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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV (Piedmont-Coastal Plain) Fall 2005 Jekyll Island Banding Station

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10 days later than average, a fact that was noted with many species and was most likely related to the weather events as noted above.

For the second year the nets located on the refuge in the scrub line behind the ocean dunes provided the highest species count in any one day. This reinforces the concept mentioned last year that many fall migrants are blown out over the ocean and those that return to land seek cover in the first vegetation available.

This is the second year that a Black-billed Cuckoo has been banded on the refuge as well as the second year they were heard calling in June and July. This is the first indication that this species is nesting in the area.

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The Kiptopeke banding station was in operation for its 43rd year, starting back in 1963. The 2005 season was again started on 15 Aug and ran through 27 Nov. This year a total of 102 species were banded. This is only the second time since 1994 that the station had banded over 100 species. The last time was the 2004 season when 108 species were banded. The 9,567 individuals banded this season make it the highest total since 1982 (23 years).

Again this year, the habitat around the banding station saw changes both prior to and during the banding season. Many pine trees were removed and the year-and-a-half-old fallow field remained productive. The removed pines left big holes in the forest coverage, but plans to reforest with native hardwoods and shrubs are currently in progress with hopes of a more diversified forest creating more of a food supply for migrating birds.

The high number of individuals captured this season was attributed to the dedicated staff of volunteers and the huge movement of birds that passed through the area in the middle of October. Being well staffed helped us band 739 birds on 21 Oct and another 702 the very next day! During the nine-day span, 15-23 Oct, we banded 4,426 birds.

The 739 birds banded in one day was the highest one-day total since 1982, and the back-to-back two-day total of 1,441 was the fourth highest ever for the Kiptopeke station.

The season saw its share of interesting and rare birds. The biggest highlight and the most rare came on 18 Nov when we caught the state's first MacGillivray's Warbler. A few days earlier, on 11 Nov, we had caught an Oregon race Dark-eyed Junco. Another new species for the cumulative list was a Green Heron banded on 10 Oct. Other rare-to-us birds include our third Rusty Blackbird, fourth Cerulean Warbler, and the fourth Tree Swallow since 1978. We also banded a Gambel's race White-crowned Sparrow on 30 Sep, a very rare capture for the station.

We had four species this season that totally crushed their previous ten-year high. We banded 8 Cooper's Hawks (old high was 2), 17 Wood Thrushes (old high was 6), and 229 Swamp Sparrows (old high was 93). The fourth was Gray Catbird: The old ten-year high was 599 set in 2001; this season however, we banded a total of 1,289. That is 690 more birds than the previous ten-year high, and the most the station has ever caught in a season dating back to 1963.

The Kiptopeke station is highly indebted to its many volunteers. Their help is essential to run this station. Also, thanks go out the Kiptopeke State Park and Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory.

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The 2005 fall banding session at JIBS stood out by our failure to capture migrating bird species during the period of time we were in operation. There were a few cold weather fronts during the 21 days, but these fronts were generally weak.

Another reason our numbers were significantly lower than normal could be that we had to discontinue use of long-utilized net locations. The primary vegetation in this area is wax myrtle. The wax myrtle has been in a state of severe decline for the past two years and collapsed completely this

year, forcing us to move our nets farther inland from the beach for better vegetation camouflage for the nets.

The most exhilaration capture of 2005 was the 78 Tree Swallows that filled one net in two seconds. Fortunately, we were having an otherwise slow day and everyone's attention was quickly directed to the task of clearing this one net. Many thanks go to our volunteers for their quick response with careful handling techniques.

JIBS continues to be a highly favored field trip for the Colonial Coast Birding Festival. We enjoy educating people, particularly interested youth, about what we are doing and why we band birds. On one of the field trips, a young fellow, age 5, proceeded to astound everyone present. He could name every species presented, as well as sex the bird when possible. Equally astounding, the child was self taught and had not seen many of the birds personally until coming to the station. We can only hope that he will continue his interest in ornithology.

Many thanks and great appreciation go to our volunteers and everyone who supports the station. Without their help the station could not exist.

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This was the fourth year of mist netting at BBCFSP during fall migration, and the third complete season. Eleven to 16 nets were placed in a restored hardwood hammock that is part of a multi-million dollar project to return native vegetation to the park. The goals of this banding project are to determine whether the restored habitats are suitable for fall migrant landbirds, and also to describe migration in south Florida.

We started banding this year on 29 Aug, nearly two weeks later than in previous years. The site was damaged by the passage of Hurricane Katrina four days earlier as a Category 1 storm. Close to 50% of the canopy was lost in this storm, and two net locations had to be adjusted slightly.

Migration was steady through early September, with a significant movement of birds following Hurricane Rita's passage to the south of Florida around 20 Sep. Late September and the first half of

October continued at a brisk pace, with several days of over 100 birds captured per 100 net hours. The 25th of Sep was a peak day, with a site record of 218 b/100nh.

In past years migration has tended to slow down by late October, but this year Hurricane Wilma paid us a visit on 24 Oct, with Category 2 conditions at the study site. Our banding area was unrecognizable when we returned the next day. We had removed our nets but left the banding tent up. It was still there the next day, even though the winds probably gusted near 120 MPH and 50 to 60% of the trees had been blown down. The remaining trees were completely stripped of their leaves and there was no fruit to be seen anywhere. We were able to clear or relocate 8 to 11 lanes and begin banding immediately after Wilma, and we continued for three more weeks, finally shutting down on 14 Nov. The cold front that drew Wilma up into south Florida from where she was parked on the Yucatán Peninsula gave us our final serious push of migrants on 25 and 26 Oct.

We captured some fascinating birds this year. Fourteen species were banded for the first time: Common Ground-dove, Whip-poor-will, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher; Golden-winged (two), Blue-winged, Nashville, Townsend's, Blackburnian, Connecticut and Canada warblers; Seaside, Grasshopper and Lincoln's sparrows; and a Thick-billed Vireo, possibly the first banded on the mainland U.S. We captured 1374 birds of 59 species at an overall rate of 45 b/100nh. This is close to the 1445 birds captured in 2004 at a rate of 41 b/100nh. The overall diversity was much greater this year, but some of the star species from 2004 were lower in number during 2005. Hawks, thrushes, and tanagers were not well represented this year, and several early warbler species (Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler) were missed because of the late start of the field season. In spite of this, we banded a record 27 species of warblers and three species of sparrows. Sparrow diversity is low in extreme southern Florida, so catching any species is a surprise, especially since the nets are placed in tropical woodland.

The overall composition of the most banded species remained similar to 2004, with Ovenbird and Black-throated Blue Warbler one and two, respectively. American Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, and Red-eyed Vireo showed modest increases in 2005, while Black-and-white Warbler