

**Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory**  
**Burdett, Schuyler County, NY**  
**John and Sue Gregoire**  
**4226-07645**  
[Khmo@att.net](mailto:Khmo@att.net)

## **SPRING 2007 Atlantic Flyway Review Report**

We were able to operate on many fewer days than normal, yet achieved more net hours and a record spring in both bandings and returns. This was largely thanks to the hordes of American Goldfinch that passed through in late April. Although numbers within other species were lower, we had nice diversity, albeit in ones and twos.

We banded a record 1,150 individuals of 63 species in 25 days of operation. We also had 142 repeats, a record 152 returns, and 7 hummingbirds not banded. Our measure of efficiency was 138.8 birds per 100 net hours for newly banded birds and 175.2 birds/100 NH overall. Our best day was 28 April with 164 banded (130 goldfinch!) and our most species diverse day was 17 May with 24 species banded.

Our age data as reported in Table 2 is somewhat skewed due to an ongoing study that has revealed covert feather shape to be a less than accurate age criterion in some species. We examined returns of known age birds and found less than 50% accuracy with this method of ageing. This was first noticed in Chipping Sparrows but we felt our sample size was too small. After achieving hundreds of returns of the thousands of American Goldfinch banded at this station, we were able to definitively determine that covert shape was an inaccurate means of age determination in this species. As a result, we aged all spring females as AHY and aged males according to other criteria. It makes one wonder what other species do not conform, especially those we band in smaller numbers. On known age returns of several other species we have seen so called "SY coverts" on many elder birds. While we will continue this study, we have lost confidence in this criterion for all species.

No new species were added to the cumulative station list of 131 species plus 5 forms; point count cumulative remains at 218 species seen at Kestrel Haven. Abnormalities were unremarkable and most species were found in normal numbers. While we banded many nifty species, the real pleasure was in our returns.

We received a report of an American Tree Sparrow banded here in 2001 and recovered near Irondale, Ontario, Canada, some 180 miles Northwest, on 13 April 2007; the bird was 7 years old.

We enjoyed 152 returning individuals! Of that number, over a third, or 55, were at least 4 years of age or older. **The eldest return was a Hairy Woodpecker at over 13 years of age.** The elders were:

- Eastern Phoebe at 4 years old
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at 4 years old
- Hairy Woodpeckers at **13+** and **10** years old
- Downy Woodpeckers (2) at 5 years old
- Blue Jay at 4 years old
- Black-capped Chickadees (11) at 4 (6), 4+, 5, 5+ (2) and **8** years old
- American Robins at 4 and 4+ years old
- Gray Catbird at 4 years old
- Yellow Warblers (7) at 4 (2), 4+, 5, 5+, 6+, and **7+** years old
- Common Yellowthroat at 4 years old
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak at 4 years old
- Chipping Sparrow at 4 years old
- Song Sparrows (2) at 4 years old
- White-throated Sparrow at 4 years old
- Red-winged Blackbird at 4+ years old
- Common Grackle at **6+** years old
- Baltimore Orioles (2) at 4 years old
- Purple Finches (2) at 4 and **7+** years old
- American Goldfinches (15) at 4 (4), 4+ (4), and 5 (7) years old.

We did not continue participation in the LaMNA cooperative study taking DNA samples and cloacal swabs for virus study as UCLA and Los Alamos failed to report results from last spring and fall. It appears this migration monitoring group study was poorly designed, funded and executed and hardly supportive of the larger USGS sampling effort.

We would like to thank Bob and Judy Cosgriff, David Guaspari, Barlow Rhodes, Jay Schissel and the Painted Post Breakfast Group for their support as well as Stillman's Greenhouse, Herzog Printing and Pine Tree Farms for their advice, assistance and generous support.

**Kestrel Haven Statistical Summaries Spring 2007:**

**Table I: Operations**

First Day 22 April: Last 31 May  
 Total Days in Operation 25  
 Range of No. Nets Used 2 to 14  
 Total Net Hours for Season\* 828  
 Number of Traps in Use 0 \*\* % of Total caught in traps N/A  
 Largest Daily Catch 164 on 28 April  
 Best Species Diversity: 24 species on 17 May  
 Number birds banded 2006: 1,043; Number birds banded 2007: 1,150  
 Total Species 2006: 65 Total Species 2007: 63  
 Birds/100 net hours 2006: 131 Birds/100 net hours 2007: 139  
 Species above 2 S.D. in 2006: N/A  
 Species below 2 S.D. in 2006: N/A  
 Weather influence ranking (+ or - or?)\*\*\*: Mostly 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 2007**

|     | Species | Number | %SY | %ASY | %AHY |
|-----|---------|--------|-----|------|------|
| 1.  | AMGO    | 711    | 35  | 19   | 46   |
| 2.  | RCKI    | 58     | 67  | 33   | 00   |
| 3.  | CHSP    | 44     | 61  | 39   | 00   |
| 4.  | WTSP    | 42     | 38  | 62   | 00   |
| 5.  | RWBL    | 25     | 72  | 28   | 00   |
| 6.  | EWCS    | 22     | 00  | 100  | 00   |
| 7.  | SOSP    | 19     | 05  | 00   | 95   |
| 8.  | CEDW    | 18     | 66  | 44   | 00   |
| 9.  | AMRO    | 18     | 05  | 56   | 39   |
| 10. | COYE    | 16     | 00  | 00   | 100  |

Overall % SY = 37, especially those we band in smaller numbers,