

The station continues to be a focal point for visitors from foreign banding programs as well as serving as a training and educational site for interested staff. We have two experienced volunteers as well as employees to help with set-up, data entry, bird extraction, etc. Because the station is located in an area of the refuge that is closed to the general public, we cannot encourage outside participation. Researchers, however, wishing to visit the site are encouraged to contact Danny Bystrak at dbystrak@usgs.gov.

Greatly assisting in this effort were: Sandy Teliak (who wrote this report), Mike Quinlan, Jo Anna Lutmerding and Bruce Peterjohn. Thanks to banders-in-training Matt Rogosky, Jasmine Rajbhandary and Jennifer McKay and to other staff who lent assistance.

**Foreman's Branch
Bird Observatory** **391-0760**

Kingstown, Queen Anne's Co., MD

Banders: J. G. Gruber*, P. Gruber. M. Gimpel, D. Small, A. C. Spears

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This was the 17th fall banding season for Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory. Productivity was higher than our 10-year average because of a large reduction in net-hours. We did not keep nets open as long into less productive afternoon hours as we have in the past. Total number of birds banded did not suffer greatly from this decision and productivity per 100 net-hours increased. Species diversity was slightly above the average of 120.

The fall weather was overall unremarkable in comparison to the past five years. Banding highlights were few. Notable catches for the season were our second only Barred Owl on 26 Oct, a station record high total of 242 Purple Finches, a Clay-colored Sparrow on 5 Nov, a single Yellow-throated Vireo on 7 Sep, and a Marsh Wren on 24 Sep. Notably absent from the nets this fall was the Red-breasted Nuthatch; a few individuals passed through the banding station, but they were scarce throughout the local area all season. Bicknell's Thrush was caught three times this fall with one each on 28 Sep, 2 Oct, and 5 Oct.

We thank our Washington College intern, Christie Phebus, for her dedication and hard work at Foreman's Branch over the past three years. She graduates in the spring of 2015 with a B.S. in Environmental Studies and we shall miss her and all her hard work at the station. In addition to the banders already listed above the following people volunteered many hours helping at the station: Harry Sears, Henry Davis, Greg Cole, Hanson Robbins, Jeannine Fleegle, Jennie Carr, Kailani Clarke, Andrew Wade, Kathy Thornton, and Anne and Brennan O'Connor.

Kiawah Island **326-0801**

Banding Station (KIBS)

Town of Kiawah Island, Charleston County, SC

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This was the sixth fall banding season on Kiawah Island and the third in which we have banded daily. Kiawah Island is an 8,000 ac barrier island and residential/resort community located approximately 20 mi southeast of Charleston, SC. The banding site is situated at the extreme western end of the island in secondary dune scrub/shrub and high marsh with wax-myrtle, sea ox-eye, and marsh-elder being the dominate plant species. We operated 23 nets daily, weather permitting, from 15 Aug through 30 Nov. Nets were generally opened 30 min before sunrise and closed approximately 5-6 hr later.

We operated for 103 days resulting in 11,565.6 net-hours (nh). A total of 5,086 new individuals were banded and 1,312 birds were recaptured of 80 different species. The capture rate for new birds was 44.0 birds/100nh with an additional 11.3 birds/100 nh as recaptures. Our capture rate decreased by 3.7 birds/100nh from last year despite banding over 500 more individuals compared to last fall. This is most likely an artifact of an increase in effort due to being open five more days than the previous fall and the addition of three new nets. Three species made up 61% of the season's catch: Common Yellowthroats (23.9%), Gray Catbirds (20.6%), and Yellow-rumped Warblers (16.6%). We banded six species never before captured at the station: Cooper's Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Clapper Rail, Sedge Wren, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

We had 1,312 recaptures (1,215 repeats, 95 returns, 2 potential foreign recaptures) during the 2014 fall season. Of the 95 returns, 64 were from migrant species (28 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 16 Painted Buntings, 7 Gray Catbirds, 4 Swamp Sparrows, 2 White-throated Sparrows, 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 1 Song Sparrow, 1 House Wren, 1 Hermit Thrush, 1 Common Yellowthroat, and 1 Prothonotary Warbler). All returning migrants, with the exception of the Prothonotary Warbler, potentially either wintered or breed on Kiawah Island. The returning Prothonotary Warbler is exceptional as it truly showed site fidelity to a stop-over site. The two potential foreign recapture this season were both

Painted Buntings. At the time of this report, I was still waiting to hear back from the BBL on the origin of the two birds.

