

KESTREL HAVEN AVIAN MIGRATION OBSERVATORY

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FALL 2007 MIGRATION BANDING REPORT –our 22nd fall season.

Early in the season weather was such that the majority of migrants overflowed our site during the evening hours. Weather also reduced our days and net-hours with most birds arriving in large spurts thus enhancing our measure of efficiency. Goldfinch returned in much better numbers after a dismal fall showing last year and we recaptured an Eastern Kingbird that set a new species longevity record. All in all it was a pretty slow season for us and well within the capacity of this station that has never had more than two banders and no helpers. Of those banded our species diversity was quite low and we had the lowest showing of young birds ever.

Of significance to banders, we have been studying ageing techniques in goldfinch and other species where we have a very large database and good returns over the years. Without question, the use of covert shape should be halted as the accuracy level is very low and not near BBL standards. We are quite confident in stating this for goldfinch and have seen indications that the hypothesis holds in several other species. As Pyle's use of this characteristic is ubiquitous, the accuracy of the national database is in question. We believe banders should avoid this technique entirely and rely on several other more accurate ageing characteristics.

We banded 3,151 new birds of 87 species in 85 days of operation. We also had 541 repeats, 124 returns and 181 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The hummingbirds were not banded. The total birds netted was 3,997 making our measure of efficiency 140 birds/100 net-hours for newly banded birds and 178 birds/100 NH overall. Hatching year birds were far below the norm at 82%.

The station banded list remains at 131 species plus five forms banded (136) and we increased the sighted list to 219 with the appearance of a young Barred Owl that stopped in for a few weeks. It emitted many plaintive cries for food and never attempted the normal Barred call.

We had six days with over 100 birds banded with the largest occurring on 28 September with 153 birds, 140 of which were goldfinch. Overall numbers were much lower than the 22-year norm. Expected species were missed entirely with the most surprising being Black-billed Cuckoo, Canada Warbler, Eastern Towhee and Brown-headed Cowbird. In all many species were several Standard Deviations below norm and the most striking were Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Cedar Waxwing, Common Yellowthroat, Indigo Bunting, Song Sparrow and House Finch. On the positive side, we banded more Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers than ever before; at 26, they exceeded Downy Woodpeckers that are normally our most banded woodpecker species. Also high were Scarlet Tanagers of which we enjoyed some remarkable color variations as the birds appeared in various ages and stages of molt. Masts to our north were very weak this

year and we are enjoying an influx of winter “invaders”. We banded record high numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches and high numbers of Pine Siskins and Common Redpolls. We hoped for Pine Grosbeak, Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks that are being observed regionally but none appeared here. We banded our 3rd Northern Shrike; it was our first adult.

Returns were terrific! The star was a female Eastern Kingbird that has nested in our gutters – usually in the same spot – each year since she was banded as a hatching year bird. She is now over 11 years of age and the new holder of the species longevity record. Additionally, BBL reported recovery of a 3+-year-old Veery and a 6-year-old goldfinch; both were found dead within 20 miles of here.

The eldest return was a Hairy Woodpecker that checked in at over 13 years of age. Of the 124 returns, 49 of 19 species were in excess of 4 years of age. They shred out as follows:

- Two Hairy Woodpeckers at **13+** and 10.
- One **Eastern Kingbird at 11 and a few months.**
- One Acadian Flycatcher at 7+.
- One Gray Catbird at 7+
- Two Northern Cardinals at 4 and 7.
- Seventeen American Goldfinch at 4 (2), 4+ (2), 5 (10), 6,6+ and 7.
- Six Yellow Warblers at 4 (3), 5+, and 7 (2).
- A Common Grackle at 6+.
- Two Downy Woodpeckers at 5.
- One Common Yellowthroat at 5.
- One Song Sparrow at 5.
- Six Black-capped Chickadees at 4 (5) and 4+.
- One Red-winged Blackbird at 4+.
- One European Starling at 4+.
- One Purple Finch at 4+.
- One Eastern Tufted Titmouse at 4.
- One American Robin at 4.
- One Rose-breasted Grosbeak at 4.

In sum, our returns this year represented 4% of our banded total, a very nice return percentage.

Overall health was excellent. Hippoboscids were few and we had only one case of avian pox. That was a very minor tarsal infestation on a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Birds surviving despite severe injury were a goldfinch, a junco and a chipping sparrow that each were missing an eye and an Acadian Flycatcher that presented with a single tarsus. Once again we had flickers exhibiting red shafts and have some question as to whether or not these are truly intergrades or more likely the result of local diet as in waxwing tails and White-throated Sparrow lores. The luckiest bird of the season award goes to the junco that, when netted, was saturated with deer saliva. Assuming it had been partially masticated, we examined it for injury, cleaned, banded and released it, as it was apparently unharmed and healthy.

