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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV (Piedmont)- Fall 2015- Kiawah Island

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originate from the north or northwest but from a more northerly direction with numerous weather systems also coming out of the southwest. Fronts that did originate from a northerly direction tended to stall off the east coast and throw back easterly winds right after the passage of the front. East winds bring very few migrants to this station. El Nino was responsible for these weather patterns. Banding highlights were very few this year. While we heard a few hundred Pine Siskins fly over the station, we caught only one for the fall on 26 Oct. Another notable catch for the season was a Summer Tanager banded on 22 Aug and recovered a month later dead in North Carolina, for a first station recovery of that species. One each Philadelphia Vireo was banded on September 20 and 25. Our third Lawrence's Warbler for the station was banded on 14 Aug and single Orange-crowned Warblers on 18 Oct and 11 Nov were notable. Both nuthatches were absent from the nets this fall. Very few species achieved new high fall totals but a number of species like Northern Mockingbird hit new fall lows with only 16 of this species banded.

We would like to thank our Washington College intern, Mike Hudson, for his dedication and hard work this fall at Foreman's Branch. In June, we added a new full-time staff member to Foreman's Branch, Amanda Spears, as both a bander and researcher. She will be analyzing 16 years of banding data from the station and writing a summary of it. In addition to the banders already listed above, the following people volunteered many hours helping at the station: Harry Sears, Greg Cole, Hanson Robbins, Jeannine Fleegle, Jennie Carr, Kailani Clarke, Mike Hudson, Andrew Wade, Rachel Field, Vincent and Carly Fumo, Sammy Ocher, Eli Anders and Anne and Brennan O'Connor.

Kiawah Island Banding Station (KIBS)

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The chief weather event of the season was the historic flood that engulfed South Carolina at the beginning of October.

New this year was the addition of a new banding site on the east end of the island—Little Bear. The two banding sites are located at each end of the island about 13 km. Both sites are situated in coastal scrub/shrub and high

marsh habitats; however, the Little Bear site is in an earlier stage of succession. Collectively, we banded 7,140 birds and had 1,533 recaptures of 93 different species at both sites.

Captian Sam's (west end of Island)

Nets were opened for a total of 98 days (out of a possible 108) from 14 Aug through 30 Nov. We had five more rain days this year compared to last year, including a three-day stretch (3-5 Oct) when we received around 20 in. of rain. In combination with extremely high tides this created catastrophic flooding in the area. We banded 4,770 new birds and had 1,122 recaptures of 83 different species. The most commonly banded species were Common Yellowthroats (1,266), Gray Catbirds (843), and Yellow-rumped Warblers (55). These three species made up 57% of all the birds banded this season. We also had many recaptures of birds banded in previous seasons.

We increased our effort from 11,565.6 to 12,115.6 net-hours despite banding fewer days than last year. This increase was due to the addition of two new nets, bringing us to a total of 25 nets. We banded 316 fewer birds this fall compared to last year and the capture rate decreased 6.6 birds/100 nh from 55.3 last year. This increase can partly be attributed to the large decrease in Yellow-rumped Warblers this fall. For the first time in several years, the capture rate of recaptures also decreased by 2.2 birds/100 nh. The capture rate of recaptures is usually fairly constant varying by only a few tenths each season.

There were 10 days when over 100 birds were banded, with three days exceeding 200 birds. The best day was 6 Oct when we banded 436 birds and had 20 recaptures. This was by far the biggest day we have ever had at KIBS!

We banded two species never before banded at KIBS: Black-billed Cuckoo and Lincoln's Sparrow. No vagrants were banded this year, but some rare and notable species were the Black-billed Cuckoo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Swainson's, Blue-winged, and Bay-breasted warblers, and Lincoln's Sparrows. Notable species absent this year were Eastern Kingbird, Brown Creeper, Wood Thrush, and Chestnut-sided and Canada Warblers.

