distance migrant, but no published migration pathways or distances of individual birds exist for this species. Our team placed Motus Wildlife Tracking System radio-transmitting tags on 187 towhees to track them for a full year to gather information on migration timing and pathways. We found that breeding birds located in our more eastern sites migrate into the coastal plain of the Delmarva peninsula while birds at more western sites migrate a longer distance to overwinter near the Carolinas.

FOCUS ON MOTUS, CONTINUED

9:00 am **Range-wide Wood Thrush Motus Project: Partnerships and Research at Scale.** Sarah Kendrick, US Fish and Wildlife Service

The Wood Thrush is a priority bird species in 25 U.S. states and Canada that has shown declines in population for the last 25 years. Improving our understanding of the species' full life cycle ecology, including migration patterns between their breeding and nonbreeding ranges, is essential in order to better understand the species' conservation needs throughout its range and to improve the design of targeted habitat management actions. With that in mind, an international group of bird-conservation partners are conducting a hemispheric research and conservation project Motus-tagging Wood Thrush across their breeding and nonbreeding ranges. Nearly 1,000 Motus tags have been deployed to better understand migratory connections, routes, timing, and survival across their full life cycle. The project continues, but Sarah will outline how the project came to be, is being coordinated, and what we hope to learn.

9:30 am **New methods to improve inference from Motus data at broad and fine spatial scales.** Cody Cox^{1*}, Nancy Raginski^{1,2}, and Clark Rushing¹

¹Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia

²Migratory Bird Center, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute,

*presenting

The Motus network has revolutionized our understanding of migration patterns and space use of small-bodied songbirds. Incorporating new statistical approaches will improve inferences from Motus data. We have developed a new model to optimize Motus tower placement on a landscape to maximize detections of migrating individuals and have pioneered a new method for analyzing localization data from node arrays to improve local space use estimates.

10:00 am **Break**

10:15 am **Developing Forestry Standards for Nonbreeding Migratory Birds.** Jeff Ritterson, Mass Audubon

The conservation of Nearctic-Neotropical migratory birds during the stationary nonbreeding period requires land use practices that support both economic activity and biodiversity. Sustainable logging may be an option, but studies to date have only compared logged versus unlogged areas, have only examined species richness or abundance, and little information exists on migratory birds. Using a combination of constant-effort mist netting, manual hand-tracking telemetry, and the Motus Wildlife Tracking System, we collected data across a gradient of logging intensity for a range of metrics to develop forestry practices that support the avian community, with an emphasis on Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*).

10:45 am **Motus in the Neotropics: exploring non-breeding ecology in a rapidly expanding network.** Nick Bayly, SELVA

FOCUS ON MOTUS, CONTINUED

11:15 am **Facilitated Discussion of Motus research questions, needs, and study design.** Todd Alleger and Garrett Rhyne, American Bird Conservancy

12:00 pm **Lunch**

1:30 pm **Facilitated Discussion of Motus, continued**

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: MANAGING FORESTS FOR BIRDS AND PEOPLE

2:00 pm – 2:30 pm Emily Cohen, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES)

This partnership project between AMJV and UMCES will bring together lidar, meteorological surveillance radar, and interpretable machine learning to incorporate the habitat needs of birds in the Appalachian Mountains during both breeding and migratory stopover into conservation planning. Using a translational ecology approach, a forest management plan will be developed collaboratively by researchers, local forest practitioners, conservation professionals and residents, integrating the needs of local human communities along with those of birds.

2:30 pm **Break**

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF SPECIES MONITORING DECISION TREE TOOL

2:45 pm – 4:00 pm Elizabeth Hunter, USGS, VA Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit

- Overview of tool prototype by Monitoring Team members
- Discussion and feedback session
 - Balancing needs - informing brand new monitoring efforts while providing guidelines to improve existing efforts
 - Defining audience
 - How best to create linkages between small-scale monitoring (project-specific) and AMJV-wide monitoring needs?

ELK REINTRODUCTION FIELD VISIT

5 pm – Dinner Included

Join us for an informative guided bus tour of Virginia's Elk Restoration Zone. We will visit the original release site approximately 30 minutes from the park and view the herd that is the result of Virginia's restoration effort that started in 2012.





FIELD DEMONSTRATION OF HAND-TRACKING

7:30 am (Optional)

A demonstration of the use of a handheld receiver to manually locate birds tagged with Motus nanotags.

FULL ANNUAL CYCLE TEAM UPDATES

9:00 am - 10 am Becky Keller, AMJV

AMJV's FAC Team is currently focused on expanding our partnership and developing large collaborative research and applied conservation projects across the Americas for AMJV priority species. We have a number of projects in development and underway and are excited to get your feedback on them.

Large-scale collaborative projects:

- FAC Project Database
- Tagging projects (KEWA, WEWA, etc)
- Migratory Stopover Project
- FAC funding mechanisms

10:00 am **Break**

JOINT VENTURE-CORNELL COLLABORATION UPDATES

10:15 am - 11:00 am Ashley Peele, AMJV, and Orin Robinson, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Discussion of new resources available from the eBird Status and Trend (EST) team

- Overview of available resources and updated schedule from Cornell's EST team
- Case study: using the AMJV-specific data products to illustrate 'boutique' analysis options
 - Relative abundance & population trend models
 - Raster-stacking to identify regional areas of importance for key habitats and/or species guilds
- How JVs are integrating these tools into species & habitat objective setting

REVISED AMJV SPECIES PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

11:00 am - 12 pm Ashley Peele, AMJV

- Review of Partner Survey Results
- Discussion of proposed prioritization process
- Setting direction for next steps of monitoring team in prioritization process

POST-MEETING DISCUSSION: COLLABORATION IN THE COAL FIELDS

1:30 pm – 3 pm (Optional)

Learn about AMJV’s new initiative focused on the coal fields, and how we envision fostering collaboration between conservation efforts and community and economic development. Using examples from the Pine Mountain region like the elk reintroduction and the Pine Mountain Trail, we’ll discuss opportunities to promote economic development while delivering meaningful conservation outcomes.

