

2015

## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain- Fall 2014- Bill Baggs Cape Florida

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Painted Buntings. At the time of this report, I was still waiting to hear back from the BBL on the origin of the two birds.

I would like to express gratitude to the Kiawah Conservancy and the Town of Kiawah Island for supporting our project by providing the funding to purchase banding supplies and to allow the hiring of four bird banding technicians. Mattie VandenBoom, William Oakley, Libby Natola, and Matt Zak were a great addition to the team and their hard work was greatly appreciated! Additionally, we thank Kiawah Development Partners for permission to conduct research on their property. I would also like to thank all of the volunteers that participated during our banding season.

Please check out the KIBS blog in 2015. It is updated daily with the banding totals for each day, photos, interesting anecdotes, and occasionally information of ageing and sexing certain species.

The blog can be viewed at:

[www.kiawahislandbanding.blogspot.com](http://www.kiawahislandbanding.blogspot.com)

### **Jekyll Island Banding Station 310-0812**

Glynn Co., GA

**Evan Pitman**

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This season a total of 1,377 birds were banded, which is just 31 fewer than in 2013, despite an additional 640 net hours of operation this year. While the previous few years have shown an increase in total number of birds banded, this year's decrease could be due in part to weather patterns and other variables affecting individual species migration during the weeks when the station was open.

Our busiest day in 2014 was 4 Oct, on which we banded 185 birds, which is over 100 fewer birds than on our busiest day in 2013, when we banded 295. In fact, there were two days in 2013 with more than 200 birds, and this year we did not reach that total in a single day. However, 2014 resulted in five days with more than 100 birds banded each of those days, making for less extreme variation between daily totals than in 2013. Persistent southeastern winds present this season, especially during the last week the station was open, and the absence of any major storm systems during this time could be part of the reason for less extreme migrant peaks in 2014.

Migration seemed to be steady through the dates we banded for Common Yellowthroats, Gray Catbirds, Painted Buntings, and the majority of other species banded. The Western Palm Warblers had one large push on 4 Oct accounting for nearly 90% of birds banded that day. However, the rest of the WPWAs did not appear in

great numbers until 16 Oct, when 51 were banded, and 68 were banded on the station's last day for the season, 19 Oct. Given the increase in Western Palm capture rate toward the end of the season, it is possible that they may have been migrating through later than in some other years.

### **Tomoka Basin Banding Station**

**292-0810**

Ormond Beach, Volusia Co., FL

**Meret S. Wilson**

[MILEYBUG@aol.com](mailto:MILEYBUG@aol.com)

This was the second fall since a control burn was conducted in Aug 2013 in the south area of Tomoka State Park (GPS: 29° 20'26.4"N 81° 05'07.8" W). The undergrowth of saw palmetto has grown back considerably. One of the results was fewer flycatchers than last fall. The Gray Catbirds returned to the lower area of the net lanes, being caught in nets 5-10 as compared to last year catch in nets 1-4 where the burn did not reach. The top five catches for the fall were very different from last year. White-eyed Vireos have never been in the top ten birds, let alone the top five. Black-throated Blue Warblers are consistently falling in numbers overall each season. At least 75% of the Black-throated Blues were of the Appalachian race. Myrtle Warblers have not been on the top five for several years until this fall. This was a surprise because there are almost no wax myrtle or juniper berries available on the south side.

Of the 36 species I captured this fall, a Cooper's Hawk and a Yellow-breasted Chat were both first-time species, bringing the total number of species banded in TSP to 87. Happily, one of the park rangers just happened to be present when the hawk hit the net. He held the hawk while I banded and measured it. The chat is the first ever recorded in the park. A Northern Harrier narrowly missed getting caught because it managed to climb out just as we rounded the corner to the net. To be on the safe side I closed that net the rest of the week.

The weather was very cooperative this fall with little wind, no rain days, and only four days that no birds were caught. Many days had only two or three catches. It was a full month before a single recapture occurred.

As always, I am grateful for the support of the rangers of Tomoka State Park and the help of my volunteers, Bill Horton and Heike and Bert Charest.

### **Bill Baggs Cape Florida**

**254-0800**

**State Park**

Key Biscayne, Miami-Dade Co., FL

**Michelle Davis, Robin Diaz, Elizabeth Golden**

**Martina Hillbrand, David Schaffter**

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Cape Florida is in its thirteenth 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 23 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 2014 and the station was open on all but two days until we closed on 7 Nov. Nets were opened from first light until early afternoon on most days.

