

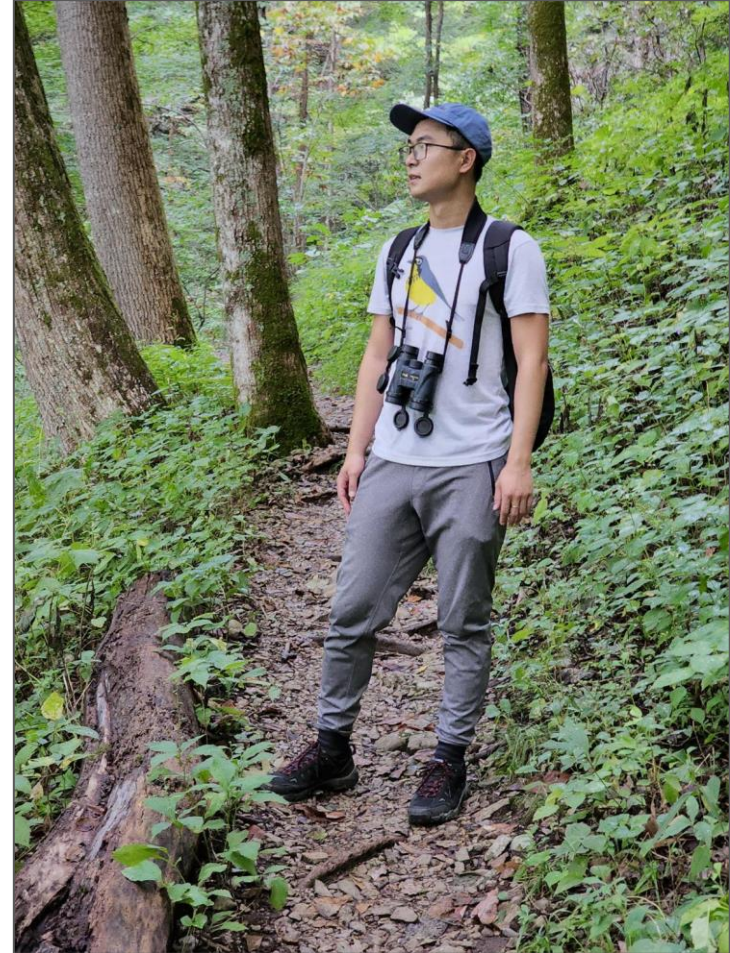


# Staying Safe in the Field - Panel Discussion

Jin Bai

# About Me

- MS in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at the University of Florida.
- Ph.D. Candidate in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology.
- Cofounder of City Bird ([www.citybird.org](http://www.citybird.org)).
- Project Coordinator of Triangle Bird Count.
- Board member of New Hope Audubon Society.



# My past and current research

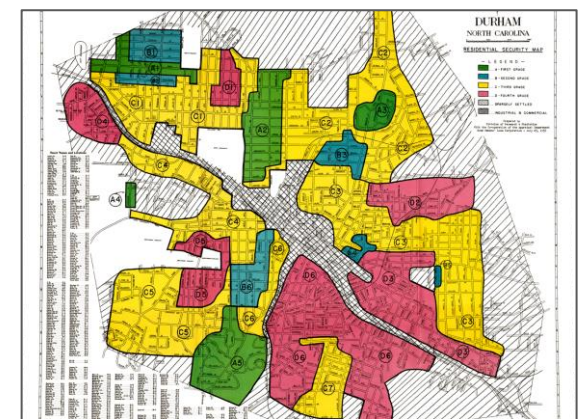
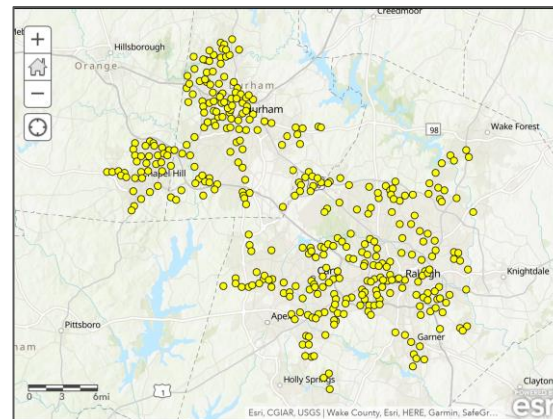
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- Forest songbirds' homing behavior
- Anthropause on urban birds
- Wealth and urban biodiversity
- Ecological legacy effects of redlining





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# Encountered safety issues - Vehicle Safety

Issue: car got stuck in mud or sand

Strategies:

- Avoid doing fieldwork alone when possible. A helping hand can get you out of trouble.
- Before doing fieldwork, Identify university staff who can help you when you have car problems.
- Communicate frequently with your advisor about your fieldwork schedule, especially field work in completely remote areas without receptions.



I got my car stuck in the mud while doing fieldwork in the summer of 2018.



# Encountered safety issues - Getting Lost

Issue: got lost while doing fieldwork

Strategies:

- Keep your phone or GPS device with you all time.
- Download offline google maps beforehand to help you navigate when getting lost.
- STOP strategies
  - **S**top - stay calm and do not panic
  - **T**hink - think through how you got there and what landmarks you see
  - **O**bserve - if without a map, follow the stream downhill as a last resort
  - **P**lan - think about possible plans. It's best to stay put if it's nightfall



The picture is from online. I got lost for about an hour at a state park in Florida while doing fieldwork in 2018.

