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## Atlantic Flyway Review: Spring 2007 Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory

John Gregoire

Sue Gregoire

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efficiency. Combined with a good number of tardy migrants, banding totals remained high well into early June. Because of this consistency, a grand total of 15,548 birds of 140 species were banded this spring. This is the highest spring banding total since monitoring began in 1960.

Does this mean an overall increase in the number of migrants through Long Point in 2007? It is hard to say since our trends are calculated on daily estimated totals of birds, which include our daily census counts as well as the banding totals each day. However, it does reflect favorably on the dedication of everyone who contributed to this spring's migration monitoring effort. Maintaining our research throughout our 47<sup>th</sup> spring would not have been possible without our international corps of volunteers, the Friends of LPBO, our project partners, and our members and supporters.

A detailed weekly account of the 2007 spring season at Long Point is available at [www.bsc-eoc.org/longpoint/index.jsp?targetpg=lpbosight](http://www.bsc-eoc.org/longpoint/index.jsp?targetpg=lpbosight)

**Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory**  
 422-0764  
 Burdett, Schuyler County, NY  
**Banders: John and Sue Gregoire**  
 khmo@att.net

We were able to operate on many fewer days than normal, yet achieved more net hours and a record spring in both bandings and returns. This was largely thanks to the hordes of American Goldfinches that passed through in late April. Although numbers within other species were lower, we had nice diversity, albeit in ones and twos.

We banded a record 1,150 individuals of 63 species in 25 days of operation. We also had 142 repeats, a record 152 returns, and seven hummingbirds not banded. Our measure of efficiency was 138.8 b/100nh for newly banded birds and 175.2 b/100nh overall. Our best day was 28 Apr with 164 banded (130 goldfinches!) and our most species diverse day was 17 May with 24 species banded.

Our age data as reported in Table 2 is somewhat skewed due to an ongoing study that has revealed covert feather shape to be a less-than-accurate age criterion in some species. We examined

returns of known-age birds and found less than 50% accuracy with this method of ageing. This was first noticed in Chipping Sparrows, but we felt our sample size was too small. After achieving hundreds of returns of the thousands of American Goldfinches banded at this station, we were definitively able to determine that covert shape was an inaccurate means of age determination in this species. As a result, we aged all spring females as AHY and aged males according to other criteria. It makes one wonder what other species do not conform, especially those we band in smaller numbers. On known-age returns of several other species, we have seen so called "SY coverts" on many elder birds. While we will continue this study, we have lost confidence in this criterion for all species.

	% SY	% ASY	% AHY
711 Amer Goldfinch	35	19	46
58 Ruby-cr Kinglet	67	33	
44 Chipping Spar	61	39	
42 Wh-thr Sparrow	38	62	
25 Red-wg Blackbd	72	28	
22 E Wh-cr Spar		100	
19 Song Sparrow	5		95
18 Cedar Waxwing	66	44	
18 Amer Robin	5	56	39
16 Com Yellowthr			100

No new species were added to the cumulative station list of 131 species plus five forms; point count cumulative remains at 218 species seen at Kestrel Haven. Abnormalities were unremarkable and most species were found in normal numbers. While we banded many nifty species, the real pleasure was in our returns.

We received a report of an American Tree Sparrow banded here in 2001 and recovered near Irondale, Ontario, some 180 miles northwest, on 13 Apr 2007; the bird was seven years old.

