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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2009 Kiawah Island Banding Station

Aaron Given

James Jordan

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of the banding station. A surprisingly low number of Black-throated Blue Warblers were banded: only 29; but their numbers were also extremely low at the nearby Kiptopeke Banding Station. The big species this season, and again, not unexpected because of the habitat, was Myrtle Warbler; the season total of 5,032 was huge. On most days after mid October, nets had to be closed early when Myrtles started to hit just to keep a level of banding sanity.

Highlights this season included banding two Clay-colored Sparrows, a rare migrant through the area. Also a flicker intergrade was banded, the fourth intergrade I have seen/banded on the Shore in the last nine years! The 18 Yellow Warblers were extremely high and the two Purple Finches and one Tree Swallow were not expected. And in the same category, a lone Seaside Sparrow was also banded. Being located so close to the Delmarva tip and in shrub/scrub habitat, raptors were extremely common as well. A total of 33 Sharp-shinned Hawks and six Cooper's Hawks were banded (and do not ask how many got out!). And in the highlight heartbreakers category, the near captures of a Green Heron (2 feet away before it popped out), a Merlin (same 2 feet), and a Black-billed Cuckoo (12 feet before it flapped out). How they still sting!

This project was a collaboration between the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge and the Center for Conservation Biology at William and Mary. I thank both of them for their support, supplies, and their continuing strive for habitat improvement. Their dedication for the betterment of wildlife on the Eastern Shore and their continuing research on species of greatest concern should be applauded by all.

Kiptopeke 371-0755
Songbird Banding Station
Cape Charles, Northampton Co., VA
Bob Reilly, Station Master
rjreilly@vcu.edu

In Fall 2009 the Kiptopeke Banding Station was in operation for its 47th consecutive year, dating back to 1963. The season started on 18 Aug and ran

through 22 Nov. The station operated for 93 of those days, capturing a total of 89 species, with a Yellow-throated Warbler on 9 Sep being perhaps the most unusual species caught. A total of 4,119 individuals were banded this season, just 57% of the season average of 7,167 since 1997 when the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory took over operation of the station. This decline was reflected clearly in the station's most common species, the Myrtle Warbler. The total of 1,749 was 51% of the 1997-2008 average of 3,429. The drop is the more notable since the station increased the number of nets from 22 to 24 this season, with the two nets ranking 1st and 4th in capture totals. These nets extended the station west to include a patch of developing scrub along the beach, and perhaps partially compensated for a loss of scrub habitat at the station in recent years. The incorporation of some additional nets lanes in the scrub on the station's eastern boundary is planned for fall 2010.

Finally, it is notable that Jethro Runco, Kiptopeke lead bander from 2001-2008, moved on to other opportunities this past fall, and it has been suggested that he took the birds with him. In any case, his birding and banding skill, unfailing good humor, and magnetic personality are missed by many. Ann Gilmore did an excellent job as the lead bander this season, ably supported during the busier month of October by veteran bander Peter Doherty. Sarah Bastarache served as the station's banding intern. Many able and dedicated volunteers once again lent their time and skills to the operation, and indeed, the station could not operate without them. As always, we extend our deepest thanks to them.

Kiawah Island Banding Station 326-0801
Kiawah Island, Charleston Co., SC
Aaron Given, James Jordan
agiven@kiawahisland.org
Town of Kiawah Island
21 Beachwalker Drive,
Kiawah Island, SC 29455

This was the first year of banding on Kiawah Island, an 8,000-ac barrier island and residential/resort community approximately 20 mi southeast of

Charleston, SC. We operated at two undeveloped sites; one on each end of the island and representing two distinct habitat types. One site (Captain Sam's Spit) is situated in secondary dune scrub/shrub and marsh dominated by wax-myrtle, sea ox-eye, and marsh-elder. The other site (Cougar Island) is located within a small old field surrounded by maritime forest. Each site maintained eight nets and was operated once per week, weather permitting, from September through November. Nets were generally opened 30 min before sunrise and closed approximately five hours later.

Captain Sam's Spit was operated for 13 days resulting in 502 net-hours (nh). In total, 521 new individuals were banded along with 83 recaptures. Average capture rate was 104 b/100nh. Forty-one species were captured; however, three species made up 57% of the season's catch: Gray Catbirds (22%), Common Yellowthroats (19%), and Myrtle Warblers (16%). Three color-banded male Painted Buntings were recovered, presumably part of the Painted Bunting Observer Team (PBOT) program; however, at the time of this report, no banding data for these birds have been submitted.

Cougar Island was operated for eight days resulting in 258 nh. A total of 283 new individuals were banded along with 27 recaptures. Average capture rate was 110 b/100nh. Thirty-nine species were banded, including one individual of the Bicknell's/Gray-cheeked Thrush complex and both races of Palm Warbler. A male Common Yellowthroat banded on 3 Nov was reported dead the following day in Ormond Beach, Florida, a journey of approximately 300 mi by land or 250 mi shortcutting across the Atlantic Ocean.

We express gratitude to the Kiawah Island Natural Habitat Conservancy for supporting our project by providing the funding to purchase banding supplies and equipment. Additionally, we thank Kiawah Development Partners for permission to band on their property. We acknowledge the expertise of Chris Snook for helping us get our banding station up and running and devoting his time to assist us through the fall migration.

North Folly Island

324-0795

Lighthouse Creek

Heritage Preserve Banding Station

Chris Snook, Director of Banding,
Cape Romain Bird Observatory,
P.O. Box 362, McClellanville, SC 29458.

snook_c@bellsouth.net

Helpers: Carole Bennett, Aaron Given, Jesse Fagan, Carl Broadwell.

Trapping effort remained about the same as last year with 20 visits during the recording period. The fall migration this year was disappointing because of the lack in number of birds and species caught.

Weather conditions were different from last year with very few tropical cyclones in the Atlantic Basin that would affect the nearshore migration patterns. Temperatures remained higher than normal toward the end of October and through to early November, which combined with a lack of wind from the western quarter resulted in an apparent poor migration. The pronounced decrease, by approximately one third (Table 1), in this year's totals was most likely attributable to the weather conditions that probably kept most of the migrants in the mountains.

Looking at the species, there was a notable reduction in the number of warblers compared with 2008, by as much as 90% for some individual species; e.g., Black-throated Blue Warbler (-88%), Northern Waterthrush (-80%), Palm Warbler (-96%) (probably because of the wind direction), and Myrtle Warbler (-90%) (probably because of the warm weather). Ground-feeding warbler numbers were up; e.g., Yellow-breasted Chat (+230%), Ovenbird (+50%), and Worm-eating Warbler (four caught, none in the past two years). Vireos also were affected: Red-eyed Vireo was down (-66%) while White-eyed Vireo was up (+33%). Gray Catbird numbers were up from last year (+27%) and remained the number one species at the site.

Despite the drop in numbers, presumably because of the weather conditions, some interesting birds were caught. The capture of an Alder Flycatcher