# Encountered safety issues - Insect hazards

Issue: got ticks while doing fieldwork

Strategies:

- Wear long socks and pants and use insect repellent.
- Conduct regular tick checks throughout the day.
- Thoroughly check ticks when returning from the field and wash field clothes when possible.



The picture is from online. I found ticks on my clothes and body multiple times during the fieldwork season.

# Encountered safety issues - Interacting with locals

Issue: interacting with local police and private property owners while doing fieldwork

Experiences:

- Being aggressively told to leave the property (golf course) when doing fieldwork for a bluebird/chickadee nest monitoring research.
- Being chased/followed while driving my research vehicle to have a conversation with two private property owners about trespassing on their property.
- Being pulled over by a police officer while collecting data for Climate Watch.





# Encountered safety issues - Interacting with locals

Issue: interacting with local police and private property owners while doing fieldwork

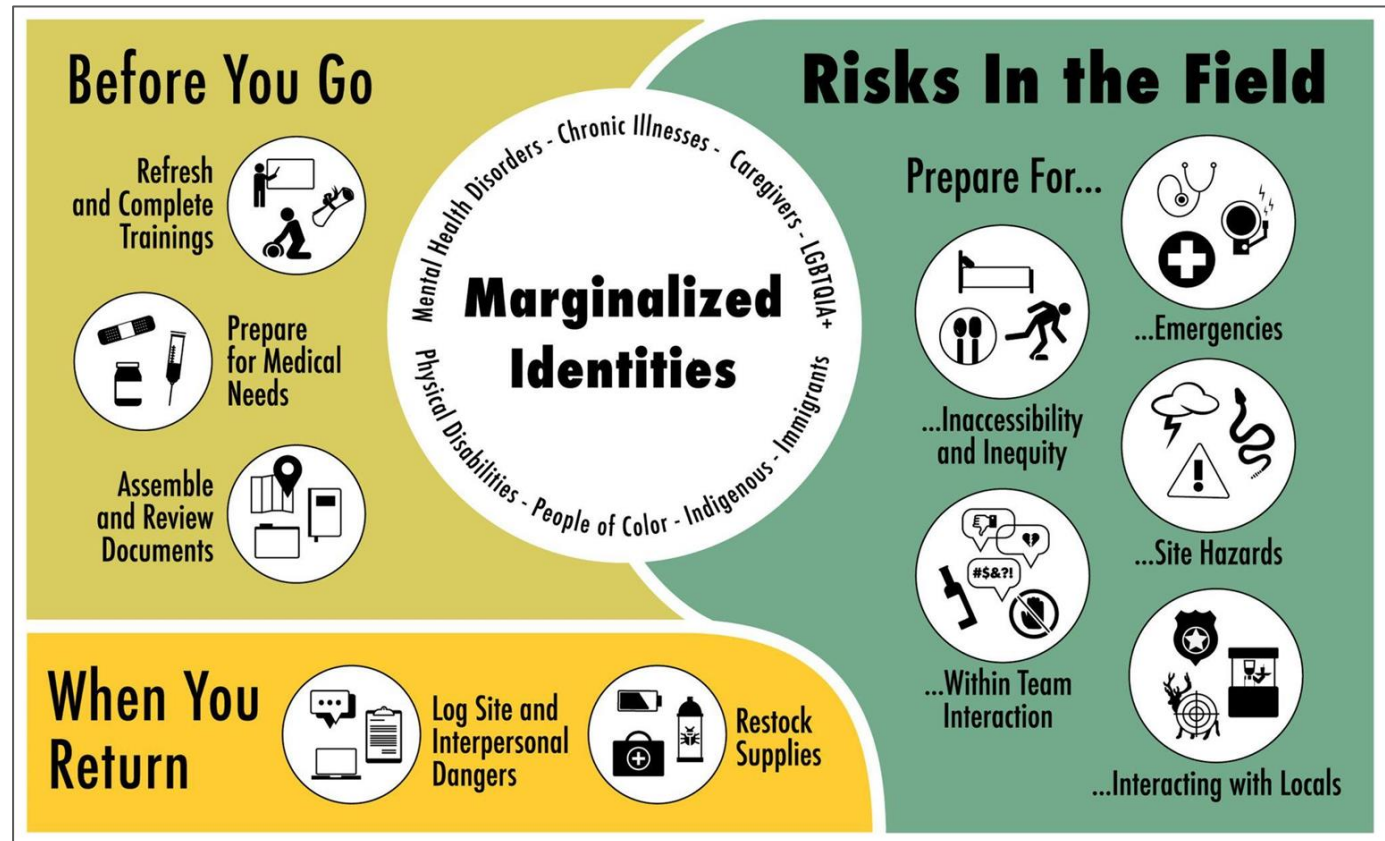
Strategies:

- Inform your neighbors near your field site about you, your research, and your institution affiliations.
- Always carry credentials and permits when someone challenges why you are there.
- Wear university-affiliated clothing and use a university vehicle or magnet.
- If feeling unsafe at any time, contact your supervisor and modify the project plan when necessary.



# A proposed framework to improve field safety

- Universities can customize training to be relevant to local risks.
- Field ecologists should complete training and prepare for risks in the field.
- Always document encountered dangers and report them to your supervisors.



**Thank you!**