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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2012 Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park

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disappointed. We did catch some life birds for several of the students and everyone got to release at least one bird.

Site fidelity once again is documented in the recapturing of a female Black-and-white Warbler on 8 Nov 2012 that had been banded as a hatch-year bird on 5 Nov 2011. She was recaptured two more times on 8 Nov 2012 and 20 Nov 2012. She was caught in the same net on all three occasions. Three Yellow-rumped Warblers, that were banded originally in November of 2011 as hatch-year birds, returned this fall in November. This is the largest number of any species to be recaptured in one season. The odd thing this fall was there were no juniper berries to be had anywhere in the entire park. The yellow-rumps solely relied on insects and wax myrtle berries and consequently departed earlier from Helicopter Island than in previous years and their numbers were down as well. Although the number of birds being banded is declining, I look forward to what next fall will present in total numbers and numbers of species. It is a puzzle we are in the middle of and it is exciting to be part of helping to solve it. We have a healthy park that may one day be the oasis in the desert.

Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park 254-0800
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Cape Florida is in its eleventh year as a fall migration banding station. The park is on the southern tip of a mostly developed barrier island just off the coast of Miami. We have 22 nets set in a restored tropical hardwood hammock that is part of a multi-million dollar effort to return native vegetation to the park following Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

We started banding on 15 Aug 2012 and the station was open on all but seven days, until we closed on 9 Nov. The total number of nets was 22, same as in 2011, with one lane in a new habitat. This net location is in willow scrub along the edge of a pond and it increased our captures of certain species such

as Prairie and Palm warblers, *Empidonax* flycatchers and Eastern Phoebes. Nets were opened from first light until early afternoon on most days.

The 2012 fall season was influenced by the passage of two tropical systems: Isaac in late August and Sandy in late October. There was a substantial fallout of birds (American Redstarts, Northern Parulas and Northern Waterthrushes were prevalent) while the station was closed due to the inclement weather from the August storm. Sandy gave us some rain and several days of strong northwest winds that made mist netting difficult or impossible, but trans-continental migration had mostly finished by then and short-distance wintering species moved in. The rest of the season was notable for the lack of west or northwest winds, and subsequently a lack of high-volume 'fallout' days. The busiest day was 7 Oct, when 100 birds were banded. However, we also had very few extremely slow days, as the migrants seemed to work their way down the Florida peninsula in a steady stream all season long with few weather blocks. The total birds/100 net hours, 22, was lower than the 10-year average of 33 b/100nh, and the total captured in 2012, 1,767 individuals of 57 species, is below the 2006 to 2012 average of 1,913 birds per season.

One species was banded for the first time at Cape Florida during the 2012 season: Yellow-green Vireo, a Central American species that is a rare visitor to southern Florida. We banded the site's second Black-billed Cuckoo; however, we banded no Yellow-billed Cuckoos in 2012, although they were seen onsite. An adult male Connecticut Warbler was an unusual banding for fall. A Chuck-will's-widow was captured with a Northern Waterthrush halfway down its throat.

Most species were caught in average numbers during the 2012 season. Black-and-white Warbler numbers were lower than average (66 in 2012; 106 avg) while Northern Waterthrush (76 in 2012; 59 avg) and Worm-eating Warbler (121 in 2012; 96 avg) numbers were above average. The 14 Chuck-will's-widows banded in 2012 were the second

highest total since the 31 banded in 2008. Red-eyed Vireos regained their position in the top ten species banded, after declining at our site for several years. Swainson's Warblers shattered their previous high of 23 (2011), with 28 banded during fall 2012. Some of the other species banded in record or near-record numbers in 2012 can be attributed to the new net in the willow edge of a pond, as compared to the other nets that are within a small hardwood forest. Flycatchers were well-represented in this location; most dramatically the 20 Eastern Phoebes captured in 2012 is ten times the previous highs of two (2002, 2008). We banded 18 Traill's Flycatchers and were able to key out one Willow and two Alder flycatchers using Pyle (1997). The other individuals were either intermediates or the extra measurements were not taken.

