

2009

## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2008 Kiptopeke Songbird Banding Station

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### Recommended Citation

Runco, Jethro (2009) "Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2008 Kiptopeke Songbird Banding Station," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 34 : Iss. 3 , Article 15.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol34/iss3/15>

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October. Earlier ones from later August through mid-October were weak in nature and stalled just south of Maryland forming low-pressure systems that lingered for days just off the Atlantic coastline. This produced more easterly winds rather than the hoped for northwest winds that bring migrants to our nets. The past two summer droughts seemed to have little effect on most of our primary breeding species like Indigo Bunting, Field and Chipping sparrows, Blue Grosbeak, and Common Yellowthroat; however, this year all these species were down significantly in numbers.

One new species was banded for the station: a Great Egret, on 2 Oct. Two northern irruptives, Purple Finch (33) and Pine Siskin (8) staged good flights through the area again this year, with many lingering into winter. Record highs for the fall included two Red-tailed Hawks and nine Warbling Vireos. Other interesting bandings were a Clay-colored Sparrow on 19 Oct, a Dickcissel on 10 Nov, and two Brewster's Warblers, one each on 29 Aug and 1 Sep. We again collected hundreds of tick samples for a researcher at Yale University. In addition to the banders already listed, the following volunteered many hours helping at the station: Harry Sears, Henry Davis, Doug Gill, Victoria Cadby, Hanson Robbins, and Jeannine Fleegle.

**Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge**

**375-0752**

Assateague Island, Accomack Co., VA

**Richard N. Roberts**

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Ten years ago, when this project was started on Assateague Island, many more birds were captured in August and September. This table lists b/100nh for the months and years noted:

	1999	2000	2002	2003	2008
August		27	23	27	10
September	93	40	34	24	6.7

These data indicate a large change in fall migrants during a rather short period of time. The 2008 October data (159 b/100nh) are difficult to interpret since 83% of these birds were Yellow-rumped Warblers, as is common most years.

The data from May, June, and July (not shown here) indicate that some of this decrease may be a result of a decreased breeding population on Assateague Island.

**Kiptopeke**

**371-0755**

**Songbird Banding Station**

Cape Charles, Northhampton Co., VA

**Jethro Runco**, head bander

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The Kiptopeke banding station was in operation for the 46<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, starting back in 1963. The 2008 season started on 15 Aug and ran through 23 Nov. The station operated for 90 of those days, capturing a total of 91 species. A total of 6,726 individuals were banded this season, making it the third lowest season total since 2000. Average capture rate was 59.2 b/100nh.

During 2004 and 2005, much habitat improvement took place in and around the banding station. 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 filling in and are now producing fruit and seeds.

The weather basically broke this season into two parts. The first month was very dry, but mild, with average high temperatures lower than normal. Rainfall was also lower than normal and wind speed was not much of a problem. Only a few minor cool fronts passed through the area; therefore, migrant numbers stayed a bit lower than normal. We did not band on 6 Sep when Tropical Storm Hanna passed by. Starting on 16 Sep, wind and rain settled into the area for the next ten days, dropping net hours and causing the station to miss three days during that span. After that storm system passed, the station

saw an increase in migrant passage; however, that increased passage dwindled down by 8 Oct. On 11 Oct, a second wave of migrants started pushing through the area. During the next ten days, the bulk of the season's total captures came, including the station's highest banding day.

The second half of the season started on 22 Oct. Many days of rain and/or wind disrupted the banding station. The last month was way above average in wind speed and the temperature was below average.

We caught very little that was unexpected, and because of the lower number of birds captured this season, we had only 11 species that tied or broke 15-year highs. Those species were American Woodcock, Great Crested Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, Carolina Chickadee, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Bicknell's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Black-and-white Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and White-throated Sparrow.

Some other notables that have shown an increase recently include an Eastern Screech-Owl that was the 24<sup>th</sup> historically for the station. A total of six have been caught in the past six years. Following the same trend, we caught our 17<sup>th</sup> Chuck-will's-widow this season, the seventh one in the past five years. The station's 28<sup>th</sup> Mourning Dove was also banded. There has also been a jump in American Woodcock numbers. This season a total of nine were banded. A total of 15 had been banded between 1963 and 2003, but amazingly, 22 were banded from 2004 to 2008. We also caught the station's 17<sup>th</sup> Hairy Woodpecker this season. Lincoln's Sparrow has also been on the increase recently; between 1994 and 2002 only seven were banded, but from 2003 through 2008 a total of 25 were banded.

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**

### **Lighthouse Creek Park Banding Station**

**Chris Snook**, Director of Banding,  
Cape Romain Bird Observatory  
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snook\_c@bellsouth.net

Helpers: Carole Bennett, Jesse Fagan, Aaron Given, Kathy Woolsey.

This year the site was operated before and after the migration period, but only the migration period is reported here. The number of nets operated this year was increased from five (error in last year's Table 1) to 10.5 to include an old net lane consisting of a string of five nets on a hummock island. The five net lanes used last year were also used this year. The number of visits was doubled to two per week. This year, the same five net lanes from last year caught 377 birds in 421 net hours for 89.55 b/100nh. The weather was cooperative, enabling a full migration period to be sampled. Full moon tides in September and October appear to be responsible for giving totals of 76 and 67 new birds, respectively, as birds were pushed away from the salt marshes that border the site to the west. The only frontal system that produced a large catch occurred on 19 Oct when 102 new birds were caught in the usual morning period, a site record.

This year saw an increase in the number of species banded at the site and that is most likely because of the increase in banding effort. Some interesting retraps occurred this fall. A three-year-old House Wren was retrapped in November. Of the 37 Gray Catbirds banded last fall, five were recaptured this fall. This site has not had any winter banding carried out, so last winter I made one visit each at the end of January and February. In the January visit only seven birds were trapped including three Myrtle Warblers. This November, we recaptured two of those three Myrtle Warblers.

For permission to band at this site, I thank Charleston County Parks and SC Department of Natural Resources, who jointly manage the park.