

# Prothonotary Warbler Report 2024

*Prepared by Shirley Devan*

This report provides a summary of Prothonotary Warbler (PROW) nesting activity in 2024 at five sites, along with plans for the 2025 season.

## **Chickahominy Riverfront Park | James City County, VA**

*Monitored by Shirley Devan & Volunteers*

- All 11 boxes had nesting activity including either Carolina Chickadees or Prothonotary Warblers
- Seven boxes hosted Carolina Chickadees
- 18 PROW nestlings banded
- Approximately 13 fledglings without banding
- Four adult females banded
- Three adult males banded

## **Powhatan Creek Trail | James City County, VA**

*Monitored by Shirley Devan & Volunteers*

- Installed two additional boxes at Powhatan, bringing the total to seven boxes. New boxes were not active in 2024
- Five of the seven boxes hosted Carolina Chickadees in April and May
- No Prothonotary Warblers nested in any boxes. However, Prothonotary Warblers were nesting at Powhatan Creek because males were heard singing and individuals were observed as box monitoring took place



*Donna Benson surprised by a Carolina Chickadee while monitoring next boxes at Powhatan Creek Park.*

## **Newport News Park | Newport News, VA**

*Monitored by Dave Youker*

- Two of the seven boxes had Carolina Chickadee nests; total chickadees fledged was nine
- Two had Tree Swallow nests; total Tree Swallows fledged was 10
- Of the 7 boxes, only 1 was used by Prothonotaries with four eggs laid. No Prothonotaries fledged for the first time since monitoring began in 2009.

Thanks to Newport News Parks and Recreation for their continued support of this project.

## **Dragon Run | Middle Peninsula of Virginia**

*Monitored by Gary Driscoll*

For the spring and summer of 2024, 22 Prothonotary warbler boxes were monitored in two locations along the Dragon Run, primarily in King & Queen County. Monitoring began on March 12 and ended on July 23, 2024.

**Big Island** | There was activity in eight of 15 boxes. There were 29 Prothonotary and six Carolina Chickadee fledglings at this location.

**Mascot Bridge** | Two boxes out of seven had activity with a total of 12 Prothonotary fledglings.

The results this year were low, but better than last year. The average from 2015 through 2021 was approximately 60 fledglings. In 2023, the number was only 35 fledglings. In 2024, there were 41 fledglings, up from six last year. The total fledglings was 41 Prothonotary warblers and 6 Chickadee fledglings.

### **Northwest River Park | Chesapeake, VA**

Monitored by Shirley Devan & Volunteers

2024 marked the fifteenth year of monitoring Prothonotary Warblers at Northwest River



Carolina Chickadee eggs at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. Photo by Shirley Devan.

Park in Chesapeake, VA. CVWO volunteers from Virginia Beach monitored boxes in 2009 and 2010. Shirley Devan and volunteers from Williamsburg started monitoring in 2011 and have monitored boxes every year except during 2020 due to COVID pandemic.

When we resumed in 2021, we observed new phenomena: buried and abandoned nests with eggs which resulted in fewer nestlings, fledglings and captured females. Sadly, these phenomena continued through 2022, 2023, and 2024. See table below for data from 2018 – 2024.

While the number of banded nestlings increased to 63 in 2024, the estimated number of nestlings fledging without banding decreased to 28. So, the estimated total number of nestlings fledged was 91, about 10% fewer than in 2023, but about 26% fewer than 153 in 2021.