We captured 18 returning birds of seven species, including a Western Palm Warbler banded in 2010. The oldest return was of a wintering Ovenbird, banded as a hatching-year bird in 2004. No foreign recoveries were captured this fall.

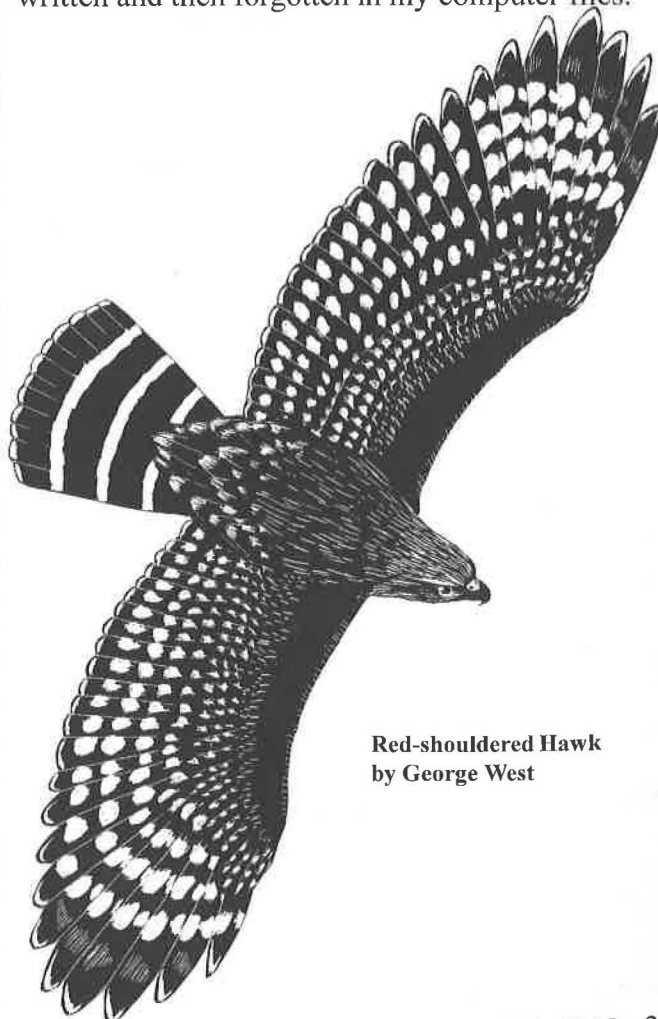
This project would not be possible without the assistance of the dedicated volunteer extractors and banders-in training for the 2012 season: Thanks go to David Schafter, James Currie, Rangel Diaz, Mike Diaz, and Jim King. Special thanks go to David Foster, the park manager, for continuing to support our project.

Lakeshore Estates
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After years of below-average rainfall, the year 2012 was almost normal in this respect and, perhaps not surprisingly, migratory thrushes were back among the top ten species banded. However, my banding total continues to remain at about 50% of what I reported a decade or so ago. The main reason is my retreat to our backyard and the adjacent edge of the patch of mixed woods to the south of which, in the past, I had covered an about 300-m long and 50-m wide strip, including a small temporary bog with

shrubs and deciduous trees. For the most part I blame advancing age that made it difficult to visit the nets on a sufficiently regular schedule, and this became a deciding issue when I discovered roaming cats and dogs in the woods and Red-shouldered Hawks surveying the bog. Unfortunately, prowling neighborhood cats increasingly are a problem near our home as well.

Considering these circumstances, I have decided to make this my last contribution to the Flyway Review of the *North American Bird Bander* that I have enjoyed reading and contributing to for over two decades. Let me use this occasion to express my gratitude for the efforts of the various coordinators I had the pleasure of working with, who kept this feature of the journal alive. Chan Robbins deserves special thanks for being my editor during the recent past and for reminding me this year that I had not submitted my report which, it turned out, I had written and then forgotten in my computer files.



Red-shouldered Hawk
by George West