

**Ornithology. Wild Birds:** Wild Birds & Human Interactions: Exploring Connections Across Conservation, Culinary Traditions, Public Health, & Art

**Faculty:** Dr. Keila Dhondt, Senior Lecturer of the Microbiology/Immunology and Biomedical Sciences Departments, Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine

**Week One:** July 5 – 11, 2026

**Schedule:** Monday - Friday, 9-12 and 1:30-3:30, except Wednesday afternoon.

**Location:** College of Veterinary Medicine, Green Room S2-223, Cornell Arboretum, Cornell Lab of Ornithology with some field work

### Welcome to ***Wild Birds and Human Interactions!***

I'm truly excited that you'll be part of this summer course. Learning alongside curious, engaged adult students makes this kind of exploration especially rewarding, and I'm looking forward to the conversations, discoveries, and shared experiences we'll have together.

Birds have captivated humans for thousands of years. They appear in our stories, art, and traditions; they inspire scientific discovery; and they play essential roles in the ecosystems that sustain life. In this course, we'll dive into the fascinating and sometimes surprising connections between birds and people across cultures, across time, and across disciplines.

This will be an active, hands-on experience. We won't stay in the classroom for long! Together we'll head outdoors to observe birds in their natural habitats, visit a virtual art museum to see how birds have shaped both artistic and scientific imagination, and participate in engaging activities that bring our topics vividly to life. Whether you're an experienced birder or someone who has only recently noticed the birds in your neighborhood, you'll find plenty here to spark your curiosity and deepen your appreciation.

Get ready to look closely, ask big questions, and discover new ways of thinking about the relationships between humans and the bird world.

I can't wait to begin this adventure with you!

Keila

