

AKESTREL HAVEN AVIAN MIGRATION OBSERVATORY

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FALL 2005 MIGRATION BANDING REPORT –our 20th fall season at KHAMO!

We had a fantastic season and banded over 5,000 birds for the third consecutive year! We banded 5102 new birds of 91 species in 100 days of operation. We also had 1,303 repeats, 121 returns and 170 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The hummingbirds were not banded. The total birds netted was 6,696 making our measure of efficiency 153 birds/100 net-hours for newly banded birds and 201 birds/100 NH overall. Hatching year birds were slightly higher than the 20-year norm at 88%. Thanks to a huge influx of Myrtle Warblers and several sparrow species, we overcame the effects some really nasty weather that obviated November banding and reduced net hours in other prime months. The station list remains at 130 species plus five forms banded. We had two foreign Song Sparrows and a foreign Goldfinch. Their source remains a mystery as the banders have yet to report/respond.

We had 39 days with more than 50 birds banded of which 16 were over 100 banded. On 12 October we set a new station high daily-banded record with 250 birds. In fact, the period from 10 September through 21 October was awesome. We missed very few days and most of those days saw better than 50 or 100 birds banded. Eleven species were banded in numbers exceeding 100 including a notable irruption of Myrtle Warblers. We banded our 10th and 11th Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow. As usual they arrived following an "Alberta Clipper" frontal event.

While most species were captured within normal parameters, a few are significant and worthy of mention. Field nesting sparrows were again very low as a result of continued habitat loss. Goldfinch continued in spectacular numbers! We banded the most Black-capped Chickadees since the 1999 irruption, our highest-ever number of Gray Catbirds, Myrtle Warblers, and Palm Warblers. Brown Thrashers exceeded their norm by a factor of four and Song Sparrows were a full one-third above norm. Both kinglets, Indigo Buntings, Lincoln's, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows were well above norm. The only negative was a significant decrease in Common Yellowthroats that were banded at almost half their average of the last three years and well below the 20-year norm. House Finches continue to gain and we encountered no mycoplasma infections until winter feeder birds arrived after the banding season.

Returns were terrific! A Common Yellowthroat at over 10 years at least matched the reported species longevity record. Our eldest return was a Hairy Woodpecker at over 11 years old. Of the 121 returns of 21 species, 40 were in

excess of 4 years of age. These numbers are truly remarkable when one considers the hazards of so many round-trip migrations. The 40 of 14 species shred out as follows:

- One Hairy Woodpecker at **11+**
- Two Downy Woodpeckers at 4 and 7
- Three Black-capped Chickadees at 4, 5 and 6
- One Tufted Titmouse at 6
- Four Gray Catbirds at 4+, 5 (2) and 8+
- One Yellow Warbler at 6
- Two Ovenbirds at 4 and 5+
- Three Common Yellowthroats at 5, 6+ and **10+**
- One Northern Cardinal at 5
- One Slate-colored Junco at 4+
- Three Song Sparrows at 4, and 6 (2)
- One Common Grackle at 4+
- Three Purple Finch at 5, 5+ and 7
- Fourteen American Goldfinch at 4 (6), 4+ (3), 5(3), 5+, and 6.

We also had a report of an SY-M American Goldfinch that was recovered 30 miles east in Cortland, NY and a 6Y-F Sharp-shinned Hawk that was recovered at a neighbor's place within a mile of the station. The identity of two Song Sparrows and an American Goldfinch that arrived here banded await reports to the BBL by those folks. We would certainly favor a return to the old "pink card" system!

Overall health was quite good and parasites were minimal. We had one minor case of pox on a Song Sparrow and a Chipping Sparrow. Hippoboscid flies were present in normal numbers. We saw no conjunctivitis until three wintering House Finches arrived post-season.

It was exciting to have so many Brown Thrashers. In a normal year we may see one or two. This year we had a minimum of three pair breed and we think we banded all the adults and offspring! A single intergrade flicker was banded. It presented with bilateral red shafts on P5 and 6. A truly notable AHY-M Cedar Waxwing had wax on both the rectrices and the tertials, a very rare occurrence.

Finally, we solved a mystery. Over the years we had occasionally arrived at a net to find a slobbery mess of feathers. While lots of sticky saliva was present, holing of the net was minimal. This season we caught the culprit – a White-tailed deer. Later we watched deer eating apples and the amount of mastication was amazing as was the slobber. Now, we had the problem of not only keeping deer from running through the nets, but also of stopping for brunch. A friend brought over a large sack of fresh pig manure claiming that a garden enhanced by pig manure kept the deer away permanently. She also said

something about elephants also being afraid of porkers. We put some manure at each end of all the nets. That seemed to have worked for the remainder of the season. Of course, we didn't have any elephant problems either...

Our fifth year of identifying and marking dragonflies incidentally netted resulted in identification of 56 individuals of 15 species. The station total of odonates is now at 71 species. Incidental to banding, we netted *Anax junius* and *longipes*, *Epiaeshna heros*, *Aeshna umbrosa*, *tuberculifera* and *canadensis*, *Boyeria vinosa*, *Erythemis simplicicollis*, *Libellula lydia*, *pulchella* and *luctuosa*, *Sympetrum vicinum*, *Celithemis elisa*, and *Somatachlora walshii*. Particularly exciting was our capture of *Cordulegaster erronea*, a rare species for this area and the fourth *Cordulegaster* species identified here. The *Anax longipes* was also a county record. It bred at one of our ponds making this only the second upstate NY breeding location known for this more southern/coastal species.

A feature article on Kestrel Haven, banding and migration by Jim Pfiffer appeared in the Elmira, NY Star-Gazette on 20 November. Kestrel Haven banding and point count data for the last several years were used in biological site studies for two massive wind power projects in nearby counties. A new project in our home county will also make use of our long-term data.

We also field-tested prototype banding pliers for the Bird Banding Lab and helped Speedtech develop an avian activity prediction algorithm for their Eco-Edge instrument. In addition to banding data, our daily point count data and weather logs were invaluable to this effort. In the coming months KHAMO will field-test the prototype instrument.

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Fall 2005 Station Operating Statistics:

Start: **3 July**
Stop: **18 November**
Days of Operation: **100**
Nets Used: **1 to 24**
Net Hours 2004: **3,335.5**
Net Hours 2005: **4,921**
Best Day: **250 on 12 October**
Reason: **64% Myrtle Warbler**
Best Diversity: **29 species on 10 October**
Banded 2004: **5,002**
Banded 2005: **5,102**
Species 2004: **93**
Species 2005: **91**
Birds/100NH 2004: **124**
Birds/100NH 2005: **153**
%HY 2004: **87**
%HY 2005: **88**

Most Frequently Banded Species:

Rank	Species	Number	%HY	Decoded
1.	AMGO (1)	1265	93	American Goldfinch
2.	SOSP (2)	725	95	Song Sparrow
3.	MYWA	368	96	Myrtle Warbler
4.	WTSP (8)	234	98	White-throated Sparrow
5.	GRCA (7)	214	91	Gray Catbird
6.	HOFI (4)	211	94	House Finch
7.	COYE (3)	162	83	Common Yellowthroat
8.	YWAR (5)	155	89	Yellow Warbler
9.	SCJU (9)	129	64	Slate-colored Junco
10,	RCKI (11)	125	100	Ruby-crowned Kinglet

(#) = Ranking last fall

Percent of total banded: **68%**

Notable additions:

11. BCCH (12) 114 97 Black-capped Chickadee