

Kevin F. P. Bennett, PhD

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EDUCATION

Ph.D.	2023	Biological Sciences, University of Maryland	College Park, MD
M.S.	2017	Biological Sciences, Fordham University	New York, NY
B.A.	2013	Biology (Distinction), Colby College	Waterville, ME

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Academic appointments

2023-present	Postdoctoral Scholar, Penn State University	State College, PA
2023-present	Research Associate, Smithsonian Institution	Washington, DC

Other positions

2017	Project TRUE Project Leader, Wildlife Conservation Society	New York, NY
2015	Field Technician, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center	Washington, DC
2012	Whooping Crane Intern, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center	Laurel, MD

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2025	Molecular Ecology, Penn State University, <i>Instructor</i>
2023	The World of Biology, University of Maryland, <i>Graduate Teaching Assistant</i>
2021	Animal Behavior, University of Maryland, <i>Graduate Teaching Assistant</i>
2017 – 2019	Ecology and Evolution Lab, University of Maryland, <i>Graduate Teaching Assistant</i>
2015 – 2016	Introductory Biology Lab, Fordham University, <i>Graduate Teaching Assistant/Teaching Fellow</i>
2015	Ecology Lab, Fordham University, <i>Graduate Teaching Assistant</i>

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed (* denotes co-first authorship)

2026 | Balakrishnan CN, Toda Y, Ko M-C, Wirthlin ME, Driver RJ, Bolton PE, Miller ET, Mendez-Aranda D, Dikow RB, Frandsen PB, Shogren EH, **Bennett KFP**, ...46 authors..., Baldwin MW. Genomic and physiological changes in a sexually selected and frugivorous bird radiation. *Current Biology*, 36(12): 3061-3076.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2026.05.021>

- *The New York Times*. These Birds' Backflips are Fueled by Sugar. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/25/science/genetics-birds-manakins.html>

2026 | Céspedes Arias LN*, **Bennett KFP***, Campagna L, Wood AW, Bonaccorso E, Cuervo AM, Cadena CD, Lovette IJ, Toews DPL. Diversification and divergence in *Myioborus* warblers: insights into evolutionary relationships and plumage genetics. *Evolution*, early view. <http://doi.org/10.1093/evolut/qpag085>.

2025 | **Bennett KFP**, Wood AWW, Baiz MD, Phung L-N, Lovette IJ, Toews DPL. A colorful legacy of hybridization in wood-warblers includes frequent sharing carotenoid genes among species and genera. *PLOS Biology*, 23(12): e3003501. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3003501>.

- *Living Bird Magazine*. When Evolution Painted Warblers Yellow. <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/when-evolution-painted-warblers-yellow/>
- *The Avian Hybrids Blog*. A colorful mess: Widespread exchange of pigmentation genes across the Parulidae phylogeny <https://avianhybrids.wordpress.com/2026/03/11/a-colorful-mess-widespread-exchange-of-pigmentation-genes-across-the-parulidae-phylogeny/>

2025 | **Bennett KFP**, Gielow KH, Conner AN, Toews DPL. Genetic confirmation of an “uncommon mourningthroat” (*Geothlypis philadelphia* x *G. trichas*): a rare but persistent hybrid warbler. *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*, 138(2): 303–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15594491.2025.2584827>.

2025 | **Bennett KFP**, Bolton PE, Brumfield RT, Wilkinson GS, Braun MJ. Impact of a putative riverine barrier on genomic population structure and gene flow in the presence of sexual selection. *Evolution*, 79(10): 2181–2192. <https://doi.org/10.1093/evolut/qpaf146>.

2025 | Morrison ES, Pandolfi GP, Aguillon SM, Ali JR, Archard O, Baldassarre DT, Baquero I, **Bennett KFP**, ...33 authors..., Shutz AJ. AvianLexiconAtlas: A database of descriptive categories of English-language bird names around the world. *PLOS ONE*, 20(6): e0325890. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0325890>.

2024 | Lim HC*, **Bennett KFP***, Justyn NM, Powers MJ, Long KM, Kingston SE, Lindsay WR, Pease JB, Fuxjager MJ, Bolton PE, Balakrishnan CN, Day LB, Parsons TJ, Brawn JD, Hill GE, Braun MJ. Sequential introgression of a carotenoid processing gene underlies sexual ornament diversity in a genus of manakins. *Science Advances*, 10(47): eadn8339. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adn8339>.

- *The Avian Hybrids Blog*. Water off a manakin’s back: how natural and sexual selection shape plumage coloration in manakins <https://avianhybrids.wordpress.com/2025/12/10>

2024 | Long KM, Rivera-Colón AG, **Bennett KFP**, Catchen JM, Braun MJ, Brawn JD. Ongoing introgression of a secondary sexual plumage trait in a stable avian hybrid zone. *Evolution*, 78(9): 1539–1553. <https://doi.org/10.1093/evolut/qpae076>.

- *Evolution*. Digest: Asymmetrical introgression of belly coloration across a manakin hybrid zone in Panama <https://doi.org/10.1093/evolut/qpae096>

2021 | **Bennett KFP**, Lim HC, Braun MJ. Sexual selection and introgression in avian hybrid zones: Spotlight on *Manacus*. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 61(4): 1291–1309. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icb/icab135>.

2021 | **Bennett KFP***, Evans BS*, Clark JA, Marra PP. Domestic cat abundance and activity across a residential land use gradient. *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, 9: 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2021.643845>.

