

Migratory Movements of Banded American Redstarts

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I obtained from the Bird Banding Laboratory a listing of all encounters of banded American Redstarts (*Setophaga ruticilla*) made before 11 July 1986. The listing contained a total of 200 encounters. These were examined for information on migratory movements.

Of the 200 encounters, 20 (10.0%) were made in the same 10-min. latitude-longitude block of banding, with no migration period between the banding and encounter dates. An additional 121 (60.5%) encounters were made in the same latitude-longitude block of banding after two or more migration periods. These were almost all cases of birds returning to their nesting or hatching places, showing a strong tendency for American Redstarts to return in their northward migration to their nesting or hatching places. This is best shown by birds banded in Massachusetts, chiefly by W. P. Wharton, with 46 of 48 American Redstarts encountered in the same 10 min. latitude-longitude block of banding. All of these 46 birds were banded and encountered during the period from 11 May to 20 September, defining the time American Redstarts are on their nesting grounds in Massachusetts.

Of the 200 encounters of banded American Redstarts, 13 (6.5%) were made outside of the 10-min. latitude-longitude block of banding but inside the state in which banding took place, and 46 (23.0%) were made outside of the state in which banding took place. Six American Redstarts were encountered after being banded in Virginia, and these were all banded during September, suggesting that the birds were in autumn migration when banded. None of these six encounters were made at the banding place, showing the small prospects for encounter of American Redstarts banded when in migration.

An American Redstart was banded in New Brunswick by G. F. Bennett on 16 July 1976 and encountered in New York on 27 August 1976, showing this bird leaving the northern part of the nesting range in late August. However, two birds banded in Oregon on 17 May 1956 by Mrs. R. A. Evans were encountered at the banding place on 30 October 1957, showing some American Redstarts remaining until late October north to 42.3 north latitude. Departure from the nesting grounds by individual birds is thus shown to cover two months. The time of southward migration of one American Redstart was shown particularly well by a bird banded by M. J. Pion on 21 September 1980 in New York and encountered in Virginia on 27 September*1980.

This bird also showed a relatively rapid rate of migration, having traveled approximately 960 km in six days for an average of 160 km per day. Another American Redstart banded by Mrs. R. W. Patterson in Maine on 7 September 1967 was encountered in South Carolina on 26 September 1967, having traveled approximately 1250 km in 19 days at an average daily rate of 66 km.

A tendency was shown by banded American Redstarts to travel directly southward from their nesting to their wintering grounds. Thus, a bird banded in Connecticut by R. C. Dewire on 12 September 1980 was encountered in the Bahama Islands on 2 October 1980. Similarly, a bird banded by W. P. Smith in Virginia on 10 September 1971 was encountered in Haiti on 14 November 1971. Also, a bird banded by J. T. Emlen in Wisconsin on 19 May 1962 was encountered in Honduras on 8 January 1963. Again, a bird banded by M. P. Sprayer in Minnesota on 19 May 1982 was encountered in Honduras on 17 March 1983. Showing a tendency for the birds to fly directly southward in their autumn migration, even if this involves over-water flight, was a bird banded by D. N. Corkran in New Jersey at 40.2 north latitude and 73.5 west longitude on 2 September 1974 and encountered over the Atlantic Ocean at 19.3 N.L. and 73.4 W.L. on 14 October 1974.

While most autumn movements of banded American Redstarts were almost directly southward, a bird banded in Wisconsin by J. N. Brouchod on 6 September 1966 was encountered in Northeastern Ohio on 22 September 1966, indicating a southeastward flight.

Some American Redstarts traveled much farther southward than others, showing the birds traveling farther than necessary to take them to winter grounds suitable for their species. The southernmost record of a banded American Redstart was of a bird banded in Venezuela at 10.3 N.L. on 22 October 1960 and encountered in Virginia on 5 May 1963.

Banding and encounter records indicate that American Redstarts may be permanent residents in the southern part of their breeding range. Thus, an American Redstart was banded by W. P. Nickell in Mexico on 16 February 1960 and encountered in the same latitude-longitude block on 18 July 1961, showing this bird in Mexico during both the winter and nesting seasons.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the memory of W. P. Wharton who banded 83.5% of the 49 American Redstarts that were banded in Massachusetts and 20.5% of the total 200.