

SPRING 2010 BANDING SUMMARY (15 April - 15 June)

About 347,000 migrant landbirds 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 45th 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, not temperature.

*Right: female Blackburnian Warbler,
one of three this spring*

*Below: The only Yellow-breasted Chat
banded this season*



Photograph by Evan Dalton – Manomet Staff



Photograph by Ian Davies – Manomet Staff

Formal education programs for 379 people were based on migration banding, local ecology and conservation biology. Onsite programs have had a wide diversity of audiences this spring. Recent groups included members, schools, universities, bird clubs, adult education, and scouts and guides. Informal presentations included those given to members, visiting scientists, the press, visiting birders, and people who just walk in!

New Bandings 1,505
Repeat Captures 516

TOTAL HANDLED 2,021 birds of 69 species.

As in farming, fishing and sailing, spring bird migration depends on the weather. For example, spring 2009 featured persistent onshore E and NE winds, cool temperatures and well above average rainfall. Consequently, we captured an average number of birds per net hour (a measure of comparative effort), but species and total numbers were at 10-year lows. This spring (2010) recorded record rainfall in March, then a cool, wet spell until pent up migration was released on 14th May with a second wave on 21st May. Underlying this year's weather effect is a significant long term decline in all migrant birds, spring and fall, since we started to band in 1970. However, the totals for both seasons has held steady for the last 12+ years.

Our busiest days were 14th May (448 captures, 424 new bandings), 21st May (236 captures) and 17th May (139). This made 14th May totals the most birds handled since 21st Oct. 1997 when we handled 470 birds, featuring 430 chickadees banded! When compared with the previous 11 springs, 15 species were banded in record high numbers; 7 record lows and 1 (Blue-gray Gnatcatcher) missed for the first time in 12 springs. Unusual captures for Manomet included single spring Tennessee and Bay-breasted Warblers and a record high of 33 Veery and 39 Northern Parula. The most abundant new bandings in 2009 were:

Gray Catbird	(251)	White-throated Sparrow	(57)
Magnolia Warbler	(184)	American Redstart	(56)
Common Yellowthroat	(85)	Common Grackle	(51)
Myrtle Warbler	(76)	Black-throated Blue Warbler	(48)
Ovenbird	(70)	Swamp Sparrow	(43)

Notable recaptures this spring (105 from previous seasons) included a 7-year-old grackle and Blue Jay, five 6-year-olds (Song Sparrow, chickadee and 3 catbirds). Four 5-year-olds, twelve 4-year-olds and twenty-five 3-year-olds were mostly residents or short distance migrants, but included an unusual two Brown Thrashers. Fifty-seven banded birds were at least 1 or 2 years old and included an Orchard Oriole. Single Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher and Hermit Thrush successfully overwintered and were recaptured this spring.

Many, many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the spring migration banding and education season of 2010 such a success. We are also greatly indebted for recent financial support of these programs to Manomet members and the following sources:

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Trevor Lloyd-Evans