



SPRING BANDING AT VISCHER FERRY GAME MANAGEMENT AREA, SARATOGA COUNTY, NY.  
By Robert P. Yunick

This year represented the fourth year of spring banding at Vischer Ferry Game Management Area in southern Saratoga County, New York. As in the past two years, it involved banding Friday evening and Saturday morning on the first four weekends in May. This year's effort of 1550 net-hours yielded 726 birds banded and 123 returns of 56 species. Seven new species were added to bring the composite spring list to 73 species. Banding was done in the same lanes as are used in the fall (see EBBA News, 33: 44-45). All birds were measured, weighed, fat classed and, where possible, aged and sexed. Special attention was given to gathering data on yellow warblers and Empidonax flycatchers.

Each migration brings changes in abundance, and this year's were as follows. The only noticeable continued reduction of any note seemed to effect the veery. This year's total of eight banded was less than 1969's eleven which in turn was less than 1968's fourteen. At first, American Redstarts gave the impression of being very scarce, however, as it turned out, they were just late in arriving and at month's end came up to their usual numbers. Yellow bellied Flycatchers were totally absent in contrast to last year's five of this species. All other changes seemed to be for the better. The Myrtle warbler total of 145 was far greater than the previous maximum of 80, due to a take of 107 on May 2. Black-throated Blue (nine vs. three in 1969 and one in 1968) and Black-throated Green (seven vs. only one in 1967) Warblers appeared more numerous. A Yellowthroat total of 41 was a new maximum exceeding the previous of 24. Four other species appeared slightly more numerous. Both the least flycatcher and rose-breasted grosbeak set new maxima of 14 vs. previous tallies of 9. In addition to the 14 rose-breasted grosbeak bandings, there were six returns. Of these 20 birds, 12 were males and all but one were ASY. Only one bird was a young of the previous year and it was the last one banded on May 23rd. Lincoln's sparrow set a new maximum of 12 compared to 8 in 1969, six in 1968. Eight of the 12 were caught on May 9 representing a new daily maximum. Lastly, yellow warblers were slightly more numerous with a new maximum of 112 vs. last year's 94. It was the most numerous returned species with 42 returns including 23 of last spring's 94, six from 1969, two from fall 1968 and eleven of the 58 banded in spring 1968.

While the yellow warbler constituted about one-third of the 123

returns, there were also some expected returns of song sparrows, yellow-throats, american redstarts and a few other species. In addition, the first station returns for Least and Traill's Flycatcher and Yellow-throated Vireo were recorded. The Vireo was one of only one of two ever banded (spring '69) until a third was banded this spring.

The best weekend of the month was the first, by far. April had been a cold, rainy month that led to a heavy Tree Swallow mortality. Finally, in its last week it moderated with suddenness into the 80's and birds flooded north in a great hurry to bring up-to-date what had been, to that point, a tardy migration. On Friday evening, May 1st, 74 birds were banded and 12 returns captured in 123 net-hours (0.60 birds banded/n-h or 0.70 captures/n-h). On the next day, 246 birds were banded and 33 returns captured (0.69 birds banded/n-h or 0.78 captures/n-h) in 357 n-h. The remaining weekend produced only average yields to give the final monthly average of 0.47 b/n-h, or, including returns, 0.55 c/n-h).

The banding was done by Will D. Merritt, Jr.; Robert J. Pantle and his wife; and myself with my father's (Peter J. Yunick) help. On May 9, in addition to 128 new birds and 24 returns, we had 75-100 members and guests of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, and on May 16 a group of about 30 Union College students to view the banding.

The more unusual captures including a blue-winged and mourning warbler and yellow-breasted chat. Unusual to us also when we first began the spring banding and compared its results to those of the fall, were some of the differences in abundance of certain species between the two seasons. We have now come to accept these as not so unusual. One of the most notable is the white-throated sparrow. By not banding in April we miss part of the white-throat migration, however, since the migration of this species, peaks during May 5 to 10, we expected to catch moderate numbers of the species, based on its fall abundance. However, when one compares 39 birds this spring in 1550 net-hours against last fall's 510 in 3810 net hours (0.025/n-h in spring vs. 0.13/n-h in fall), it is apparent that there is a marked difference in abundance. This difference is further accentuated when one eliminates those fall net-hours prior to the beginning of the white-throat migration. By counting only from mid-September to the end of October, 508 white-throats were banded in 2073 net-hours (0.25/n-h) indicating an approximately ten fold difference.

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MANOMET BIRD OBSERVATORY SPRING SUMMARY  
By Wayne R. Petersen, Staff Biologist - MBO

Southeastern Massachusetts has long been considered an avian desert for spring migration, especially for those tropical winterers bound for