The 2014 fall season continued with the recent trend of little to no tropical weather activity in south Florida. Fronts and rainy nights were also few and far between, although several decent waves of birds passed through in mid-to-late September and some rain along a boundary put down more birds in late October. Radar and field observations suggest that good numbers of birds are moving through the area, and they either continue on overhead due to favorable conditions or they land onsite but are not captured. The restored forest around the banding area is maturing; the oldest trees are nearing 20 years of age and are growing taller while the understory is thinning out. Both of these trends are probably contributing to fewer captures. The busiest day was 25 Oct with 102 new captures, but several other days were close to that peak (99 captures on 21 Sep; 90 new captures on 5 Oct). The overall respectable number of 2029 birds captured during the 2014 season was a result of the record 10,540 net hours, as the capture rate of 21 birds/100nh was the second lowest in 12 years.

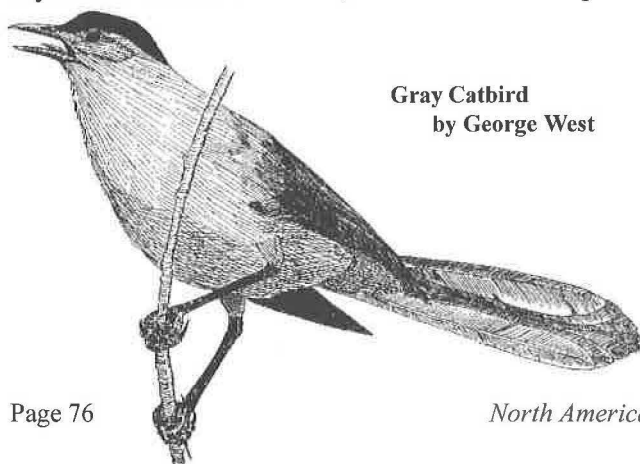
We had several interesting captures in 2014 despite the low total of 54 species banded. Three species were banded for the first time at Cape Florida during the 2014 season. Two were common local species that are not easily captured by our type of mistnetting operation; a Gray Kingbird on 4 Sep and a Barn Swallow on 2 Oct. Both birds stumbled into a net placed in a more open location in scrubby habitat adjacent to the hardwood hammock. The third species was an Ash-throated Flycatcher banded on 30 Oct, a southwestern US species

that winters occasionally in south Florida. Other unusual captures included a Wilson's Warbler banded on 17 Oct and a Lincoln's Sparrow banded on 20 Oct. Individuals of both these species have only been captured two other times in 13 years of banding.

Gray Catbirds continued to be captured more than average (229 in 2014), but were not the most abundant species banded this season as they were in 2013. Catbird bandings have been on the increase in the last several years, and have been well above the average of 147.7 since 2011. Black-throated Blue Warblers, on the other hand, have been below average the last three years with no big days where they swarmed the site. The 268 Black-throated Blue Warblers banded in 2014 are well below the record years such as the 580 banded in 2008. Ovenbirds remain the most abundant species banded at the CFBS with 294 captures in 2014. A site record was broken for Worm-eating Warbler (142; 138 in 2013) and Swainson's Warbler nearly tied (32) with the 2013 record high of 33. One individual Swainson's Warbler may be spending the winter at Cape Florida; it was originally banded on 26 Aug and was recaptured on 22 October with no significant change in weight. Another more unusual species with a strong showing in 2014 was Wood Thrush; the five banded this year compares to an average of 1.7 captures a year. All of these birds were captured between 23 and 30 Oct. On the other hand, not a single hawk was banded during the 2014 fall season, although several Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks escaped from nets. The lack of significant storms for the past nine years has allowed the canopy to recover while the hammock trees, all hand-planted since 1994, are maturing. This probably makes the site more attractive to some species, less attractive to others, and changes the capture rate of certain other species that are still present.

We captured 25 returning birds of seven species, with Ovenbirds banded in the last four years, making up nearly half of these. The two oldest returns were a resident Northern Cardinal banded in 2006 and a wintering Gray Catbird banded as an adult in spring 2007 that was also recaptured in fall 2013. 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 2014 season: thanks go to David Schaffter, Mike Diaz, Jim King, Miriam Avello, Mario, Nico and Lucas Porcelli, Mike Bush, Jenn Sweatman, Barb and Ted Center, Celeste De Palma, Elizabeth Lago, Jared Swenson, Mark Lopez, and Doug Weidemann. Special thanks go to David Foster, the Park manager, for continuing to support our project.



Gray Catbird  
by George West