

Reflections on a Season of Banding: Fall 2009 (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 44th 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.



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. Informal presentations included those given to members, visiting scientists, visiting birders, and people who just walk in! Forty 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.

Above: adult **Broad-winged Hawk**
(*Buteo platypterus*) 9th September 2009

Right: immature **White-eyed Vireo**
(*Vireo griseus*) 21st September 2009

(Photographs by Ian Davies, Manomet staff)

The 6 White-eyed Vireos banded this fall exceed any total for the previous decade, although we have been unable to confirm breeding in recent years. In the 1960's & 1970's, as many as nine pairs bred on 40 acres of Manomet property in coastal Plymouth.



The Numbers:	New Bandings	1,137
	Repeat Captures	903

TOTAL HANDLED 2,040 of 69 species

Manomet Bird Observatory

This autumn, a below-average number of birds per net hour was banded. Individual bandings were the second lowest recorded, partly caused by closed nets during adverse weather. A wet and windy spring was followed by a hot, wet summer and early fall. The flurry of captures at the end of August were mostly local breeders. The rest of the season featured rain and wind, but seldom from the NW, the direction which drifts nocturnal landbird migrants to the New England coast. The only notable migration peak was in mid-Oct. and was led by whitethroats, Myrtle Warblers and kinglets. Local seed and berry production seemed plentiful for the reduced numbers of migrants through Nov. Our busiest days were 28 Aug. (114 captures), 14 Oct. (94), 24 Aug. (86), 31 Aug. (81), 27 Aug. (78) and 9 Oct. (70). A discouraging 2 species were banded in greater numbers this fall, when compared with the last 10 years; these were American Redstart and Swainson's Thrush. When compared with the same previous 10-year period, 39 species were below average, including short-distance and neotropical migrants. Such diverse species as chickadees, Blackpoll Warbler and Northern Waterthrush reached all-time lows. New bandings were led by catbirds, as usual:

Gray Catbird	(338)	Golden-crowned Kinglet	(35)
Myrtle Warbler	(116)	American Redstart	(33)
White-throated Sparrow	(96)	Hermit Thrush	(30)
American Robin	(70)		

Two immature Rusty Blackbirds were the first banded since 17th Oct. 1994, 15 years ago. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is most unusual at Manomet recently, while 3 Yellow (Eastern) Palm Warblers are much less frequent than the more usual Western race in fall. A Red-shouldered and a Broad-winged Hawk were unexpected because they are a bit big for the nets, and usually "bounce out". Sparse but regular warblers banded included 2 each of Orange-crowned, Blackburnian and Hooded.

Notable recaptures this fall (62 from previous seasons) included; a titmouse first banded as a hatch year on 19 Oct. 2005 (4 years old): 3-year-old House Wren, chickadee, cardinal and 7 catbirds; fifteen 2-year-olds and 36 banded birds 1 year old.

Many, many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the fall migration banding and education season of 2009 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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Ian Davies (MA) and Evan Dalton (MA, IN) were the lead banders this fall, assisted by Jessica Johnson (MA) and Eric Fishel (MD). We will miss this skillful, enthusiastic and hard-working team.

Trevor Lloyd-Evans.