Odonata studies were very limited this year and inadvertent net captures were limited to five *Libellula lydia* and two *Aeshna umbrosa*. Numbers reflect the overall slow and spotty dragonfly season this year

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Common Redpoll

Fall 2007 Station Operating Statistics:

Start: **5 July**

Stop: **21 November**

Days of Operation: **85**

Nets Used: **1 to 22**

Net Hours 2006: **3,196**

Net Hours 2007: **2,247**

Best Day: **153 on 28 September**

Reason: **92% goldfinch**

Best Diversity: **23 species on 20 July and 20 September**

Banded 2006: **3,591**

Banded 2007: **3,151**

Species 2006: **93**

Species 2007: **87**

Birds/100NH 2006: **112**

Birds/100NH 2007: **140**

%HY 2006: **86**

%HY 2007: **82**

Returns 2006: **118**

Returns 2007: **124**

Most Frequently Banded Species:

Rank	Species	Number	%HY	Decoded
1.	AMGO (2)	1051	92	American Goldfinch
2.	SOSP (1)	351	93	Song Sparrow
3.	SCJU (9)	183	63	Slate-colored Junco
4.	GRCA (3)	132	80	Gray Catbird
5.	COYE (4)	126	80	Common Yellowthroat
6.	WTSP	108	85	White-throated Sparrow
7.	BCCH	77	100	Black-capped Chickadee
8.	RCKI (5)	75	100	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
8.	EWCS	75	60	Eastern White-crowned Sparrow
9.	YWAR (10)	63	76	Yellow Warbler
10.	HOFI	59	93	House Finch

(#) = Ranking last fall

Percent of total banded: **71%**

Table 1. Birds banded at Kestrel Haven in 2007. (AOU order)

7	Morning Dove	4	Blue-headed Vireo
3	Sharp-shinned Hawk	14	Blue-winged Warbler
3	Hairy Woodpecker	27	Nashville Warbler
21	Downy Woodpecker	1	Tennessee Warbler
27	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	Cape May Warbler
2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	73	Yellow Warbler
2	Yellow-shafted Flicker	4	Black-throated Blue Warbler
2	Flicker Intergrades	25	Myrtle Warbler
2	Eastern Kingbird	34	Magnolia Warbler
1	Great-crested Flycatcher	17	Chestnut-sided Warbler
14	Eastern Phoebe	3	Bay-breasted Warbler
4	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	5	Blackpoll Warbler
5	Acadian Flycatcher	3	Blackburnian Warbler
26	Trail's Flycatcher	14	Black-throated Green Warbler
9	Least Flycatcher	4	Western Palm Warbler
16	Blue Jay	2	Yellow Palm Warbler
10	European Starling	4	Prairie Warbler
6	Brown-headed Cowbird	18	Ovenbird
32	Red-winged Blackbird	2	Northern Waterthrush
22	Baltimore Oriole	3	Mourning Warbler
17	Common Grackle	142	Common Yellowthroat
58	Purple Finch	6	Hooded Warbler
61	House Finch	17	Wilson's Warbler
4	Common Redpoll	6	American Redstart
1761	American Goldfinch	10	House Sparrow
7	Pine Siskin	143	Gray Catbird
2	Savannah Sparrow	2	Brown Thrasher
97	Eastern White-crowned Sparrow	20	House Wren
150	White-throated Sparrow	2	Winter Wren
16	American Tree Sparrow	4	Brown Creeper
58	Chipping Sparrow	7	White-breasted Nuthatch
27	Field Sparrow	5	Red-breasted Nuthatch
190	Slate Colored Junco	11	Eastern Tufted Titmouse
370	Song Sparrow	81	Black-capped Chickadee
24	Lincoln's Sparrow	30	Golden-crowned Kinglet
23	Swamp Sparrow	133	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
6	Fox Sparrow	5	Wood Thrush
28	Northern Cardinal	3	Veery
68	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	4	Gray-cheeked Thrush
18	Indigo Bunting	5	Hermit Thrush
11	Scarlet Tanager	60	American Robin
55	Cedar Waxwing	5	Eastern Bluebird
1	Northern Shrike		
36	Red-eyed Vireo	90	Species
2	Philadelphia Vireo	4301	Individuals
10	Warbling Vireo		