

2012

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2011 North Folly Island, Lighthouse Preserve Banding Station

Chris Snook

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**Kiawah Island
Banding Station**

326-0801

Kiawah Island, Charleston County, SC

Aaron Given, James Jordan, William Oakley

agiven@kiawahisland.org

Town of Kiawah Island

21 Beachwalker Drive

Kiawah Island, SC 29455

This was the third fall banding season on Kiawah Island, which is an 8,000-ac barrier island and residential/resort community located approximately 20 mi southeast of Charleston, SC. The banding site is situated in secondary dune scrub/shrub and high marsh with wax-myrtle, sea ox-eye, and marsh-elder being the dominant plant species. We operated 12 nets 3-5 days per week, weather permitting, from mid-August through November. Nets were generally opened 30 minutes before sunrise and closed approximately five hours later.

We operated for 56 days resulting in 2,409.8 net-hours (nh); a large increase from the 27 days of operation and 1,000.6 nh logged last fall. A total of 2,263 new individuals were banded and 289 birds were recaptured. The capture rate for new birds was 93.9 b/100nh, with an additional 12.2 b/100nh as recaptures. Sixty-six species were banded; however, three species made up 60% of the season's catch: Common Yellowthroats (27%), Myrtle Warblers (20%), and Gray Catbirds (13%). We banded ten species never before captured at the station: Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Bell's Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-winged Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Pine Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager. Undoubtedly, the best bird of the fall was a Bell's Vireo banded on 17 Sep. This represents the first banding record for that species in South Carolina!

We had 289 recaptures (231 repeats, 55 returns, three foreign recaptures) during the 2011 fall season. Of the 55 returns, 41 were from migrant species (27 Myrtle Warblers, 3 Swamp Sparrows, 4 Painted Buntings, 2 Gray Catbirds, 2 House Wrens, 1 White-eyed Vireo, 1 Brown Thrasher, and 1 Song Sparrow).

Nine of the migrant returns were from the 2009 fall season (our first banding season). Additionally, 11 returns were from the 2009-2010 winter season, 1 from the 2010 spring season, 12 from 2010 fall season, 5 from 2010-2011 winter season, and 4 from 2011 spring season. Several individuals (8 Myrtle Warblers, 1 House Wren, 1 Swamp Sparrow, and 1 Painted Bunting) have been captured every year since they were banded in 2009.

We express gratitude to the Kiawah Conservancy for supporting our project by providing the funding to purchase banding supplies and equipment. Additionally, we thank Kiawah Development Partners for permission to conduct our research on their property. We also thank all of the volunteers who participated during our banding season.

North Folly Island

324-0795

Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve Banding Station
Charleston Co., SC

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, Paula Sisson and Kathy Woolsey

The fall of 2011 was a mixed season with some pleasant surprises.

Because of site interference and logistics, a reduction in effort occurred this year—only six nets were deployed and one day a week scheduled for banding. Five of the nets used this year were the “core” nets that have been used every year since 2007 at this site. Despite the reduction in effort, a very pleasing capture rate of 139 b/100nh (Table 1) was obtained. This increase in capture rate can be accounted for by the weather—most of the mornings that we opened nets were within a day or so of a front passing through. This resulted in three banding sessions with over 70 birds (30% of mornings had 70+ birds) and one other with over 50 birds (40% of mornings had 50+ birds).

The top-ranked four of the ten most numerous migrants remained the same as in 2010; only the order changed between Myrtle Warbler and American Redstart. The lower five were completely different from those in 2010 (Table 2). This fall produced five new species banded, including an interesting species for coastal South Carolina: a hatch-year Mourning Warbler. This brought the total of species banded at this site since 2005 to 89. The proportion of hatch-year birds dropped by 8% to 86% (Table 1). The other new species added were Orchard Oriole, Canada Warbler, and Bay-breasted Warbler. The most common migrant was the Gray Catbird, which retained its top ranking (Table 2).

A preliminary analysis suggested that the overall level of retraps remained approximately consistent with the effort expended.

Many thanks to the Charleston County Parks & Recreation Commission for permission to band on the site. As usual, I express my appreciation of the volunteers who helped keep the site going.

Jekyll Island Banding Station **310-0812**
Glynn Co., GA
Evan Pitman
westernpalm@gmail.com

My first year as Master Bander at the Jekyll Island Banding Station was 2011 and it was a good beginning. We caught more birds than we did last year and managed to catch a few cold fronts which boosted the total number of birds banded. On 6 and 7 Oct there was a small cold front bringing in the birds; however, on 10 Oct there was a thunderstorm which caused us to lose a day of banding. On our final days of banding we caught another weather system starting on 14 Oct, and on 15 Oct, our biggest day, we banded nearly a quarter of our total for the season. The last day, 16 Oct, could have been another 200 bird day; however, we were out of time and needed to dismantle the station and head home.

We did have two new records for the state of Georgia: a Prothonotary Warbler (PROW) on 12 Oct was a new late date in the state and a second PROW on 14

Oct was a newer later date for the state. Other interesting news is that we banded a Red-eyed Vireo on 6 Oct and it was found dead on 21 Oct in Wilmington, NC, which is nearly 300 miles in the wrong direction! More research is needed for weather conditions during that entire time period; however, it was a hatch-year bird and could have been navigationally deficient.

Sadly, the former Master Bander, Chris Pitman, my father, has Parkinson's and needed to retire. He is doing ok, but is no longer able to safely handle birds on a daily basis. He will continue to assist me with the station.

Tomoka Basin Banding Station **292-0810**
Ormond Beach, Volusia Co., FL
Meret S. Wilson
MILEYBUG@aol.com

Of the 55 Black-throated Blue Warblers banded, 12 were of the Appalachian race, more than the total of all other years combined. Banding in a slightly different area of the park could have accounted for this number, assuming they normally come through this area. My theory is that just before the birds began their migration, Hurricane Irene hit the northeast and may have pushed their migration pattern slightly off from previous years. This is definitely a new question that will be pursued in future years.

Looking at the top ten species caught this fall, it is clear there has been a huge change in what is coming through the park. Most the species were timed to arrival dates of previous years. It is the lower numbers of so many species that is puzzling. This was a higher-than-normal species count from other years, including the two new species caught. On the whole, migration seemed small as viewed by birders in the field, yet I had a higher number of new birds banded.

Two new sites were used this fall due to the policy changes for state parks. One of my new sites was the same habitat as a section (called south area) used last year: a mix of pine and hardwoods with one side exposed to marsh. The other area used was a much older growth of hardwoods with less mid-level