

**AUTUMN MIGRATION OF THRUSHES (*Catharus*) AT A BANDING SITE IN CENTRAL FLORIDA**

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The timing of bird migration varies even between closely related species and over short distances (e.g., Remsen et al. 1996), and perhaps over decades as a result of climate change (Jenni and Kéry 2003), but there are relatively few quantitative benchmarks of the phenomenon in Florida based on mortalities (such as tower kills) or captures.

Here we present information on the capture of fall-migrating thrushes at Wekiwa Springs State Park, Apopka, Florida, and compare it to data from kills at towers in the Florida Panhandle and central Florida.

We captured birds in nets 2.3 m × 13.8 m, with a 30 mm mesh. We opened them most days from 1 September through 31 October 1995 through 1998, from 15-30 minutes before sunrise until approximately 1100 hours. Nets were closed during rain and the few days personnel were unavailable to operate the station. We banded all captured birds with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum bands.

Veeries (*Catharus fuscescens*) were captured from the first day of September through the first two weeks of October. Swainson's Thrushes (*C. ustulatus*) were captured from the middle of September to the end of October, with the peak from the last of September to early October. Gray-cheeked Thrushes (*C. minimus*) were captured from the middle of September to late October. Wood Thrushes (*C. mustelinus*) were captured during October (Table 1). None of these thrushes breeds in central Florida (AOU 1998).

Crawford (1981) reported casualties at the WCTV tower at the Tall Timbers Research Station near Tallahassee, Leon County, from 1955 through 1980, and found that most casualties of Wood Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush and Swainson's Thrush occurred in the last 10 days of September and the first 20 days of October. Veeries were found in highest numbers in the middle third of September, with second highest numbers in the last third of September. Taylor and Anderson (1973, 1974) found similar results from 1969 through 1972 at the WDBO tower in Orlando, Orange County (Table 1). Body counts were conducted in early morning at both towers indicating that death occurred during the night.

Veeries were the most numerous captured and killed, followed by Swainson's, Gray-cheeked and Wood Thrushes in Wekiwa Springs State Park and at the WDBO tower. The

**Table 1. Thrushes captured in Wekiwa Springs State Park 1995-1998 and migratory thrushes killed at the WDBO Tower, Orlando, Orange County, Florida 1969-1972.**

Species	Wekiwa River Basin		WDBO	
	Number Captured	Date Range	Number Killed	Date Range
Veery	214	Sep-Oct	24	Sep-Oct
Swainson's	94	Sep-Oct	18	Sep-Oct
Gray-cheeked	21	Sep-Oct	9	Oct
Wood	6	Oct	3	Oct

time of captures coincides with those killed at the WDBO tower. A comparison of the data from Wekiwa Springs State Park and the WDBO tower suggests that migration of thrushes through Central Florida occurs equally during the day and night.

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