



Reflections on a Season of Banding: Fall 2014 (15 Aug. – 15 Nov.) at Manomet

During the fall seasons from 1966 – 2014 we have banded 165,570 landbirds. We are in our 49th year of data collection and education programs at Manomet. This fall, we again ran 50 mist nets on the same dates and in the same locations as the previous years, giving us an unparalleled comparison of range expansions and contractions, yearly variation of migration, survival and long-term population change. Recent Manomet data have documented an earlier arrival of some spring migrants which correlates with global warming; some fall migrants pass through earlier, some (mostly single-brooded short-distance migrants) later.



Formal education programs for 436 visitors at Manomet were based on migration banding, local ecology and conservation biology. Visiting groups included members, scouts, schools, universities and adults from the local community. Informal presentations included those given to members, visiting scientists, visiting birders, and people who just walked in! This year, banding was also videotaped for the *Sentinelles de la Nature* program of the French Ushuaïa TV Station.

An unambiguous (by plumage and measurement) hatching year Bicknell's Thrush on 21st October was the first fall record this century. For the last five autumns, we have exceeded recent numbers of birds per effort (birds per net per hour). Overall, both spring and fall numbers have

remained steady since 2000, a welcome relief from the ca. -2% /yr. declines from 1970-1995.



Above: hatching year Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*) Photograph by Ian Davies, Manomet Staff.
Right: hatching year Nelson's Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni subvirgatus*) Photograph by Grace Alloy-Relihan, Manomet Staff.

The Numbers: New Bandings 2,089
 Repeat Captures 1,246

TOTAL HANDLED 3,335 of 77 species



Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences

Both individual numbers banded and species captured were slightly above average for the previous ten years. Another snowy winter last year was followed by a wet spring and average summer plus a July hurricane. Late summer and fall seeds and berries were plentiful. There were no days of overwhelming migration from mid-Aug. through mid-Oct., but we were rescued from mediocrity by a flurry of migrants starting on 20th October. Our busiest fall days were: 27 Oct. (162 total captures), 20 Oct. (144), 24 Oct. (139), 28 Oct. (110) and 29 Oct. (93). Fifteen species were banded in greater or greater= numbers this fall, when compared with the last 10 years; six species lower or lower=. The “up” numbers included short-distance migrants e.g. Sharp-shinned Hawk, Hermit Thrush and Myrtle Warbler plus an all-time Northern Cardinal record. Ten-year low Neotropical migrants included Northern Waterthrush, Black-throated Green and Blackpoll Warblers. New bandings were led by catbirds as usual:

Gray Catbird	(473)	Northern Cardinal	(95)
Myrtle Warbler	(361)	Tufted Titmouse	(88)
Black-capped Chickadee	(171)	Hermit Thrush	(86)
White-throated Sparrow	(139)	Red-eyed Vireo	(61)

Unusual species not banded in the last decade of fall migrations were American Woodcock, Bicknell’s Thrush and a “way out of habitat” Nelson’s Sparrow. A single intergrade flicker with a pinkish primary among the yellow shafts was a first since 2006.

Notable recaptures this fall (69 from previous seasons) included: a Common Yellowthroat first banded as an adult male on 20th May 2008 (at least 7 years old); a 6-year-old Gray Catbird; a 5-year-old N. Cardinal; a 4-year-old Hairy Woodpecker; ten 3-year-olds; nine 2-year-olds and 33 banded the previous spring or fall. All are residents or short-distance migrants, except possibly some of the catbirds or the old yellowthroat. The latter has been missing a couple of claws on one foot since before 2008 and is fondly known to the staff as “old nubby toes”.

Many, many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the fall migration banding and education season of 2014 such a success. We are greatly indebted to Manomet members and those who supported the Bird-a-Thon this year. Financial support also came from:

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Ian Davies and Grace Alloy-Relihan were the lead banders this fall, assisted by Lauren diBiccari and Ben Lagassé. We will greatly miss their experience and enthusiasm.

“Per ardua ad astra” as we sometimes say in the world of bird migration.

Trevor Lloyd-Evans