

2008

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2007 Kiptopeke Songbird Banding Station

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Recommended Citation

Runco, Jethro (2008) "Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2007 Kiptopeke Songbird Banding Station," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 33 : Iss. 3 , Article 17.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol33/iss3/17>

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Resources and a graduate student at Yale University. One notable recapture was a Field Sparrow originally banded as an ASY on 5 Apr 1999 and last recaptured in Oct 2007 when it was approximately 10 yr 4 mo old, a new age record. Other highlights included 2 Summer Tanagers (20 and 22 Aug), 1 Northern Shrike (12 Nov), 15 Connecticut Warblers (12 Sep through 8 Oct, our second-highest year), and 2 Bicknell's Thrushes (24 Sep and 2 Oct).

In addition to the banders listed above, the following people volunteered many hours helping at the station: Harry Sears, Patricia Gruber, William Snyder, Henry Davis, Helga Horrick, Doug Gill, Victoria Cadby, Hanson Robbins, Jeannine Fleegle, and Hillary Stayer.

Chincoteague
National Wildlife Refuge
Assateague Island
Accomack Co., VA
Richard N. Roberts

375-0752

This was a year for new species: Gray-cheeked Thrush, Pine Siskin, Wood Thrush and Lincoln's Sparrow. There was also an invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches that was not observed in the previous nine years, and the numbers of Myrtle Warblers were down considerably. Prairie Warbler, Yellow Warbler, and Swainson's Thrush were completely absent. Perhaps the long term eastern seaboard drought had a negative effect on the success of the nesting season.

Kiptopeke
Songbird Banding Station
Cape Charles
Northhampton Co., VA
Jethro Runco

371-0755

The Kiptopeke banding station was in operation for the 45th consecutive year, starting back in 1963. The 2007 season started on 15 Aug and ran through 22 Nov. The station operated for 92 of those days, capturing 92 species. A total of 5,507 individuals were banded this season, making it the lowest season total since 1997. Average capture rate was only 0.464 b/nh. During the years 2004 and 2005, a lot of habitat management took place in and around the banding station. Since then, those areas were

replanted with native trees and shrubs in hopes of creating a more diversified forest and food supply for migrating birds. With the help of recruiting plants and shrubs, those areas are starting to fill in and produce fruit and seeds.

The 2007 fall season saw its lowest total in over a decade. Migrant birds, especially Neotropical migrants, just did not pass through the Kiptopeke area this season. Capture rates were extremely low from 15 Aug to 11 Oct. During that 58-day span, 1,376 individuals were banded with 6,800 net hours for a capture rate of 0.202 b/nh. Remove the four biggest days during that span (1, 13, 24, 29 Sep) and the remaining 54 days netted only 770 birds in 6,239 net hrs, for a capture rate of 0.123 b/nhr, or an average of 14 birds per day: highly unusual for the Kiptopeke station. The large storm system that passed over the eastern part of the US in mid-September packed five days of strong northeast winds that I believe affected the entire eastern seaboard by pushing a large segment of migrants (mainly Neotropicals) toward the west, away from the coast. Of course this is just a hypothesis. By mid-October, the first waves of temperate migrants started showing up, but the normally large wave of Myrtle Warblers just did not hit; their migration appeared to be more drawn out, occurring later than normal. Unusual for Kiptopeke, more Myrtles were banded in November than October. Peak date came on 14 Nov when 489 were banded.

Few unusual species were captured this season, but did include Common Grackles, Prothonotary Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, seven Lincoln's Sparrows, and Clay-colored Sparrow. The most unusual species banded were two Eastern Bluebirds, only the 4th and 5th historically, and six Rusty Blackbirds (4th-9th historically). We did band some extremely late migrants, including a Worm-eating Warbler on 22 Oct, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on 7 Nov and a Gray-cheeked Thrush on 8 Nov. All three are new extreme late dates, or close to it, for the state of Virginia.

This season was good for catching Palm Warblers (293 banded), Red-breasted Nuthatches (17 plus one foreign recapture!), and Northern Saw-whet Owls (2) plus four recaptures (all from the nearby NSWO banding project). We had two huge misses this season—no Nashville Warblers or Blue Jays!

Sadly, this season was one of the worst years for warblers in recent times. Out of 28 warbler species that are caught here at Kiptopeke with a ten-year average greater than 2.0 birds/season, 14 were either at their lowest or tied for the lowest total banded and another four were at their second lowest level (over the last ten years); 26 of the 28 warbler species did not even break their 10-year average. Only two had higher-than-average numbers: Pine Warbler (six banded) and Palm Warbler (293—a new 10-year high).

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

North Folly Island 324-0795
Light-house Creek Park
Banding Station
Charleston, SC
Chris Snook, Director of Banding
Cape Romain Bird Observatory

This is the first time that banding totals for this site have been reported, but it has been operated irregularly since the early 1990s. It is located on the southern entrance to Charleston Harbor, SC, on a barrier Island with mature dune/scrub/maritime forest habitat, formerly a Loran Coast Guard Station until taken over by the Charleston County Parks system.

Banding at this site was cut short in 2006 due to access problems. In 2007 the banding operations started late and missed the early local migrants. One of the main net lanes (five nets long) was not used due to signs of increased human activity in the net lane. All days targeted for banding operations were unhampered by weather conditions.

Although the numbers were low (cf. 358 for same calendar period but twice the nets and three times the net hours in 2005) the catch rate was good. The exceptional catch on 29 Sep of 42 birds in three nets in 1/2 hr was due to an offshore storm that forced birds to seek the nearest land. The catch consisted mostly of Palm Warblers (45%) in a flock that flew over the banding station and was estimated to be more than 50 birds.

Recoveries proved to be extremely interesting this year. There has been a Painted Bunting color-banding project on going in this state and we captured a number of color-banded birds. Most had been banded at this site but two were significant recoveries of birds banded this summer: one on a nearby marsh island (~3 km), the other on another barrier island about 20 km SSW from the site. This appears to be unusual movement for a second year bird. The most significant foreign recovery has to go to the Gray Catbird (1781-71005) that was originally banded as an HY bird at Plainwell, MI, in 2002. The significance is not just the distance and age, but this is the only foreign recovery at this site of which I am aware. Other recaptures of note this year include two Carolina Wrens and a Northern Cardinal banded here in 2005.

Now, I have saved the best until last. On 2 Nov I trapped an HY male Blue-winged Warbler that caused *Bandit* to throw a fit. The South Carolina late date for this species is the first week in October. This was a relatively slow but successful fall migration.

Helpers: Christy Beck, Jesse Fagan, Billy McCord and Will Post.

Jekyll Island Banding Station 310-0812
Jekyll Island, GA
Chris Pitman, Jan Pitman, Charles Ratliff
Ovenbird@earthlink.net

This year's session was punctuated by a surprising lack of weather fronts, which may account for a low quantity of birds banded this year. Another factor is the changing status of the flora in the banding area. There has been a major die-off of the vegetation that provided net cover, which has forced us to change our net placements.

Western Palm Warblers and Common Yellowthroats as usual accounted for a high percentage (67%) of the total for the year. Some unusual species for JIBS this year were Orange-crowned and Wilson's warblers, Winter Wren, and Yellow-throated Vireo. The most unusual species appeared during the Colonial Coast Birding Festival and created quite a bit of excitement. After consulting all of our reference materials, we came to the conclusion that we had a MacGillivray's Warbler, the second record of this species at JIBS.