

Jekyll Island Banding Station 310-0812

Jekyll Island, GA

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For the second year in a row, JIBS banded a rare species for Georgia. On a relatively quiet day I found myself removing a small vireo from the holding bag. The bird felt and appeared different from any other vireo I had banded before. After many minutes of comparing the bird in my hand to various field guidebooks and consulting the "banders' bible" (Peter Pyle's *Identification Guide to North American Birds*), I came to the conclusion that I was holding a Bell's Vireo. Even after banding thousands of birds over many years, it was absolutely enthralling to band a "new" species.

While Western Palm Warblers and Common Yellowthroats maintained a strong presence in 2008, their numbers were somewhat down from 2007. This year these two species accounted for 57% of our total, down from 67% in 2007. Other species made up the difference. Numbers of Painted Buntings, American Redstarts, Black-throated Blue Warblers, Northern Cardinals, and House Wrens doubled or tripled over the previous year's totals. The operation of the Jekyll Island Station is entirely dependent on the generous donation of time from volunteers. I would particularly like to thank my sub-permitees Jan Pitman and Charles Ratliff, aspiring banders Evan Pitman and Laura Steadman, and Carol "Deputy Strike" Schneier.

Tomoka Bird Banding Station 292-0810

Ormond Beach

Volusia Co., FL

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The fall banding season at Tomoka State Park, Ormond Beach, FL (GPS 29 20 54 N, 81 05 08 W), alone produced almost as many newly banded birds as the entire banding season for 2007 - 2008. Thanks to rain during the summer and some productive rain days this fall, the environment was richer with food sources for the birds.

Only a couple of days were cancelled by inclement weather.

The most exciting capture of the fall season was a Lincoln's Sparrow, a first for the park and banding station. Few Lincoln's are found around the state in the winter and this may be a rare event for Volusia County. Three species of sparrows were caught this fall: Lincoln's, Savannah, and Chipping for a total of five sparrows.

One Gray Catbird returned during the fall on 16 Oct, first banded at the park on 1 Jan 2007. Comparing notes from the original banding session, the bird was a second year, sex unknown juvenile. Plumage, internal beak, and eyes confirmed it to now be an adult bird, sex still unknown.

Statistically, Tomoka State Park has a high percentage of juveniles traveling through both in the fall and the spring. It is also interesting that a higher percentage of females of all species also use this route on migration.

Of great concern, in my opinion, a reflection of drought conditions at TSP, is the lack of Hermit and Wood thrushes. This is the second fall for no Hermit Thrushes, and the second full year for no Wood Thrushes. Although I have seen several Hermit Thrushes when birding, I have not seen any Wood Thrushes. The number of Northern Waterthrushes was also way down.

A large group of visitors from the Halifax and West Volusia Audubon groups attended a banding session on 15 Oct. This was especially eventful for them, because most had never seen a Lincoln's Sparrow before. A number of visitors of the park on different occasions happened by the station and enjoyed seeing the process and expressed gratitude for being allowed the opportunity.

Many thanks go to Denise Huckaby who scribed all the data, including sheets and envelopes for fecal and feather sample submissions. And, as always, heart-felt gratitude goes to all the park employees who are so supportive, ready to whack down a weed, move a picnic table, check on me out on Helicopter Island, and keep a watchful eye on my poles.