I would like to express gratitude to the Kiawah Conservancy and the Town of Kiawah Island for supporting our project by providing the funding to purchase banding supplies and to allow the hiring of four bird banding technicians. Mattie VandenBoom, William Oakley, Libby Natola, and Matt Zak were a great addition to the team and their hard work was greatly appreciated! Additionally, we thank Kiawah Development Partners for permission to conduct research on their property. I would also like to thank all of the volunteers that participated during our banding season.

Please check out the KIBS blog in 2015. It is updated daily with the banding totals for each day, photos, interesting anecdotes, and occasionally information of ageing and sexing certain species.

The blog can be viewed at:

www.kiawahislandbanding.blogspot.com

Jekyll Island Banding Station **310-0812**

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This season a total of 1,377 birds were banded, which is just 31 fewer than in 2013, despite an additional 640 net hours of operation this year. While the previous few years have shown an increase in total number of birds banded, this year's decrease could be due in part to weather patterns and other variables affecting individual species migration during the weeks when the station was open.

Our busiest day in 2014 was 4 Oct, on which we banded 185 birds, which is over 100 fewer birds than on our busiest day in 2013, when we banded 295. In fact, there were two days in 2013 with more than 200 birds, and this year we did not reach that total in a single day. However, 2014 resulted in five days with more than 100 birds banded each of those days, making for less extreme variation between daily totals than in 2013. Persistent southeastern winds present this season, especially during the last week the station was open, and the absence of any major storm systems during this time could be part of the reason for less extreme migrant peaks in 2014.

Migration seemed to be steady through the dates we banded for Common Yellowthroats, Gray Catbirds, Painted Buntings, and the majority of other species banded. The Western Palm Warblers had one large push on 4 Oct accounting for nearly 90% of birds banded that day. However, the rest of the WPWAs did not appear in

great numbers until 16 Oct, when 51 were banded, and 68 were banded on the station's last day for the season, 19 Oct. Given the increase in Western Palm capture rate toward the end of the season, it is possible that they may have been migrating through later than in some other years.

Tomoka Basin Banding Station **292-0810**

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This was the second fall since a control burn was conducted in Aug 2013 in the south area of Tomoka State Park (GPS: 29° 20'26.4"N 81° 05'07.8" W). The undergrowth of saw palmetto has grown back considerably. One of the results was fewer flycatchers than last fall. The Gray Catbirds returned to the lower area of the net lanes, being caught in nets 5-10 as compared to last year catch in nets 1-4 where the burn did not reach. The top five catches for the fall were very different from last year. White-eyed Vireos have never been in the top ten birds, let alone the top five. Black-throated Blue Warblers are consistently falling in numbers overall each season. At least 75% of the Black-throated Blues were of the Appalachian race. Myrtle Warblers have not been on the top five for several years until this fall. This was a surprise because there are almost no wax myrtle or juniper berries available on the south side.

Of the 36 species I captured this fall, a Cooper's Hawk and a Yellow-breasted Chat were both first-time species, bringing the total number of species banded in TSP to 87. Happily, one of the park rangers just happened to be present when the hawk hit the net. He held the hawk while I banded and measured it. The chat is the first ever recorded in the park. A Northern Harrier narrowly missed getting caught because it managed to climb out just as we rounded the corner to the net. To be on the safe side I closed that net the rest of the week.

The weather was very cooperative this fall with little wind, no rain days, and only four days that no birds were caught. Many days had only two or three catches. It was a full month before a single recapture occurred.

As always, I am grateful for the support of the rangers of Tomoka State Park and the help of my volunteers, Bill Horton and Heike and Bert Charest.

**Bill Baggs Cape Florida
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