



Manomet Bird Observatory

Reflections on a Season of Banding: Fall 2012 (15 Aug. – 15 Nov.) at Manomet

During the fall seasons from 1966 – 2012 we have banded 161,363 landbirds. We are in our 47th 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 spring migrants which correlates with global warming, but this change in arrival is not yet detected in fall migration timing (we are checking).



Formal education programs for 620 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!

Above: an adult male Purple Finch (Haemorrhous purpureus) an example of the many irruptive northern seedeaters recorded this fall. Photograph by Alan Kneidel, Manomet Staff.

Right: imm. female Northern Saw-whet Owl (Aegolius acadicus), less common along the coast than inland. Photograph by Patrick Roberts, Manomet Staff.



A Golden-winged Warbler (hatching year female) on 1st Oct. was the second consecutive fall record for this vanishingly rare species in New England. The last three autumns, we have exceeded recent numbers of birds per net hour. Overall, both spring and fall numbers have remained steady since 2000, a welcome relief from the ca. -2% /yr. declines from 1970-1995.

The Numbers: New Bandings 2,401
 Repeat Captures 1,775

TOTAL HANDLED 4,176 of 75 species



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Both individual numbers banded and species captured were above average for the previous ten years. A warm winter last year was followed by a long, hot summer with few NW winds until early Oct. Traditionally, NW winds and a cold front drift more nocturnal migrants south and east to the southern New England coast. Thus August and September Neotropical migrants were notably few. That all changed on 4th Oct. and the bulk of our migration occurred in the next two weeks. Our busiest fall days were: 4 Oct. (251 total captures), 5 Oct. (248), 9 Oct. (183), 10 Oct. (153) and 15 Oct. (152). Eighteen species were banded in greater or greater= numbers this fall, when compared with the last 10 years: these included residents e.g. Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, N. Cardinal, and also short and long-distance migrants e.g. Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Thrasher, Swainson’s Thrush and Blackpoll Warbler. When compared with the same previous 10-year period, four species were lowest or lowest=, all Neotropical migrants (Ruby-crowned Kinglet and 3 warblers). New bandings were led by catbirds as usual:

Gray Catbird	(473)	Black-capped Chickadee	(117)
Myrtle Warbler	(281)	American Robin	(113)
Tufted Titmouse	(176)	White-throated Sparrow	(112)
Blackpoll Warbler	(175)	Northern Cardinal	(92)

In the last decade we banded only 6 fall Yellow Palm Warblers and more Western Palms (the opposite of spring migration). This fall an unprecedented 16 Yellow Palms were all captured on 4th Oct., but no others. Blown in from their normal more western route??

Notable recaptures this fall (64 from previous seasons) included: a Tufted Titmouse first banded as a hatching year on 19 Oct. 2005 (7 years old); a 6- year-old catbird, cardinal, grackle and Brown Thrasher; five 5-year-old birds; two 4-year-olds; nine 3-year-olds; fourteen 2-year-olds and 29 banded the previous fall or spring. A Myrtle Warbler we caught this fall was banded as a hatching year bird in Brewster, MA on 21st Oct. 2007.

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:

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Alan Kneidel and Laura Koloski were the lead banders this fall, assisted by Zephyr Mohr-Felsen and Patrick Roberts. We will greatly miss their experience and enthusiasm. “*Per ardua ad astra*” as we say in the world of bird migration.

Trevor Lloyd-Evans