

2017

Species Snapshot No 2: Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*)

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recaptures) and 1 new Hermit Thrush that are typically infrequent winter visitors to the feeders.

Interesting recaptures were a Tufted Titmouse captured 4 Feb 2017, originally banded during MAPS banding as AHY U on 23 Jun 2008; a Carolina Chickadee captured 24 Jan, originally banded as unknown age on 4 Oct 2010; a chickadee captured 4 Feb, originally banded as AHY on 5 Jan 2010; and a chickadee captured 14 Feb, originally banded as HY on 21 Sep 2010. In addition, two titmice and a chickadee were recaptured from 2011, and two titmice were recaptured from 2012.

All sessions were open to the public. A total of 388 park visitors observed banding, including 309 participants in the Winter Bird Day that provided a variety of educational experiences for visitors.

Greatly appreciated are our fabulous volunteer and staff crew members who help with set-up, banding, record keeping and visitor education. Thanks to sub-permittees Diana McLusky, Susan Bradfield, Heather Gallagher, Ethel Kawamura and John Kell, and to trainees and aides, Allison Salas, Justin Hiltner, Jo Neumaier, Laura Cook, Kim Bailey, Lauren Hoffman and Rachel Anderson. A special congratulations to John Kell who received a sub-permit under Cyndi Routledge. John volunteers with several research projects throughout middle Tennessee.

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Species Snapshot No. 2: Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*)

This is the second installment in our regular feature presenting a brief synopsis of the banding and encounter records submitted to the Bird Banding Laboratory for a particular species. Each installment will feature a new species; suggestions for species to be covered or data to be presented are welcome. Space limitations of **North American Bird Bander** prohibit any in-depth analysis of the data and these notes are not meant to show any trends in population parameters such as population density or growth rate, geographic distribution, etc. and should not be viewed as a definitive analysis of the status of the species.

Although the banding program began in the 1920s, the currently available digital records for banding data include only those records from 1960 to the present (pre-1960 banding data are available in other formats, however). All encounters, including those of birds banded before 1960, are available in digital format. As no Le Conte's Sparrows banded before 1960 have been encountered, the following summary includes only those birds banded and encountered between 1960 to 7 Apr 2017 (date of data request to Bird Banding Laboratory).

Banded birds:

Numbers and Age and Sex Categories

Since 1960, 3,434 Le Conte's Sparrows have been banded in the United States, Canada, and Mexico (Table 1). Sex was recorded for only 13% (n = 462)

of the banded sparrows; of these, 75% (n = 350) were males and 25% were females (n = 112). All but two males and one female were aged as AHY, SY, or ASY when banded; the remaining three were banded as HY or U. Sixty percent (n = 1,800) of those sparrows for which sex was unknown were aged as AHY (n = 1,531), SY (n = 142), or ASY (n = 127) when banded. The remainder were aged as HY (n = 606), U (n = 548) or L (n = 18).

Geographic distribution

Since 1960, Le Conte's Sparrows have been banded in 29 states (n = 3,072), 8 Canadian provinces (n = 361), and Mexico (n = 1) (Figure 1). More than 80% of the Le Conte's Sparrows banded in the United States were banded in just 4 states: Texas (n = 1,625), Michigan (n = 345), Louisiana (n = 295), and Oklahoma (n = 264). Almost 75% of all sparrows banded in Canada were banded in two provinces: Alberta (n = 151) and Ontario (n = 111).

Seasonal distribution

Two-thirds (n = 2,013) of the Le Conte's Sparrows banded in the United States were banded between Nov and Feb (approximate overwintering season) compared to 16% (n = 505) banded between May and Aug (approximate breeding season), 11% (n = 324) banded between Mar and Apr (approximate spring migration) and 7% (n = 230) banded between Sep and Oct (approximate fall migration). Nearly all (486 of 505) of the sparrows

banded in the United States during the approximate breeding season were banded in Michigan (n = 307), Minnesota (n = 105), and North Dakota (n = 74). On the other hand, nearly all (1,947 of 2,013) of those banded during the approximate wintering season were banded in Texas (n = 1,452), Oklahoma (n = 264) and Louisiana (n = 231). In contrast to the seasonal distribution of sparrows banded in the United States, just 1 of the 361 sparrows banded in Canada was banded between Nov and Feb compared to 80% (n = 289) banded between May and Aug, 1% (n = 3) banded between Mar and Apr, and 19% (n = 68) banded between Sep and Oct.

