

Volunteer Information for LMBO: 2025

Construction: We are in the process of building a new banding station. If you have volunteered or visited us before you will see that where our trailer was, is currently a construction site! We are still banding while construction occurs. We are banding out of a small shed in Site 101 across the road from the old station. We hope that the new station will be open for visitors in Fall 2025. We are also working on updated signage to make finding the banding station easier for everyone.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Last Mountain Bird Observatory! We look forward to having you out. This email covers what to expect from your time volunteering with us, and what you might need to do to prepare.

When we are banding birds, our first priority is always the safety of the birds. Being captured and banded is a stressful situation for the birds, and we reduce stress wherever possible. This includes reducing handling time as much as possible. We also want to make sure you get a chance to handle birds, if that is what you want out of your volunteering experience. Just be mindful that if we are capturing a high volume of birds, you will likely handle fewer birds.

We like to start new volunteers off as scribes, which means sitting next to the bander and writing down information. This allows you to see up close how we handle birds, and how we collect information on birds. We will also get you handling banded birds outside to get you used to holding the bird properly. Then we move up to removing birds from mist nets, and banding.

We begin banding at 7:00 am everyday, weather depending, and expect volunteers to be at the station by that time. If you cannot do that, please inform the bander-in-charge ahead of time. We accept visitors from 10:00 am to close. We ask that visitors register, but we still get drop-ins from time to time. We close the nets at 1:00 pm. It takes roughly 30 minutes to close. So prepare to be at the station from 7:00 to 1:30. Bring snacks and water to help fuel you and keep you hydrated.

Volunteers may have different goals when coming to the station. We get everything from graduate students getting hands on experience banding, to people who only want to scribe and learn more about birds. Whether you are interested in getting in the banding chair or having a more relaxing volunteer experience is completely up to you. Just communicate what you want out of your time volunteering, and we will do our best to make that happen.

We check the mist nets every 30 minutes for birds and close the nets if it becomes too windy or starts raining. As long as you come prepared with good walking shoes (closed toe recommended), sunscreen, and a hat, people are generally pretty comfortable. Ticks and mosquitoes are around the net lanes, so bring whatever you need to reduce your exposure. We like to recommend bug spray and long pants/sleeves. If you are using bug spray with Deet, please avoid putting it on your hands if you are handling birds.

There may be other volunteers or visitors while you are at the station. We cap volunteers at 5 people per day to make sure everyone gets an opportunity to handle birds if they wish. Generally, visitors are small groups or families who visit the station, but we also can get larger school or community groups sometimes. We will advise you if that is the case and allow you to reschedule if you'd prefer.

If you are staying in the park, you are able to use our tent site for camping. You are welcome to book your own site if you prefer though or if you require a site with power/water. You can book sites at Last Mountain Regional Park (<https://letscamp.ca/camps/lmrp>) or call the office at 1-(306) 484-4483.

Many people get lost their first trip to LMBO. A lot of the area's attractions begin with Last Mountain and it can be confusing. Please see the attached maps. The banding station is in Last Mountain Regional Park, and this is what you should put into your navigation app. Anything else will likely take you to the National Wildlife Area or the Bird Sanctuary. Once you are in LMRP, stay on the main road heading south. You should see the Last Mountain Bird Observatory sign on the east side of the road (left side if you are heading south). You will also see the red Loraas dumpsters. Turn left just before the dumpsters, and we are the first building you will see.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to Jordan at jrustad@naturesask.ca or call/text us at 306-539-9415.