



Student Christina Newman is part of the research team from Southeastern Oklahoma State University that bands and monitors populations of prothonotary warblers at Tishomingo NWR. | Prothonotary Warbler | Atchafalaya NWR, LA | Timothy Vidrine • Inset photo courtesy of Doug Wood

Doug Wood, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma

Ornithologist Doug Wood, Ph.D., an associate professor of biology at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, found an ideal research partner in the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge, located 35 miles from campus. “The refuge is one of the few wild places available for field research,” says Wood. When Wood visited the refuge for the first time in 2003 and noticed prothonotary warblers flying and singing near the edge of Cumberland Pool, “I was fascinated by the fact that this species was at the western end of its range, and apparently doing quite well,” he says.

That discovery was the beginning of a mutually beneficial partnership between Wood, his students, the refuge’s Friends group (TREES—the Tishomingo Refuge Ecology and Education Society), and the Tishomingo NWR staff. Wood and his students have established a banding program, and have banded and tracked some 1,200 prothonotary warblers since the study began in 2003. The research team has put up 80 nest boxes for the warblers on the refuge, conducted mist-netting bird surveys during spring migration, and assisted TREES by conducting bird-banding demonstrations and informational workshops at the refuge’s annual nature festival. Wood’s ongoing research provides refuge biologists with data they might not otherwise have the resources to collect, and the refuge provides an ideal field ornithology research station for Wood and his students.