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Atlantic Flyway Review: Spring 2007 Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park

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rumped "Myrtle" Warbler (MYWA), Northern Parula, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Swamp Sparrow. Of note, three of the MYWA birds recaptured on "opening day" (14 Mar 2007), each had been banded on 4 Mar 2005. These individuals were not recaptured during the 2006 season.

There were 26 recaptures of 19 individuals of nine species in 2006. Of these, six were resident species: Eastern Tufted Titmouse, American Goldfinch, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pine Warbler, and Carolina Chickadee; three were migratory species: Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler, and Northern Parula.

Additional Activities

The educational function of the First Landing Station expanded during the 2007 spring season. Several interested individuals (some of whom were involved with the inaugural Virginia Master Naturalist Program) were trained in scribing, extracting and banding protocol. Included in this group were: Renee Hudgins, John Young, Kathy Spencer, Sheila Scoville, and Cindy Burke. Five scouting groups made scheduled and unscheduled visits to the station. Foot traffic was brisk over the course of the season, including visitors from previous seasons.

Also, a blog was created for the First Landing Station at: www.cvwofirstlandingspk.blogspot.com.

Finally, a modest and successful effort was begun to capture Chuck-will's-widows at First Landing. This nightjar nests in the park annually, and an increased effort next spring by the Costal Virginia Wildlife Observatory to study the species, its habits, and use of the park habitat appears justified.

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Cape Florida is in its sixth year as a fall migration banding station. The park is on the southern tip of a mostly developed barrier island just off the coast of Miami. We have up to 18 nets set in a restored tropical hardwood hammock that is part of a multi-million dollar effort to return native vegetation to the park following Hurricane Andrew. We opened for

spring migration in 2007 for the first time, with some interesting results. Unfortunately, due to the time constraints placed on the three volunteer banders, this spring session will most likely be a one-time deal.

275	Common Yellowthroat
177	American Redstart
160	Black-throated Blue Warbler
155	Ovenbird
96	Prairie Warbler
86	Northern Waterthrush
69	Blackpoll Warbler
69	Black & White Warbler
60	Gray Catbird
44	Worm-eating Warbler

Nets were opened for three days in March, and more frequently in April and the first half of May. The station was open for six days a week in the third week of April and the first two weeks of May, during the peak movements. Nets were open from sunrise until around 1300 on most days, but we stayed open until 1600 or 1800 on good fallout days.

The weather was active with front passage and precipitation occurring at regular intervals throughout the spring. Westerly winds seem to create fallout conditions on the east coast of Florida as migrants coming up from the islands 'miss' the peninsula to the east and head back towards shore from the open Atlantic after sunrise. Waves of songbirds can be observed flying in off the ocean to land on the key in the afternoons on days with strong west winds or rain. We also noticed a phenomenon we called 'fair-weather fallouts,' where distinct waves of birds would arrive in late morning or early afternoon without inclement weather or adverse winds. We suspect these birds could be leaving locations such as Hispaniola the night before and using Cape Florida as a regular stepping stone in their migration, rather than as a last-chance shelter.

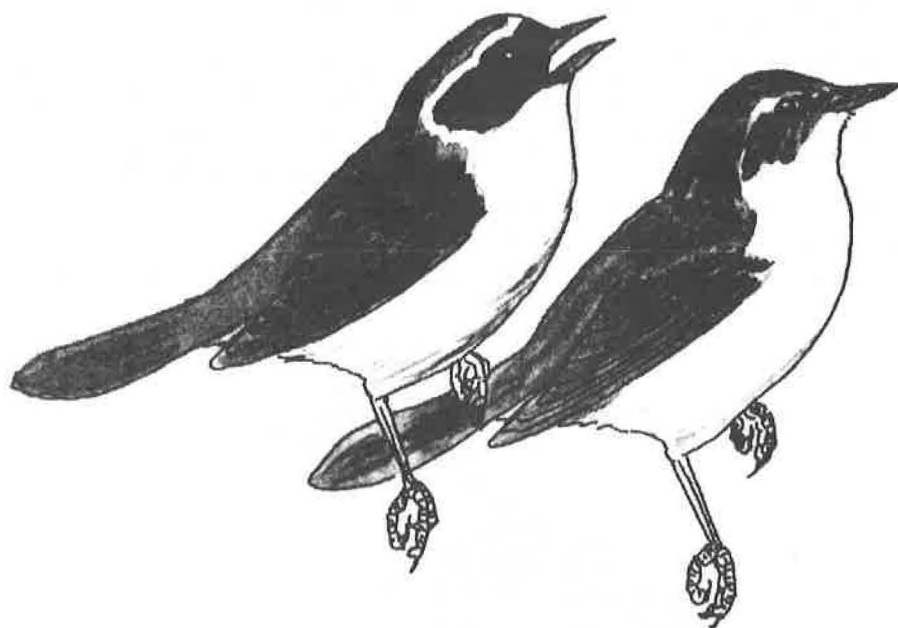
The weather for May 2007 was somewhat peculiar. Subtropical Storm Andrea parked off the north coast of Florida for several days and provided us with days of westerly winds. Smoke from numerous forest fires to our north reduced visibility for many of the banding days. We had no evidence of birds being disoriented by the smoke, but the sustained west wind gave us our busiest days in the history of the station on 9-12 May. We were never able to maximize these days because of usually having only two to three people available to

band and run nets, but we still banded anywhere from 84 to 208 birds each day with only a fraction of the nets open. May 9th featured 515 b/100nh for the short time nets were open; a site record—most of these were Common Yellowthroats. Communication with other banders farther up the coast showed the May fallouts to be confined to extreme south-eastern Florida.

The species diversity was a lot lower this spring than it is in fall, but the volume was much higher. Our final average of 82.1 b/100nh is nearly twice our fall average of around 45 b/100nh. However, the species captured remained strictly Caribbean and South American migrants. Central American migrants were not well represented this spring; this is unlike fall where we get a noticeably different species composition on a west wind. Common Yellowthroats, Blackpoll Warblers, and Black-

whiskered Vireos were much more abundant this spring than in any fall. Highlights included the 15 Connecticut Warblers and two Bicknell's Thrushes banded between 9 and 12 May, with six captured on the ninth! We banded or recaptured 1,429 birds from previous seasons this spring, with nearly half of them captured in May. Birds documented to be overwintering in the Park included four Ovenbirds, four Gray Catbirds, a Painted Bunting, and a Swainson's Warbler. Many other Painted Buntings used the site as a staging area to put on fat before continuing north to Georgia or the Carolinas.

Volunteers this spring included Rachel Henderson, Mike Baranski, Linda McCandless, David La Puma, Rebecca Boulton, Phil Cassey and Ben Baiser. Special thanks go to Robert Yero, the Park Manager, for continuing to support our research.



Common Yellowthroats
by George West