

SPRING 2016 BANDING SUMMARY (15 April - 15 June)

About 81,600 spring migrant landbirds have been banded at Manomet to date. The spring and fall migration banding program commenced here at the (then) Ernst House porch in the fall of 1966. We are thus in our 51st 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 detected an earlier arrival (by 0.78 days per decade) in all spring migrants since 1970, a trend which correlates strongly with measures of climate change over that same time period. 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 variations in temperature or day length.



Left: European Goldfinch female in definitive alternate plumage. The 1st ever record at Manomet 22nd April. Photograph by – Evan Dalton, Manomet Staff.

Below: Orange-crowned Warbler on 10th May. A 1st alternate plumaged male, only the 8th spring record here since 1969. Photograph by – Lauren diBiccari, Manomet Staff.

We held onsite banding demonstrations for over 560 visitors, including: Manomet members, schools, universities, and photographers. Informal presentations included those given to members, visiting scientists and birders.

A spring Orange-crowned Warbler is always exciting and a genuine rarity in New England; this was only our 8th since 1969. However, a European Goldfinch captured in late April raises the old problem of a species more likely to have escaped from a cage, rather than having been blown off course from Europe. To add to the mystery, the bird above seems to be the Central Asian subspecies *Carduelis c. caniceps* which lacks a black hood and has grayer upperparts than the Western European race. Blown in from Tajikistan by a strong south-east wind? Probably not.



New Bandings	1,362
Repeat Captures	710
TOTAL HANDLED	2,072 birds of 78 species



Spring 2016 followed a cold, lingering winter, after the record snow of winter 2014/15. An initial flurry of early migrants in late April (mostly grackles and White-throated Sparrows) gave way to a slow first half of May. All the big movements were in the 2nd half of May, while June was warm and numbers unremarkable; but included a few choice captures! Thanks (mostly) to two busy migration days, we captured about average numbers of birds per net hour (a measure of comparative effort), while the 78 species handled were more than 9 of the last 10 springs. Underlying this year's weather effects is a significant long term decline in all migrant birds, spring and fall, since we started standardized banding in 1970. However, that declining trend stopped in the mid-1990s, and banding totals for both spring and fall migration have held steady for the last 20+ years.

Our busiest days were 17th May (249 captures, 226 new bandings), 26th May (123 captures), 18th May (93) and 25th April and 11th May (both 83). When compared with the previous ten springs, 12 species met or exceeded record high or high equal numbers. Only 1 species (Blue-headed Vireo) was a record low (=). None of our former banded, resident Carolina Wrens appear to have survived either this or the previous winter. Unusual captures were a Black-billed Cuckoo on 6th June, a Worm-eating Warbler on 9th June and 5 other warbler species in numbers exceeding those of the previous 10 springs. The most abundant new bandings in spring 2016 were:

Gray Catbird	(286)	Black-and-white Warbler	(61)
Magnolia Warbler	(128)	Common Yellowthroat	(57)
White-throated Sparrow	(120)	Common Grackle	(50)
American Redstart	(85)	Yellow Warbler	(41)

Notable recaptures this spring (104 from previous seasons) included a 10-year-old Northern Cardinal, a 9-year-old Common Yellowthroat and a 7-year-old Brown Thrasher. We also recaptured one 6-year-old (yellowthroat), two 5-year-olds (yellowthroat and cardinal), plus seven 4-year-old birds (catbirds, jay, grackles, cowbird and chickadee). Winter resident Song and White-throated Sparrows made it through the winter in good numbers. We also recovered a Tufted Titmouse originally banded by Wellfleet Audubon as a young bird last autumn.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the spring 2016 migration banding and education season such a success. We are also greatly indebted for recent financial support from Manomet members and:

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Mattie VandenBoom, Lauren diBiccari and Evan Dalton were the indefatigable staff banders and teachers this spring, with timely assistance by Emily Renaud and Sarah Groendyk. We also welcomed Diego Cruz, a bander from Belize, Central America for the last week.

Trevor Lloyd-Evans