

Reflections on a Season of Banding: Fall 2008 (15 Aug. – 15 Nov.) at Manomet

About 350,000 birds have been banded at Manomet to date. The spring and fall migration banding program started here at the (then) Ernst House porch in the fall of 1966. We are thus in our 43rd year of data collection and education programs at this site. This fall we continued to run 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 spring migrants which correlates with global warming, but this change in arrival is not reflected in fall migration timing to date.



White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*)

12th September 2008, Photo by Ian Davies

(This crossbill was in almost complete juvenal plumage, with just enough red feathers emerging on the head to indicate a male. Although he did not look as if he was capable of having flown any great distance – with crossbills, who knows? In the same vein, we banded a very early Slate-colored Junco on 20th Aug., also in predominantly juvenal plumage. At the tail of the fall migration, a Blackpoll Warbler recaptured on 12th November may be the latest Manomet record for that species)

Formal education programs 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. On 17th Sep.

we combined a banding demonstration with a Manomet Garden Workshop by Garden Coordinator Kim Goggin, emphasizing the relationship between birds, insects, pollination and fruit dispersal. Informal presentations included those given to members, visiting scientists, visiting birders, and people who just walk in! Fifty migrants were swabbed for H5N1 Avian Influenza virus testing and samples were sent to UCLA and government labs at Madison, WI, all negative to date.

The Numbers:	New Bandings	1,942
	Repeat Captures	1,135

TOTAL HANDLED 3,077 of 76 species

This autumn, an above-average number of birds per net hour was banded, although we were slightly below the average of the previous decade in individual bandings. August featured catbirds and Baltimore Orioles plus flycatchers and other early migrants. Most of Sep. was hot and slow; Oct. had most of our busy days and Nov. was generally windy and wetter. Local seed and berry production was even better than last year with abundant food supplies for migrants at least through Oct. Our busiest days were 07 Oct. (128 captures), 14 Oct. (114), 08 Oct. (109), 21 Oct. (102), 30 Sep. (90) and 24 Aug. (90). An encouraging 14 species were banded in greater numbers this fall, when compared with the last 10 years; these included the expanding Red-bellied Woodpecker and an irruptive White-winged Crossbill (on the early date of 12 Sep.); also 8 Neotropical migrants (incl. hummingbird, Willow and Least Flycatchers, Blue-winged Warbler) and 4 short-distance migrants (incl. many Blue Jays and robins). The 4 ten-year lows included Nashville Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler and Gray-cheeked Thrush. New bandings were led by catbirds, as usual, and the biggest Blue Jay flight for a long time:

Gray Catbird	(483)	White-throated Sparrow	(105)
Blue Jay	(152)	Black-capped Chickadee	(93)
Eastern Tufted Titmouse	(142)	Blackpoll Warbler	(66)
American Robin	(135)	Northern Cardinal	(64)
Myrtle Warbler	(107)	Song Sparrow	(54)

A Whip-poor-will and a Chipping Sparrow are most unusual at Manomet in fall. Nine Sharp-shinned Hawks are close to a record, while Cooper's are a bit big for the nets, but we know some "bounced out", alas none were banded. Sparse but regular warblers banded included Orange-crowned, Bay-breasted, Connecticut and Hooded.

Notable recaptures this fall (56 from previous seasons) included; a cardinal first banded 20 Apr. 2004 (5 years old): 4-year-old Song Sparrow, chickadee, cardinal and whitethroat; eight 3-year-olds and 43 banded birds 2 or less years old.

Many, many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the fall migration banding and education season of 2008 such a success. We are also greatly indebted to Manomet members and to the following for financial support of these programs:

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Mark Thomas (PA, Jamaica) and Ian Davies (MA) were the lead banders this fall, assisted by Evan Dalton (MA, IN) and Linnea Rowse (MN, RI). We will miss this skillful, enthusiastic and hard-working team.

Trevor Lloyd-Evans.