Encounters

Since 1960, there have been 15 encounters representing 13 unique Le Conte's Sparrows recorded through 7 Apr 2017 (Table 1). Sex was identified for only one of

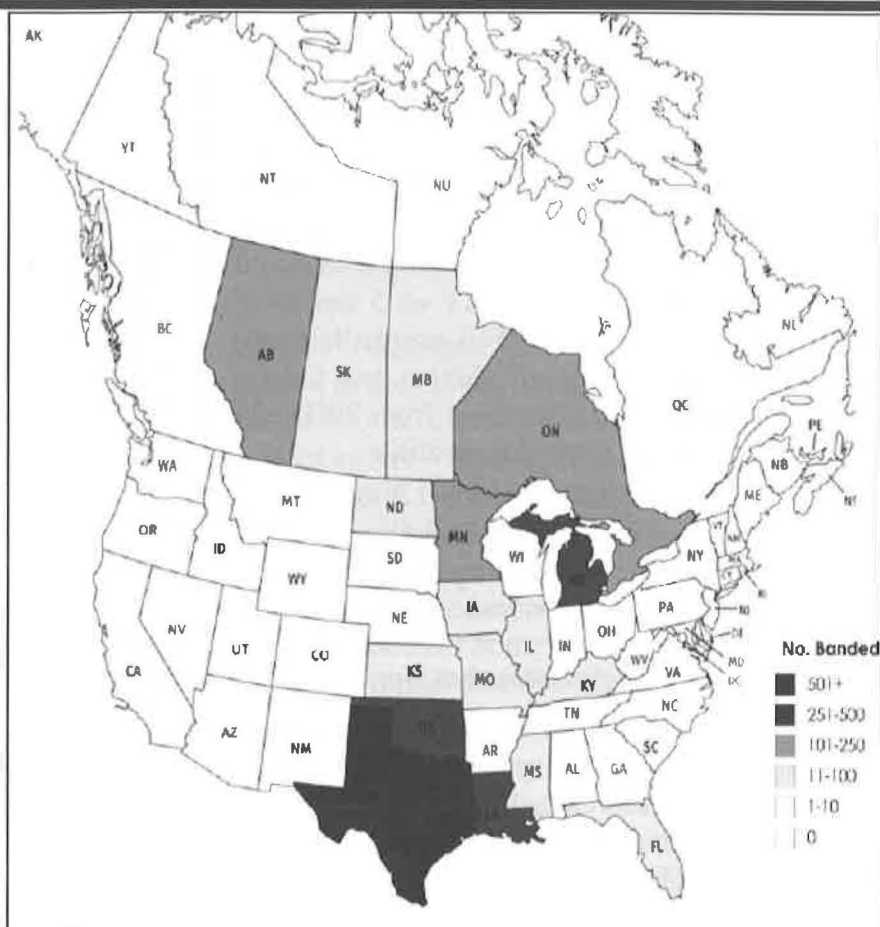


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of banding locations of Le Conte's Sparrows in the United states (n=3,072) and Canada (n=361) between 1960 and 7 apr 2017. Not Shown: Mexico (n=1).

Table 1. Number of Le Conte's Sparrows banded and encountered in the United States, Canada, and Mexico between 1960 and 7 Apr 2017 by age at banding and sex (either sex at banding or sex updated upon encounter).

Age code	Banded birds				Encountered birds			
	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total
AHY	164	74	1,531	1769	1	0	10	11
HY	1	1	606	608	0	0	1	1
L	0	0	18	18	0	0	0	0
SY	119	21	142	282	0	0	0	0
ASY	65	16	127	208	0	0	1	1
Unknown	1	0	548	549	0	0	0	0
Total	350	112	2,972	3,434	1	0	12	13

these individuals, an AHY-banded near Tofield, AB, in Jun 1983 and encountered at the same location 2 months later. The longest time between banding and encounter is 4y0m for a bird banded as HY-U near Barbeau, MI, in Aug 2003 and encountered at a location 21 miles WSW near Dryburg, MI, in Jul 2007. This is also the longevity record for this species (4y0m). The remaining 11 encountered sparrows were all banded as AHY-U or ASY-U on San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge in TX during Dec or Jan of 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015. Ten of these 11 were encountered at their banding location within 2m of banding. The eleventh was also encountered within 2M after banding at another location on the

same refuge, 22 miles south of its banding location. Thus, of the 13 encountered Le Conte's Sparrows, only 1 was encountered more than 2 months after banding and only 2 were encountered at locations other than where they were banded, both of which were within 25 miles of their banding location.

Acknowledgements

I thank the nearly 200 permit holders who have banded Le Conte's Sparrows over the decades, all the individuals who reported encounters, and staff at the Bird Banding Laboratory for supplying the data.

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