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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2012 Kiawah Island Banding Station

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normal for most of the fall. Hurricane Sandy kept us closed for three days due to wind. Most cold fronts that came through the area had a decidedly west-southwest bend to them by the time they arrived in Maryland. Despite this, we had a phenomenal finch flight. Purple Finches and Pine Siskins not only set new record fall banding totals, but also yearly banding totals for Foreman's Branch.

Banding highlights include the following record-breaking fall totals: Pine Siskin 572 (170 banded on 1 Nov), Purple Finch 234, Semipalmated Sandpiper 8, Northern Saw-whet Owl 275, Northern Rough-winged Swallow 114, Philadelphia Vireo 6, Magnolia Warbler 301, Winter Wren 53, and Golden-crowned Kinglet 294. Other notable highlights included two Red-tailed Hawks, a Clay-colored Sparrow on 7 Oct, a Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow on 21 Nov, and after an absence of two years, a Vesper Sparrow on 4 Nov. We had one large surprise in the nets this fall. A Turkey Vulture was captured on 11 Sep. It was released without banding. It did not create any large holes in the net but did leave behind its lunch. It made the net smell very bad for several weeks afterwards until we had a good soaking rain.

In addition to the banders already listed, the following people volunteered many hours helping at the station: Harry Sears, Henry Davis, Hanson Robbins, Jeanine Fleegle, Bernie Lohr, and Anne and Brennan O'Connor.

Kiawah Island Banding Station 326-0801

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This was the fourth fall banding season on Kiawah Island. Kiawah Island is an 8,000 acre barrier island and residential/resort community located approximately 20 miles southeast of Charleston, SC. The banding site is situated at the extreme western end of the island in secondary dune scrub/

shrub and high marsh with wax-myrtle, sea ox-eye, and marsh-elder being the dominant plant species. We operated 17 nets daily, weather permitting, from 15 Aug through 30 Nov. Nets were generally opened 30 minutes before sunrise and closed approximately 5 to 6 hours later.

We operated for 98 days resulting in 7,220.6 net-hours (nh); a large increase from the 56 days of operation and 2,409.8 nh logged last fall. A total of 4,719 new individuals were banded and 879 birds were recaptured. The capture rate for new birds was 65.4 b/100nh, with an additional 12.2 birds/100nh as recaptures. Eighty-seven species were banded and two additional species were captured as recaptures. Three species made up 64% of the season's catch: Common Yellowthroats (28%), Yellow-rumped Warblers (23%), and Gray Catbirds (13%). We banded 19 species never before captured at the station: Virginia Rail, Chuck-will's-widow, Philadelphia Vireo, Tree Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Nashville Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Canada Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco. Without a doubt, the large number of new species banded was an artifact of the increased effort of banding daily. Probably the best bird of the fall was a Bell's Vireo banded on 9 Sep. This is the station's second Bell's Vireo in as many fall seasons! Last year's was the first Bell's Vireo ever banded in South Carolina.

We had 879 recaptures (766 repeats, 105 returns, 8 foreign recaptures) during the 2012 fall season. Of the 105 returns, 74 were from migrant species (56 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 7 Painted Buntings, 5 Gray Catbirds, 2 House Wrens, 1 White-eyed Vireo, 1 Orange-crowned Warbler, 1 Swamp Sparrow, and 1 Song Sparrow). Six of the 7 foreign recaptures were Painted Buntings that were banded locally but not at the KIBS. The other however, was a true long-distance recovery. It was a Myrtle Warbler that was banded at Braddock Bay Obs. on 3 Oct 2012 and recaptured at KIBS on 5 Nov 2012.

New in 2012 was the creation of the Kiawah Island Banding Station Blog. The blog was setup to highlight our banding activities during fall migration. The blog was updated daily with the banding totals for each day, photos, interesting anecdotes, and occasionally information on ageing and sexing certain species. The blog can be viewed at <http://www.kiawahislandbanding.blogspot.com>. Please follow along with us in 2013!

We would like to express gratitude to the Kiawah Conservancy for supporting our project by providing the funding to purchase banding supplies and to allow the hiring of three bird banding technicians. This allowed us to expand our effort to band daily. DeeAnne Meliopoulos, Meghan Oberkircher, and Michael Novak were a great addition to the team, and their hard work (for very little pay) was greatly appreciated! Additionally, we thank Kiawah Development Partners for permission to conduct our research on their property. We would also like to thank all of the volunteers who participated during our banding season.

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Weather effects were most pronounced this year. Only two days of the banding schedule were missed this year because of poor weather, one of which was the passage of Hurricane Sandy close offshore. The biggest effect was the timing of the fronts throughout the fall. The majority of fronts moved through the area 1-2 days after a banding session. It was an unusually warm fall with temperatures remaining warm until mid-January. The recent weather patterns and tree pest effects are beginning to be seen on the site. Red Bay Blight is beginning to be noticeable, with over 50 trees affected. An
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increasing number of Wax Myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) trees are succumbing to wind (possibly due to low rainfall).

The fall was mostly characterized by consistently low-to-moderate numbers of birds with an unusual shift in the highest catch day from early October to early November (Table 1), resulting from a front arriving the day before the banding session. However, the day of greatest species diversity continued to be in early October. The number of birds banded this fall decreased by approximately one-third from 2011, due primarily to these effects despite a similar effort. There was a similar decrease in the number of species caught (Table 1). This can be seen by the presence of the resident Northern Cardinal and the winter visitor Swamp Sparrow in the top ten species list and the loss of Red-eyed Vireo from the rankings (Table 2). The top four most numerous migrant species in Table 2 are showing a decreasing trend in the number of hatch-year birds caught.

A Common Yellowthroat was trapped on 24 Nov and a Black-throated Blue Warbler on 3 Nov. Both records are the latest for these species since 2005 and are probably due to the unusually warm fall.

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The year 2012 was a successful one at the Jekyll Island Banding Station. We were open for one week longer than last year, for a total of three weeks, from 30 Sep 2012 to 21 Oct 2012. During that time, we banded 1,328 birds and had 39 recaptures. This is an increase of about 300 birds from 2011; however, we would have expected a greater increase with an entire extra week of banding. We did have one very slow day on 2 Oct 2012 as there were 8-12 mph southeastern winds which affected our capture rate and we banded only four birds on that day. On our busiest day this year, 9 Oct 2012, we banded 132 birds of 22 species. We kept the nets open from 7:10AM until 7:00PM with only a two-hour break