



## SPRING 2015 BANDING SUMMARY (15 April - 15 June)

About 80,200 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 50<sup>th</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 spring 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 variations in temperature or day length.



*Left: Cerulean Warbler male in definitive alternate plumage. The 1<sup>st</sup> spring (and 5<sup>th</sup> ever) record at Manomet. Photograph by – Sophie Zyla, Manomet Staff*

*Below: 1<sup>st</sup> fledgling of the spring. Common Grackle in juvenal plumage. Photograph by – Grace Alloy-Relihan, Manomet Staff*

Onsite education programs based on birds in the hand have had a wide diversity of audiences this spring. Recent groups included Manomet members, schools, universities, and scouts. Informal presentations included those given to members, visiting scientists, visiting birders, and people who just walk in. We are in the first of three years of a Climate Lab program in partnership with the Wildlands Trust and TERC, the latter a planning and curriculum partner from Cambridge, Massachusetts. Seventh and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from Duxbury, Sandwich, Wareham and Weymouth were introduced to potential effects of climate change on vegetation leaf out, insect emergence and bird migration timing, and learned to record data of long-term value while interpreting variability. Plymouth PACTV produced a short video when students visited the Manomet banding operation. <http://youtu.be/hG9mmZdO43Y>





New Bandings	1,229
Repeat Captures	660
<b>TOTAL HANDLED</b>	<b>1,889 birds of 74 species</b>

Spring 2015 followed an unprepossessingly cold and literally record-breaking snowy winter. It was a rather dry, windy spring, initially cold with early migrants peaking in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April. Then mostly warm SW winds from 4<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May with fair numbers of migrants. Late May and June were warm and slow for bird movements. Thanks (mostly) to a few significant migration days, we captured slightly above-average numbers of birds per net hour (a measure of comparative effort), while numbers of species handled were also above average for the decade. Underlying this year's weather effects was a significant long term decline in all migrant birds, spring and fall, since we started standardized banding in 1970. However, that trend stopped in the mid-1990s, and totals for both seasons have held steady for the last 20 years.

Our busiest days were 5<sup>th</sup> May (164 captures, 141 new bandings), 15<sup>th</sup> May (119 captures) and 11<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May (both 96 captures). When compared with the previous ten springs, 8 species were banded in record high or high equal numbers; 6 record lows (or low =). None of our banded resident Carolina Wrens appear to have survived the winter. Unusual captures were a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on 29<sup>th</sup> May and 2 Bay-breasted Warblers on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The bird of the spring had to be the first spring Cerulean Warbler ever – a male in full breeding plumage. The most abundant new bandings in spring 2015 were:

Gray Catbird	(367)	Common Yellowthroat	(45)
White-throated Sparrow	(110)	Ovenbird	(39)
Magnolia Warbler	(102)	Black-and-white Warbler	(39)
Common Grackle	(48)	Eastern Towhee	(34)

Notable recaptures this spring (122 from previous seasons) included an 8-year-old Northern Cardinal and a Common Yellowthroat. We also recaptured two 7-year-old catbirds, five 6-year-olds (including a Brown Thrasher and Yellow Warbler), four 5-year-olds and nine 4-year-old birds.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the spring 2015 migration banding and education season 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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| Massachusetts Cultural Council                       |                                  |



Mattie VandenBoom, Grace Alloy-Relihan and Evan Dalton were the indefatigable staff banders and teachers this spring, with timely assistance by Sophie Zyla and Meghan Lee. Climate Change teachers working at the middle schools were Evan Dalton of Manomet, Brian Drayton, Gilly Puttick and Abe Drayton of TERC; with planning and logistical help from Manomet's Beth Brazil.

*Trevor Lloyd-Evans*