

**Marsh Banding Trail****422-0853**

Cooper, Kalamazoo County, MI

Coordinator: **Rich Keith**Banders: **Rich Keith**

Assistants: Brenda Keith, John Brenneman, Jen Tagett, Warren Whaley, Margaret Hahn, Nicole Uebbing, Tori Steely, Box Nixon, Elyse Coffey, Maureen Hurd, Zarina Sheikh.

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Banding has been part of the Kalamazoo Nature Center since its inception in 1960. Fall migration banding has been conducted under standard protocol since 1974 including the Marsh Trail (MA). In 1990 banding began at the Pitsfield (PF) site, near Vicksburg. The MA and PF trails have always been similar in habitat and effort and in recent years we have made them as much alike as possible with two distinct trails 24 km apart. Habitat management has occurred at PF since 1995 and at MA since about 2010. Each trail follows the same protocol, runs about the same number of nets, has a component of wetland, prairie, woodland, mature forest, and each runs a similar number of feeders with nets in October. Since adding Ruby-throated Hummingbird banding in 2007, traps have been run at PF and, depending on bander availability, at MA.

Several species set new records on the Marsh Trail during the fall 2015. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (92) were high due to increased effort. Acadian Flycatchers (17) are interesting as other trails here always captured small numbers: from 1990 - 2008, MA averaged 2.1 and then for 2009 - 2014 the average was 11. Habitat maintenance likely has had an effect on Acadian Flycatcher captures. Ruby-crowned Kinglet (293 MA captures, 109 PF captures) were well above the 25-yr averages of 123 for MA and 138 for PF. Also of note, these high numbers follow the very low numbers from 2014: 71 at MA and 49 at PF. American Robin, 106 at MA and 154 at PF, were above the 25-yr average of 31 (MA) and 122 (PF). American Robins tend to fluctuate a great deal depending on food availability. Orange-crowned Warbler was a record high on MA with 24. Common Yellowthroat, 254 at MA and 89 at PF, set records at

both MA and PF in 2015. Their 25-yr average is 107 at MA and 57 at PF. Since habitat work has begun on the Marsh Trail numbers have been above average every year. Eastern White-crowned Sparrow are seldom captured at PF, while at MA a record 88 were banded this fall. Indigo Bunting is another species normally captured in small numbers: PF has averaged just 7 per year since 1990 while MA has averaged 36. While numbers have been higher since habitat work began the 154 banded at MA this fall is nearly twice the previous high of 85 in 1998. American Goldfinches have always been abundant here. From 1990 - 2008 MA banded 8,312 (average 437) and PF banded 2,827 (average 149). From 2009 to 2014 MA averaged 595 and PF averaged 536. The 784 American Goldfinches banded on MA in 2015 was the second highest since 1990.

**Pitsfield Banding Station****421-0853**

Vicksburg, Kalamazoo County, MI

Coordinator: **Rich Keith**Banders: **Rich Keith**

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I have given a description of history and habitat in the narrative with the Marsh Trail account (above). The Marsh trail account also discusses three Pitsfield (PF) species, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Common Yellowthroat and American Goldfinch. Another species, Eastern Bluebird, at 27 was the highest number ever banded at PF. Eastern Bluebird is one of our most commonly banded species (over 25,000) due to extensive effort on bluebird trails over the years but which does not come to the nets in large numbers. Tennessee Warbler (155) made our top ten but was well below the 25-yr average of 235. Interestingly, while Tennessee Warbler numbers have trended lower at PF in recent years (1990 - 2008 average 247 and 2009 - 2014 average 201), the opposite has taken place at MA (1990 - 2008 average 103 and 2009 - 2014 average 140). I believe this is due to habitat management. Tennessee Warbler is Kalamazoo Valley Bird Observatory's (KVBO) ninth

most commonly banded species at just over 15,000. Myrtle Warbler, KVBO's third most commonly banded species at just fewer than 35,000, was in low numbers, 271 at PF, 146 at MA, in 2015. Myrtle Warblers are always high in numbers and have trended up in recent years: at MA from 1990 - 2008 captures averaged 78 per year and from 2009 - 2014 captures have averaged 247, while at PF captures averaged 443 per year for the period 1990 - 2008 and averaged 559 for the years 2009 - 2014. While habitat management has something to do with this upward trend, I believe it has more to do with the Myrtle Warbler. American Goldfinch, KVBO's most commonly banded species with just over 39,000 banded, was in low numbers at PF (393) in 2015 yet was still our most commonly banded species this fall. American Goldfinch is just the opposite of Myrtle Warbler in that numbers and trails are switched. From 1990 - 2008, PF averaged just 149 American Goldfinch and for 2009 - 2014 captures have averaged 536 per year. MA on the other hand averaged 437 for 1990 - 2008 and then rose to an average of 595 for 2009 - 2014. This year MA had 784 which is the second highest on that trail since 1990.

Ticks continue to be a focus at PF and our collaborations with Michigan State University and Texas A&M continue. Please visit [naturecenter.org](http://naturecenter.org) to see some of our publications including our latest: Keith, R. S., B. S. Keith, W. C. Scharf, and S. A. Hamer. 2015. *Ixodes brunneus* (Acarina: Ixodidae) from two bird hosts: A new Michigan tick. *Great Lakes Entomologist* 48:201-204.

**Lincoln Land Community College Banding Station****394-0893**

Springfield, Sangamon County, IL

Coordinator: **Vernon Kleen**Banders: **Vernon Kleen and Anthony Rothering**

Primary Assistants: Tyler Beckerman, Elizabeth Erickson, Joe Gardner, Anna Kozlov, Jim Mordacq and Libby Roehrs

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Although this was the fourth fall banding season at this location, it was only the third "full" season. The Oct. - Dec. 2015 & Jan. - Mar. 2016

station's habitats consist of four components: a) an older, regenerated deciduous woods with a thick honeysuckle understory and a slightly sloped ravine with a narrow, shallow stream that flows from the campus lake (below the dam) to Lake Springfield (off campus); b) a woodland edge next to a crop field or mowed grassy lane; c) a small, managed prairie; and d) an area in the vicinity of a group of bird feeders close to the campus lake. With the station based at a local community college, dozens of classroom students visited the station as part of a lab assignment or for extra credit. Weather, especially strong southerly and/or westerly winds and rain, affected the season's potential results by forcing the early closure of the nets or the failure to open them at all on several days. In addition to the 2,047 birds banded, there were 57 returns and 572 repeats. The station owes its success to a cadre of dedicated volunteers and substantial financial support including an anonymous donor who provided us with a Polaris "Bird Mobile".

**Whigg Meadow****352-0840**

Robbinsville (NC), Monroe County, TN

Coordinator: **Scott Rush**

Banders: **Scott Rush, Jay Dedeker and Nelson Edwards**

Primary Assistants: Charlie Muse, Eric Soehren and Aung Chan

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The number of birds banded and species diversity were down from previous years but the number of visitors to site totaled about 250 individuals to learn about bird migration, bird banding and Whigg Meadow. Included among these visitors were classes from several schools and universities located in the surrounding states. Extension of new net lanes in high elevation heath habitat was completed and run through the season, producing additional captures of typical species. The Whigg Meadow Station has been run for 18 yr. The Swainson's Warbler captured on 31 Aug was the most recent new species for the station.