



Reflections on a Season of Banding: Fall 2011 (15 Aug. – 15 Nov.) at Manomet

During the fall seasons from 1966 – 2011 we have banded 158,962 landbirds. We are in our 46th 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 detected in fall migration timing to date.



Photograph by Nathan Marcy, Manomet staff

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 walked in! We also remotely “test-skyped” live bird banding demonstrations to students in Brighton, MA and Chicago, IL.

Above: a spectacular Golden-winged Warbler (Vermivora chrysoptera) – imm. male is the first banded since 9th Sep. 1998. The species may not have bred anywhere in the Commonwealth for the last 5 years or more.

Right: Red-bellied Woodpecker (Melanerpes carolinus) – imm. female, a steadily increasing resident in SE Mass.



Photograph by Nathan Marcy, Manomet staff

Three species were banded this fall, which had not been netted in the previous decade: our 21st fall Golden-winged Warbler, 1 Acadian Flycatcher and 2 Eastern Kingbirds. The latter two species have usually departed to the south by the time nets open in mid-August.

The Numbers: New Bandings 2,382
 Repeat Captures 1,809

TOTAL HANDLED 4,191 of 81 species



Manomet Bird Observatory

The last two autumns, we have banded well above average numbers of birds per net hour compared with the last decade. Overall, both spring and fall numbers of birds per net hour have remained steady, a welcome relief from the ca. -2% per year declines from 1970-1995. Individual numbers banded in fall 2011 were above all the previous ten years except 2005 and 2007, while only 2005 had more species (82). A windy spring was followed by a warm and windy fall. The winds were infrequently from the NW, the direction which drifts nocturnal landbird migrants to the New England coast. Thus September neotropical migrants were notably few until the 30th. Peak migration was in early Oct. and featured a mixture of short and long distance migrants. Local seed and berry production seemed plentiful. Our busiest days were: 6 Oct. (323 captures), 7 Oct. (163), 3 Oct. (155), 30 Sep. (147) and 9 Sep. (133). Twenty species were banded in greater or greater= numbers this fall, when compared with the last 10 years: these included Red-eyed Vireo, Tufted Titmouse, Am. Robin, Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Yellow-breasted Chat and N. Cardinal. When compared with the same previous 10-year period, only Blue Jay was lowest this autumn. New bandings were led by catbirds due to a very sparse chickadee movement:

Gray Catbird	(572)	White-throated Sparrow	(161)
Eastern Tufted Titmouse	(268)	Blackpoll Warbler	(127)
American Robin	(180)	Red-eyed Vireo	(110)
Myrtle Warbler	(173)	Northern Cardinal	(80)

Three Philadelphia Vireos all arrived on 9 Sep. and less usual warblers this fall included a single Worm-eating and a female Hooded, plus three Connecticut Warblers which included a very early 23 Aug. record.

Notable recaptures this fall (68 from previous seasons) included: a Blue Jay first banded as a second year on 7 May 2003 (9 years old); a goldfinch at least 8 years old and a 6-year-old titmouse; four 5-year-old catbirds and a White-throated Sparrow; eight 4-year-olds; six 3-year-olds; thirteen 2-year-olds and 33 banded the previous fall or spring. An Eastern Phoebe banded this fall has already been recaptured in Maryland.

Many, many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the fall migration banding and education season of 2011 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 the following:

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Nathan Marcy and Ashley Daniels were the lead banders this fall, assisted by Alan Kneidel, Megan Shave and Laura Koloski. We will miss this skillful, enthusiastic and hard-working team. Trevor Lloyd-Evans.