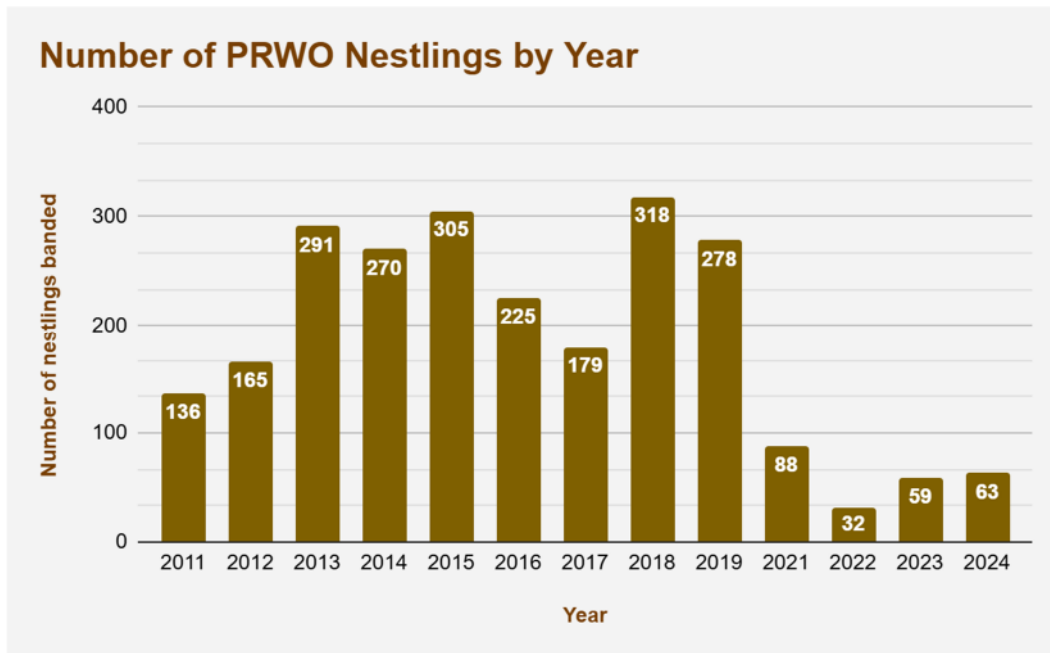
upward trend.

Perhaps 2025 will be the year we see an

NOTE: All handling and banding of birds done with proper permits from the USGS Bird Banding Lab and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

**2018–2024 for Prothonotary Warblers Nesting Data from Northwest River**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Number of Boxes</b>	83	84	84	84	82	81
<b>Eggs Laid</b>	486	579	570	462	340 (est)	306 (est)
<b>Nestlings Banded</b>	318	278	88	32	59	63
<b>Fledged without Banding (estimated)</b>	51	105	65	35	45	28
<b>Total Nestlings Fledged (estimated)</b>	369	383	153	67	104	91
<b>% Fledged of Eggs Laid (estimated)</b>	75%	66%	27%	12%	31%	30%
<b>New Adult Females Banded</b>	29	30	26	13	24	13
<b>Females Recaptured</b>	42	46	15	4	4	4



### **Plans for 2025 Prothonotary Warbler Nesting Season**

CVWO will continue to monitor the five sites listed in the 2024 summary and add another site. CVWO has received permission from James City County Parks & Recreation to install eight nest boxes at Greensprings Interpretive Trail in James City County. In spring 2024, volunteers along with Alex Holloway of JCC Parks & Recreation, scouted sites for the eight boxes and noted GPS coordinates. Two boxes will be on VDOT property along the Capital Trail. Alex has received permission from VDOT to install 2 boxes on the selected sites along the Capital Trail.

- Donna Benson, under Shirley Devan's supervision, will lead on the Powhatan Creek Trail and the Greensprings Interpretive Trail sites. Shirley will be available to band nestlings at these two trails.
- Shirley Devan will continue to lead on the nest boxes at Northwest River and Chickahominy Riverfont Park.
- Nest boxes installation has been completed for the new Greensprings Interpretive Trail site as well as replacement boxes needed at all trails.
- At Greensprings Interpretive Trail, it is necessary to purchase poles and well as umbrella baffles similar to those located at Powhatan Creek Trail.
- CVWO will be recruiting new volunteers for the Greensprings Interpretive Trail from the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists.
- Dave Youker and Gary Driscoll will continue to monitor nest boxes at Newport News Park and Dragon Run.
- CVWO will modify our monitoring protocol to include masks and gloves (as appropriate for the volunteers' roles) to reduce the risk of contact with avian flu.