*Shared first-authorship

Non-peer reviewed

2026 | **Bennett KFP**. Sequencing the “uncommon mourningthroat.” Guest post, Wilson Ornithological Society Blog. <https://wilsonsociety.org/2026/03/09/guest-post-uncommon-mourningthroat/>

2025 | Sly ND, **Bennett KFP**, Long KM. Golden-collared Manakin (*Manacus vitellinus*), version 3.0. In *Birds of the World* (Sly ND and Billerman SM, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/species/gocman1/3.0>.

GRANTS AND AWARDS (total \$241,875)

Research grants

2026	\$5513	EECG Research Award, American Genetic Association
2021	\$74,648	Co-PI: James Bond Grant, Smithsonian Institution
2021	\$700	Maryland Ornithological Society Research Grant
2020	\$2,470	Alexander Wetmore Research Award, AOS
2019	\$138,292	Co-PI: Core Research Grant, National Museum of Natural History

Other awards

2024	\$460	Travel Award, American Ornithological Society
2023	\$9,061	BISI Dissertation Fellowship, University of Maryland
2022	\$6,429	Dr. Devra Kleiman Memorial Graduate Endowment, UMD
2022	\$570	Travel Award, American Ornithological Society
2022	\$983	Biology Department Travel Award and Goldhaber Travel Grant, UMD
2020	\$250	Best Behavior, Ecology, Evolution, & Systematics Research in Progress Talk, UMD

2020	\$2,500	Dean's Fellowship, UMD
2019	\$500	Biology Department Travel Award, UMD
2018	\$2,500	Dean's Fellowship, UMD
2016	\$712	Professional Development Grant, Fordham University
2015	Hon. Mention	NSF Graduate Research Fellowship
2012	\$1,800	Linda Cotter Award, Colby College

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talks

2026	Patuxent Bird Club	"A colorful legacy of hybridization in wood-warblers"
2024	Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History: Informatics, Data Science, & Genomics Series	"Gene flow and sexual selection: insights from colorful birds"
2023	Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science	"Evolutionary insights from hybridization in bearded manakins"
2022	East Carolina University	"The genetic basis and evolutionary history of a sexual signal in bearded manakins"
2020	Frederick Bird Club	"Manakins: Evolutionary insights from a dancing bird"
2020	Maryland Bird Conservation Symposium	"Manakins: Nature's Lords of the Dance"
2019	Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History: Phylopizza Series	"Birds of a (golden) feather: Evolutionary insights from manakin genomics and behavior"

Conference Talks

2025	American Ornithological Society, St. Louis, MO	" <i>In vitro</i> characterization of a functional parulid carotenoid processing enzyme, BCO2"
2024	American Ornithological Society, Estes Park, CO	"Following a colorful winding thread of introgression in wood-warblers (Parulidae)"
2023	American Ornithological Society, London, ON	"Hybridization in a dynamic landscape: insights from nearshore islands"
2023	Society for the Study of Evolution, Albuquerque, NM	"Impact of a river barrier on genomic population structure and introgression of a sexually selected trait"
2022	American Ornithological Society, San Juan, PR	"Colorful plumage in bearded manakins: parallel evolution or gene flow?"
2021	American Ornithological Society, virtual	"Is a river barrier impeding introgression of sexually selected trait?"
2019	Manakin Genomics Research Coordination Network, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil	"The genetic basis of sexual traits in an avian hybrid zone"
2019	Society for the Study of Evolution, Providence, RI	"The genetic basis of a sexually selected trait in an avian hybrid zone"

Conference Posters

2025	American Ornithological Society, St. Louis, MO	"Incomplete introgression of a carotenoid coloration gene in red-faced warblers (<i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>)"
2017	Student Conference on Conservation Science, New York, NY	"Patterns of free-ranging domestic cat abundance along an urbanization gradient"
2016	North American Ornithological Conference, Washington, DC	"Free-ranging cat densities along an urban-rural gradient"

STUDENT MENTORSHIP

2022-2023 Caleb Bekele, NMNH YES! Program intern
2022 Sophia Matoss, NMNH YES! Program intern
2020-2021 Grant Bowers, UMD undergraduate research assistant, NMNH intern
2020 Rachel Lubitz, UMD undergraduate research assistant
2017 Devin D'Agostino, Fordham undergraduate and Project TRUE mentee
2017 Bethany Regan, Fordham undergraduate and Project TRUE mentee

OUTREACH

2025 Bird walk, Ward 8 Woods Conservancy, Washington, DC
2024 Bird walk, Columbia Heights Education Campus, Washington, DC
2024 Bird walk, Ward 8 Woods Conservancy, Washington, DC
2024 Seminar & bird walk, Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, State College PA (co-lead with David Toews)
2023 Bird walk, Black Birder's Week, Laurel, MD (co-lead with Dara Wilson and Maria Montero)
2022 Bird walk, Black Birder's Week, Washington, DC (co-lead with Adé Ben-Salahuddin)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

American Ornithological Society Early Professionals Committee (2023-present)
Patuxent Bird Club Member, Board of Directors (2021-present)
Maryland Ornithological Society Member, Maryland/DC Records Committee (2021-2024)
UMD B.E.E.S. Student Taskforce Vice President (2019-2021)

PEER REVIEW

Nature Climate Change
Molecular Ecology
Evolution
Proceedings of the Royal Society B
Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution
Journal of Heredity
PeerJ
Ornithology
Ornithological Applications
Emu – Austral Ornithology
Journal of Urban Ecology
US Geological Survey (external reviewer)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Ornithological Society
Society for the Study of Evolution
Wilson Ornithological Society
Maryland Ornithological Society