



SPRING 2011 BANDING SUMMARY (15 April - 15 June)

About 351,000 migrant landbirds have been handled 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 46th 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: American Woodcock

Below: An unusual record of a spring Orange-crowned Warbler



Photograph by Jessica Johnson - Manomet Staff



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Formal education programs 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, digital photographers, 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 1,091
Repeat Captures 575

TOTAL HANDLED 1,666 birds of 75 species.



Manomet Bird Observatory

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 (2011) recorded above-average rainfall and cool temperatures throughout most of April and early May until pent up migration was released on 20th May and lasted for over a week. 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 have held steady for the last 15+ years.

Our busiest days were 25th May (131 captures, 114 new bandings), 23rd May (124 captures), 29th Apr. (77) and 20th May (75). When compared with the previous 10 springs, 11 species were banded in record high or high equal numbers; 8 record lows (or low =) and an Orange-crowned Warbler was the first banded in spring since 1970. Other unusual captures for Manomet included single spring Red-shouldered Hawk and American Woodcock and high numbers of Acadian Flycatcher (5) and Yellow (Eastern) Palm Warbler (34). The most abundant new bandings in 2011 were:

Gray Catbird	(292)	Yellow Palm Warbler	(34)
Common Yellowthroat	(72)	American Redstart	(34)
Magnolia Warbler	(66)	Black-and-white Warbler	(27)
White-throated Sparrow	(51)	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	(26)
Northern Parula	(36)	Hermit Thrush	(25)

Notable recaptures this spring (88 from previous seasons) included a 7-year-old catbird and Song Sparrow, three 6-year-olds (Song Sparrow, Blue Jay and catbird). Nine 5-year-olds, ten 4-year-olds and nine 3-year-olds were mostly residents or short-distance migrants, but included an unusual Brown Thrasher. Fifty-five banded birds were at least 1 or 2 years old and included a Red-bellied Woodpecker. Singles of Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher 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 2011 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