

KESTREL HAVEN AVIAN MIGRATION OBSERVATORY

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FALL 2004 MIGRATION BANDING REPORT

We had a fantastic season despite very uncooperative November weather, which only allowed a few hours netting. We broke 5,000 for the second consecutive year with 5,002 new birds banded of 93 species in 113 days of operation. We also had 1,470 repeats, 128 returns and 236 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The hummingbirds were not banded. The total birds netted was 6,836 making our measure of efficiency 124 birds/100 net-hours for newly banded birds and 169 birds/100 NH overall. Hatching year birds were again right on the 19-year norm of 87%. It's hard to believe that we have been at this for 19 consecutive falls at this site. That study site longevity of constant effort banding continues to lead to better data, particularly in support of species longevity, routing and timing of migration and weather effects on migration.

We added Northern Shrike to bring our station total to 130 species plus five forms. The shrike was a youngster who had been terrorizing the net lanes for a few days; after banding, he departed the area.

We had 40 days with more than 50 birds banded of which 8 were over 100 banded. Twelve species were banded in numbers exceeding 100 including a notable resurgence of House Finch. Given the large number of young birds, they seem to be making a comeback from the population depressing mycoplasma epidemic. This was only our second fall with very few White-crowned Sparrows; their normal month-long stopover was reduced to but a few days although we did band our 9th Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow. Weather was very much in our favor until the very end of October and all of November when winds made netting unsafe. This is largely the difference between this year and last as we had been tracking slightly ahead of last year's numbers.

While most species were captured within normal parameters, a few are noteworthy of mention. Traill's Flycatchers were fifty percent above norm while Black-capped Chickadees were banded in good numbers. The chickadee norm was skewed by the 652 birds banded during the 1999 irruption making this year's 105 appear less significant. Hermit Thrush at 40 were at about twice their norm while American Robins were present in numbers only about one-third of their norm. Cedar Waxwing continued a very strong presence equal to last year, although most banded birds were adults. Red-eyed Vireos were twice their norm and we banded our third ever Yellow-throated Vireo. Yellow Warblers doubled their norm. After years of not seeing Louisiana Waterthrush we banded three. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were again well over their norm with 111 banded. Field nesting sparrows were again very low as a result of habitat loss. Goldfinch continued in spectacular numbers!

Returns were exciting! An American Goldfinch exceeded the reported species longevity record of slightly over 9 years of age. Our eldest return was a Gray Catbird at 11 years followed closely by a Hairy Woodpecker at over 10 years of age. Of the 128 returns, 46 were in excess of 4 years of age. These numbers are truly remarkable when one considers the hazards of so many round-trip migrations. Site fidelity almost goes without saying although a slight prevailing wind can cause us to miss a bird on any given day. The 46 shred out as follows:

- Two Hairy Woodpeckers at 10+ and 7
- One Eastern Kingbird at 8
- Six Black-capped Chickadees at 4(2), 4+, 5+(2) and 6

- Two Tufted Titmouse at 5 and 6
- An American Robin at 6
- Eight Gray Catbirds at 4(3), 4+, 6, 6+, 7 and 11
- Four Yellow Warblers at 4+(2), 5, and 5+
- A Chestnut-sided Warbler at 5+
- Two Common Yellowthroats at 6+
- An Indigo Bunting at 4
- Three Song Sparrows at 4, 5, and 5+
- A Baltimore Oriole at 5 and,
- Thirteen American Goldfinch at 4, 4+, 5(2), 5+(3), 6, 7(2), 8+(2) and 9+.

We also had a report of an American Goldfinch that was sighted 90 miles Southeast in Dalton, PA. According to the BBL coding this band was read without capture. Thanks to the great eyes, and patience, of Ellie Hyde!

Overall health was quite good. Thankfully, we did not repeat the high incidence of avian pox and deformities seen last year. Of two pox cases, one was a HY-M Common Yellowthroat that presented with pox and pox lesions on the right hallux, proximal and distal. In the second case, a 5Y-M Song Sparrow returned healthy on 1 September only to later present on 27 September with enough pox on the right foot to give a clubfoot impression. This bird had returned many times over the years and had always been healthy. We had two cases of feather mites, one on a Veery and the second on a jay. The Blue jay was completely bald with the resulting sunburned scalp. That left his ear quite visible and allowed us to take detailed close-up photos to share with our supporters. We additionally posted those shots in our newsletter and on our website for all to see and use for education.

We had only two incidents of bill deformity. A Veery had its upper mandible so crossed that it left a 5mm gap. The second case was less extreme as a Blue-headed Vireo presented with a slightly elongated upper mandible. Unlike last year we had no cardinals or grosbeaks with excessive keratin layers on the bill. Of the huge number of goldfinch netted only two showed problems, both with tumors on otherwise healthy birds. One had a soft tumor on its right tarsus but was able to navigate quite well. The other had a sub-cutaneous tumor in the belly area. This tumor was quite sinister in appearance but the bird was seemingly unaffected.

Hippoboscid flies were present in normal numbers. That was unusual considering the very wet year and we had expected more. House Finches were the most attractive to these parasites with Song Sparrows a close second. Two Sharp-shinned Hawks carried three flies each and every one was quite large compared to the smaller versions we normally see on songbirds. A matter of proportion as those on Black-throated Green Warblers and Yellow Warblers were quite small. We saw no conjunctivitis until a couple of wintering House Finch arrived in late-season.

Our fourth year of identifying and marking dragonflies incidentally netted, resulted in identification of 45 individuals of 12 species. The station total of odonates is now at 65 species. Incidental to banding, we netted *Anax junius*, *Aeshna umbrosa* and *tuberculifera*, *Libellula lydia*, *pulchella* and *luctuosa*, *Sympetrum internum* and *vicinum*. New and exciting were *Celithemis elisa*, *Perithemis tenera* and two unusual Somatachloras – *tenebrosa* and *walshii*.

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Fall 2004 Station Operating Statistics:

Start: **3 July**

Stop: **26 November**

Days of Operation: **113**

Nets Used: **1 to 24**

Net Hours 2003: **4,921**

Net Hours 2004: **4,046**

Best Day: **137 on 27 September**

Reason: **52% American Goldfinch**

Best Diversity: **25 species on 28 August**

Banded 2003: **5,760**

Banded 2004: **5,002**

Species 2003: **107**

Species 2004: **93**

Birds/100NH 2003: **117**

Birds/100NH 2004: **124**

%HY 2003: **87**

%HY 2004: **87**

Most Frequently Banded Species:

Rank	Species	Number	%HY	Decoded
1.	AMGO (1)	1491	88	American Goldfinch
2.	SOSP (2)	557	96	Song Sparrow
3.	COYE (3)	283	89	Common Yellowthroat
4.	HOFI (11)	250	91	House Finch
5.	YWAR (8)	216	94	Yellow Warbler
6.	CEDW (7)	186	37	Cedar Waxwing
7.	GRCA (5)	155	86	Gray Catbird
8.	WTSP (4)	154	94	White-throated Sparrow
9.	SCJU (6)	137	72	Slate-colored Junco
10,	RBGR (13)	111	71	Rose-breasted Grosbeak

(#) = Ranking last fall

Percent of total banded: **70.77%**

Notable additions:

11.	RCKI (10)	110	100	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
12.	BCCH	105	94	Black-capped Chickadee