

## SPRING 2008 BANDING SUMMARY (15 Apr. – 15 Jun.)

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 43<sup>rd</sup> year of data collection and education programs at this site. This spring 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, and long-term population change. We have also detected an earlier arrival (by 0.78 days per decade) in all migrants since 1970, a trend which correlates closely with measures of climate change. South American wintering migrants do not show this trend towards earlier arrival, perhaps indicating that they use internal “clock” cues to initiate migration in spring.



Photograph by Linda Damon – Manomet Staff



Photograph by Ian Davies – Manomet Staff

*An adult male Lawrence's Warbler was only our 4<sup>th</sup> in 43 years of migration banding at the site. This is the rare double-recessive gene hybrid between Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers. A positively identified migrant Bicknell's Thrush is also a rarity anywhere, this bird was captured at the late date of 5<sup>th</sup> June when most are already breeding in New England mountaintop habitat or in SE Canada.*

Formal education programs are based on migration banding, local ecology and conservation biology. Onsite programs this spring included members, elementary to high schools, the University of Vermont ornithology class, adult education, and cub scouts. Manomet's research into the correlation between earlier migration and climate change was featured on WBZ Ch. 4 by weather forecaster Mish Michaels on 27<sup>th</sup> May (see that date @ <http://wbztv.com/video>). Informal presentations included those given to members, visiting scientists, the press, visiting birders, and people who just walk in!

Enclosed with this letter are the spring 2008 totals for initial and repeat banding captures through 15<sup>th</sup> June and graphed daily totals.

New Bandings	1,272
Repeat Captures	623

TOTAL HANDLED 1,895 birds of 70 species (plus a hybrid).

As in farming, fishing and sailing, spring bird migration depends on the weather. For example, spring 2004's nine-year high numbers were attributed to unusually persistent

westerly winds from mid-May onwards. These winds drifted nocturnal landbird migrants to our east coast location. Spring landbird banding 2006 suffered from essentially continuous NE winds and rain, while our ideal would be fair weather and SW winds to drift migrant landbirds E to our shore. Spring 2007 featured cool temperatures and rain, but generally fair SW winds except for two weeks in late April/early May when a massive stationary low pressure system off the Carolinas reduced our migration. This spring (2008) started cool and wet, then windy as strong SW winds and low pressure alternated with strong NW winds and high pressure. Underlying this year's weather effect is a significant long term decline in most migrant birds since spring 1970.

Our busiest days were 2<sup>nd</sup> May (104 total captures, 76 new bandings), 8<sup>th</sup> May (103 captures, 91 new bandings), and 15<sup>th</sup> May (118 captures, 101 new bandings). The most abundant new bandings in spring 2008 were:

Gray Catbird (as usual!)	(273)	American Robin	(35)
White-throated Sparrow	(138)	Swamp Sparrow	(32)
Common Grackle	(99)	Northern Cardinal	(32)
Magnolia Warbler	(65)	American Redstart	(30)
Common Yellowthroat	(55)	Ovenbird	(29)
Black-and-white Warbler	(41)	Hermit Thrush	(28)

Banding volunteer and Manomet Councillor Rusty Briggs performed some excellent programming and database work with the 40+ years of Manomet banding records. We now have the ability to examine the age structure by species for any season, plus obtain a printout of all the previous occurrences of any repeat banded bird.

Notable recaptures this spring (123 from previous seasons) included a resident chickadee and a resident Song Sparrow both 5 years old. Eleven 4-year-olds included a White-throated Sparrow who returns each winter. There were twenty 3-year-olds and 63 banded birds at least 1 or 2 years old.

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

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Meghan Powell (CT, ME), Jim Kowalsky (MA, ME), Ruby Harrison (OH) and Ian Davies (MA) were the indefatigable staff banders and teachers this spring.

Trevor Lloyd-Evans