

Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory
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SPRING 2003 Atlantic Flyway Review Report

For the first time since we began formally reporting Spring AFR banding, the weather was very cooperative and helped set station spring records in all categories! We had many gray, windless days and a few obliging blocking fronts that caused stopover at our station. Our elation was short lived as the over 50 birds per day average from late April into May dissipated on 18 May and banding became slow through month's end.

We banded 724 individuals of 66 species in 26 days of operation. We also had 101 repeats, a whopping 136 returns and 31 hummingbirds not banded. The fine weather caused us to stay open longer than usual each day – we just couldn't believe it! - lowering our measure of efficiency to 68.9 birds per 100 net hours for newly banded birds and 91.5 birds/100 NH overall. Our best day was 7 May and our most species diverse day was 15 May with 22 species banded. Once again, American Goldfinch were our bread and butter with 303 banded and 44 returning.

No new species were added to the cumulative station list of 124 species plus 5 forms although a Ring-necked duck raised our point count cumulative to 215 species seen at Kestrel Haven. Most neotropicals were present in very small numbers although we managed to band at least one of every expected species. We continued our Dragonfly studies and netted two in mist nets, a *Gomphus exilis* and an *Anax junius*. The cool, wet weather and lack of sun has kept odonate emergence down and downright late this year. The real pleasure of this spring was in our returns.

We received reports of three encounters, two of which were long distance records. An American Goldfinch was recovered south of Orlando, FL (900 miles) and an American Robin was recovered in Louisiana between New Orleans and the Texas Border (1200 miles). The third bird was a Slate-colored Junco, which was recovered 38 miles east of Durham, NC. These birds must have had advance knowledge of the harsh winter we experienced!

We enjoyed 136 returning individuals of 19 species of which 49 were over four years of age. Neotropical migrants accounted for 23% of the over 4 years group! The eldest return was an 8-year old Yellow warbler followed by a 7+ year old Chipping Sparrow. A Baltimore Oriole that has been trapped every year since banding returned again at 7 years of age.

Others over 4 were as follows: Eight American Robins at 4, 4+ (4), 5, 5+ and 6+; Five Song Sparrows at 4 (2), 5 (2) and 6; Thirteen American Goldfinch at 4 (6), 4+ (3), 5+ (2) and 6; Two Downy Woodpeckers at 4+ and 5; Six other Yellow Warblers at 4 (3), 4+, 6 and 6+; Two Black-capped Chickadees at 4 and 5; Four Common Yellowthroats at 5+ (2) and 6 (2); A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at 6+; A White-breasted Nuthatch at 4; A Red-bellied Woodpecker at 4+; an Eastern Tufted Titmouse at 5; a House Sparrow at 4+ which had previously been released 15 miles away and demonstrating remarkable site fidelity and, a Northern Cardinal at 6+ years of age.

Abnormalities were few and mostly consisted of advanced cases of avian pox. We did have one Gray Catbird with a serious feather mite infestation in over fifty- percent of its primaries.

Kestrel Haven joined in a partnership with the New Jersey Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Derby Hill Bird Observatory (NY) in an attempt to monitor the migration flight of Red Knots from the Delaware Bay region to their James Bay nesting grounds. One hundred knots were banded, marked and fitted with radio transmitters, half on discrete frequencies for individual monitoring and half on five other frequencies to assist in locating nesting areas. Kestrel Haven and Derby Hill provided 24/7 monitoring and taping services in the hope that these birds make use of the direct flight line which passes over the central Finger Lakes of New York. Wet coastal weather and a paucity of Horseshoe Crabs laying eggs has delayed the normal timing so this project continues well beyond the end of our banding.

We would like to thank Ruth and Charlie Young, Joe, Denise, Angela and Laura McEnerney, Don and Doris Cohrs, Bob and Judy Cosgriff, David Guaspari, Barlow Rhodes, Fred Sibley and Stillman's Greenhouse for their advice, assistance and generous support.

We are also grateful to our friends at Pine Tree Farms; their continuous supply of high quality suet cakes contributes so much to attracting and keeping birds around this station. It is a particular pleasure to watch returning migrants head straight for the suet cake feeding area. That's only matched by watching the regulars bring their young to that bounty of suet. Thanks folks.

Kestrel Haven Statistical Summaries Spring 2003

Table I: Operations

First Day 27 April: Last 30 May

Total Days in Operation 26

Range of No. Nets Used 2 to 14

Total Net Hours for Season* 1050

Number of Traps in Use 0 ** % of Total caught in traps N/A

Largest Daily Catch 77 on 07 May

Best Species Diversity: 22 on 15 May

Number birds banded 2002: 450; Number birds banded 2003: 724

Total Species 2002: 53 Total Species 2003: 66

Birds/100 net hours 2002: 90.9 Birds/100 net hours 2003: 68.9

Species above 2 S.D. in 2003: AMGO, COYE, CHSP.

Species below 2 S.D. in 2003: N/A

Weather influence ranking (+ or - or?)***: +++++ extremely positive

* based on 1 4-shelf 12m net x 1 hour of netting = 1 net hour (adjusted accordingly for shorter or longer nets)

** list number and types used

*** were general weather conditions overall during the season a negative or positive or inconclusive factor in banding results?

Table II: List of Ten Most Commonly Banded Species Spring 2003

	Species	Number	%SY	%ASY	%AHY
1.	AMGO	303	58	41	01
2.	CHSP	35	63	29	08
3.	WTSP	34	70	30	00
4.	EWCS	33	00	10	90
5.	COYE	30	00.03	00.06	91
6.	CEDW	26	62	31	07
7.	YWAR	22	64	36	00
8.	GRCA	21	00	00	100
9.	RCKI	18	67	28	05
10.	RBGR	14	43	43	14
11.	AMRO	14	00	14	86
12.	BCCH	14	57	00	43