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INTRODUCTION TO FIELD BIOLOGY:

FALL SHOREBIRD MIGRATION

A short course on fall shorebird migration will be offered this summer by Manomet Observatory's Field Biology Training Program. Participants become actively involved in Manomet Observatory's ongoing twenty-five-year study of shorebird migration in coastal Massachusetts. Each fall, thousands of migrant shorebirds stop over at key barrier beaches along the Massachusetts coast to rest and gain fat before continuing their flight to wintering grounds in the tropics. The goal of this course is to teach participants the practical applications of studying the migration ecology and population dynamics of shorebirds at staging areas, while collecting data that will be used toward directing future management decisions on coastal areas.

Primary activities involve all aspects of censusing and mist netting shorebirds. After brief introductory classes, field studies begin. Through shorebird censuses, which are taken almost daily, participants learn field identification, how to estimate the numbers of birds in a flock, and read color band combinations on marked birds. Mist nets are set up on barrier beaches at night to capture shorebirds so migration weights can be determined and birds can be uniquely color banded to monitor movements of individuals during censuses. Proper extraction techniques from mist nets, handling methods, color banding, measuring, and aging of shorebirds are all learned through direct involvement with the process. Other skills acquired include sampling invertebrate populations, understanding shorebird molt, quantifying shorebird behavior, and making color bands.

This program is geared toward students, biology teachers, refuge managers, and volunteers. No prior experience with shorebirds is necessary; just a keen interest and enthusiasm to learn about the how-to's of studying shorebird migration.

Dates: July 17-August 11, 1995

Credit: Two semester hours

Cost: \$1750, including room

For more information about "Fall Shorebird Migration," or any of the other programs offered by the Field Biology Training Program, please call or write:

Mark Kasprzyk, Acting Director, FBTP

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