

and Northern Parula were captured at a little more than 50% of their 2004 levels. Two of the signature species from 2004 were also slightly less abundant in 2005: 69 Worm-eating Warblers (97 in 2004) and 14 Swainson's Warblers (22 in 2004). Gray Catbirds and Common Yellowthroats, on the other hand, showed significant increases, with 143 banded of the former (99 in 2004) and 95 of the latter (39 in 2004). Some of the changes in species abundance possibly are the result of hurricane damage to the site. The loss of canopy and increase in brush may attract and hold certain species to the area, while at the same time altering the vegetation structure around the nets affects the 'catchability' of other species. The 2006 field season may give us more insight into the nature of these changes and the implications for stopover on our site.

Adult migrants continue to make up a significant percentage of our captures, with only 60.5% of the overall total consisting of hatching-year (HY) birds. This percentage has remained fairly constant over the four years the site has been operating. The percent of HY birds within species has been less consistent, but generally still shows a greater proportion of adults to young than many other coastal banding stations report. The increase over the last two seasons in the captures of Red-eyed Vireos, Common Yellowthroats and Gray Catbirds has come with an increase in the percentage of adults. For example, Red-eyed Vireos in 2003 were 93.3% HY (30 banded), in 2004, 94.2% HY (52 banded) and in 2005, 76.4% HY of 72 banded. Species such as American Redstart, Black-and-white Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler and Northern Waterthrush continue to vary between 40 and 60% adults over the years of the study.

A record 20 birds returned from previous years, all as winter residents except for the six permanent resident Northern Cardinals recaptured. A Gray Catbird and an American Redstart were the first returns of those species we have recorded. Eight Ovenbirds and four Blue-gray Gnatcatchers rounded out the returns. One Ovenbird banded in 2002 has returned every winter since. We captured no foreign recoveries in 2005.

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My banding activities in 2005 covered the same period as in 2004, and the number of net hours was almost identical. Hence, the juxtaposition of the data from both years in the tables can tell my story: The number of birds captured in 2005 was only one half of what it was in 2004, making the netting efficiency a dismal six b/100nh. Interestingly, the total number of species was not much lower in 2005 than it had been in 2004, suggesting that a poor showing in 2005 was shared by many species. An overriding factor contributing to the scarcity of birds must have been a persistent drought that was associated with high temperatures. Whereas the month of August was much wetter than average and kept my boggy area flooded until early September, the hurricanes that devastated areas west and south of here provided only minimal precipitation in September and nothing more than an occasional drizzle in October. As a consequence, leaf litter and soil in my yard and the adjoining woods dried out, ground cover and many shrubs wilted, and trees like the water oak prematurely shed their leaves.

In spite of the small number of captured birds, a feature quite consistent with earlier years was that the top two positions in the list of the ten most commonly banded species were taken by White-eyed Vireo and Northern Cardinal, and that the Hooded Warbler retained a relatively high rank. The absence from the list of the Myrtle Warbler for the third year in a row is troubling. It cannot be attributed to a later arrival, because captures of Myrtle Warblers remained relatively rare events also in the weeks following the period covered by my AFR reports.

Two returns were recorded: an Ovenbird captured on 11 Sep had been banded on 9 Sep 2004, and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet netted on 14 Nov had been banded on 11 Nov 2004. Both were second-year birds in 2005.

I thank U.S Cellular for its permission to conduct banding activities in the woods surrounding their telecommunication tower.