Little Bear (east end of Island)

Nets were opened for 57 days (out of a possible 72) from 7 Sep to 17 Nov. Fifteen days were cancelled due to rain, wind, and/or flooding. The Little Bear site was shut down 3-12 Oct due to extensive flooding of the Ocean Course which is the only way to access it. This was unfortunate because the days after the rain

stopped, beginning on 6 Oct, Captain Sam's experienced huge volumes of birds moving through. Little Bear missed out on all this activity, but it was surely nice to have all hands on deck at Captain Sam's during that time.

We banded 2,370 new birds and had 410 recaptures of 70 different species. The most commonly banded species were Gray Catbirds (563), Common Yellowthroats (424), and Yellow-rumped Warblers (423). Those three species combined made up 59% of all the birds banded this season.

We logged 3,552.4 nh out at Little Bear this fall. We started with 10 nets, but that number increased to 16 as the season progressed and we learned more about the site.

Little Bear had a very good capture rate at 76.2 birds/100 nh – much higher than at Captain Sam's. There were 11 days when over 75 birds were banded with three over 100. The best day was 13 Oct, when we banded 116 birds and had five recaptures.

We banded three species never before banded at KIBS during this first fall at Little Bear: Green Heron, Saltmarsh Sparrow, and Seaside Sparrow.

No vagrants were banded this year, but some rare and notable species were banded including Green Heron, Eastern Kingbird, Tufted Titmouse, Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided, and Black-throated Green warblers, and Clay-colored, Saltmarsh, Seaside, and Lincoln's sparrows.

I thank all those who made this season such a great success: the banding assistants (Mattie VandenBoom, Chris Snook, Sean McElaney, Casey Weissburg, Michael Gamble, Nancy Raginski, and Ryan Donnelly), the Kiawah Island Conservancy for providing funding for the hiring and housing of seven banding assistants; the Town of Kiawah Island for allowing me to take on an extremely time-consuming project, and the funding for one banding assistant; Kiawah Partners for allowing access to their property; and finally to all the volunteers who donated their time to either come out and help or just to observe.

Jekyl Island Banding Station

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During the 2015 fall migration season, the Jekyl Island Banding Station banded a total of 1,497 birds of 49

species. We welcomed a new sub-bander, Darlene Moore, to our regular volunteer staff. She has quite a bit of experience volunteering at banding stations in several states and we are excited to have her knowledge, energy, and dedication at JIBS. We also had the support of many wonderful visitors, volunteers, and staff throughout the 22-day banding season.

Common Yellowthroats remained the most numerous species, with a total of 693 banded. This is an increase of 54% from last year's total of 371, and this year Yellowthroats made up a significant percentage of our catch every day, with the most in one day being 192 on 6 Oct. This year also saw a higher percentage of adult birds banded, as last season 84% of birds were hatch-year birds and this season only 76% were hatch-year. We banded 196 Western Palm Warblers this year, which is far below the usual capture rate for this species. Palm Warblers remained our second most abundant species, but only by two individuals, narrowly surpassing Gray Catbirds, of which we banded 194. This is highly unusual, and compared to the 2014 season, when a total of 468 were banded, it appears that Palm migration peaked about a week later this year on 12 Oct with 48 Palms; whereas last year the peak was 169 on 4 Oct. The significance and cause of this difference cannot be determined for certain from this data, but weather patterns may have played a role. Theoretically, global climate change will have a greater impact on species that reside closer to the Earth's poles, and could affect the timing of migration. We need to have continued monitoring for this pattern.

While Palm Warblers were represented in much lower numbers this year, other species were in greater abundance than they have been in several years. Yellow-billed Cuckoos are not generally captured or even observed every year, but this season we banded a total of eight, six of which were on 6 Oct. Common Ground-doves are seen and heard regularly, but only one or two are generally banded each year. However, this season we caught six individuals across five days. Other uncommon species banded this year included Baltimore Oriole, Bobolink, Blue Grosbeak, and Blackpoll, Bay-breasted, and Blackburnian warblers. Of course, few inferences can be based on these individual data points, but they are amusing to note.