We enjoyed 152 returning individuals! Of that number, over a third, or 55, were at least four years of age or older. **The eldest return was a Hairy Woodpecker at over 13 years of age.** The elders were:

- Eastern Phoebe at 4 years old
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at 4 years old
- Hairy Woodpeckers at 13+ and 10 years old
- Downy Woodpeckers (2) at 5 years old
- Blue Jay at 4 years old

- Black-capped Chickadees (11) at 4 (6), 4+, 5, 5+ (2) and 8 years old
- American Robins at 4 and 4+ years old
- Gray Catbird at 4 years old
- Yellow Warblers (7) at 4 (2), 4+, 5, 5+, 6+, and 7+ years old
- Common Yellowthroat at 4 years old
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak at 4 years old
- Chipping Sparrow at 4 years old
- Song Sparrows (2) at 4 years old
- White-throated Sparrow at 4 years old
- Red-winged Blackbird at 4+ years old
- Common Grackle at 6+ years old
- Baltimore Orioles (2) at 4 years old
- Purple Finches (2) at 4 and 7+ years old
- American Goldfinches (15) at 4 (4), 4+ (4), and 5 (7) years old.

We did not continue participation in the LaMNA cooperative study taking DNA samples and cloacal swabs for virus study as UCLA and Los Alamos failed to report results from last spring and fall. It appears this migration monitoring group study was poorly designed, funded and executed and hardly supportive of the larger USGS sampling effort.

We thank Bob and Judy Cosgriff, David Guaspari, Barlow Rhodes, Jay Schissel and the Painted Post Breakfast Group for their support as well as Stillman's Greenhouse, Herzog Printing and Pine Tree Farms for their advice, assistance, and generous support.

**Wing Island Banding Station**                      **414-0700**  
 Brewster, Barnstable County, MA  
**Bander: Susan Finnegan**  
 sfinnegan@wingisland.org  
 Chief Assistant: Gretchen Putonen

This was another disappointing year for our seventh spring season at the Wing Island Banding Station located on the grounds of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in Brewster, MA. The spring season began on 27 Mar and ended on 16 Jun for a total of 24 days of operation. Strong winds, mainly from the NW, continued to blow throughout the spring. Many rainy days coincided with days we planned to band. Number of birds recaptured also exceeded new birds banded for the first time! A total of 292 birds of 35 species were banded. Number of nets used ranged from one to 31. Net hours totaled 2,095, for a capture rate of 30 b/100nh. Our poor showing of birds may be a combination of weather, as last year was bad too,

and the fact that the western half of Wing Island was cleared a couple of years ago to restore a meadow that had reverted back to woods. Our largest daily catch was a total of 58 birds on both 17 and 22 May; 26 & 27 May brought the most species diversity, a pitiful 11 species.

On a brighter note, we banded our first American Woodcock. This species showed up immediately after the clearing was done. On 9 May we were honored to watch their display flights for the first time this spring in early evening. While walking between net lanes one day, an American Woodcock performed a distraction display pretending a broken wing, so I must have been close to a nest.

Two week-long intensive banding courses were held with five students attending. A group of high school students attended a banding demo on 17 May, visitors joined us on many days, and a banding demonstration was held for the Cape Cod Bird Club on 12 May.

We recaptured numerous birds with previous bandings (2006 and earlier), too many to mention, but we had a chickadee originally banded in 2000 and a Common Yellowthroat that has showed up in the same net year after year since we originally banded him in 2003. For foreign retraps, we captured a Gray Catbird that was originally banded by Bob McKinney at Island Beach in 2003 as a HY. We first captured her in 2005 and continue to catch her often during the season, documenting her breeding and molting conditions. Manomet Center for Conservation Science caught two of our birds this spring. One, a Gray Catbird we banded as a HY the previous summer, and a Northern Cardinal we banded this spring. We were surprised a cardinal would migrate 24 miles over water as the crow flies.

We continue to pull ticks from birds, with results showing that not only are birds hosting Lyme disease, but Anaplasmosis as well.

Thanks very much to banders Gretchen Putonen and Carolyn Kennedy and assistants Judith Bruce, Tom Burgess, Amber Carr, Kalina Desseaux, Judy Keller, Antonia Stephens, and Kate Yard for helping out this spring. A big thank-you to the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History for the use of one of their buildings as a banding lab. I also thank Susan Putonen for making the best bird bags ever and Bill Otis for helping out with the website.