

Bird Banding at NBNC

It is said that “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,” and this was certainly the case at North Branch Nature Center, where bird banding was formally launched in the summer of 2011. In bird banding, songbirds are captured in mist nets, carefully removed, identified and measured, and “tagged” with a band before being released. Bands look like little metal bracelets the birds wear on their ankles to help identify them if they are recaptured in the future.



Nashville Warblers don't breed at NBNC, but we caught this one during fall migration.

Being able to differentiate individual birds allows banders to gain insight into their abundance, productivity, survival rate, and other demographics that would not otherwise be possible. Furthermore, close examination of birds-in-the-hand can reveal anatomical traits that would be indistinguishable through binoculars, such as weight, feather molt, breeding status, and others. Decades of banding has demonstrated this technique to be a safe, cost effective way of learning more about birds, with meaningful insights towards improving avian conservation.

The data collected this year has already shed some light on the birds of NBNC. Of the 32 species of birds that were caught, ten species had individuals that were recaptured, which is a good indication that these species were sticking around, perhaps to breed. One Common Yellowthroat was caught on five separate occasions between June 1 and July 16! It will be especially interesting next year to see how many banded birds return to NBNC after spending the winter in the tropics.

In addition to providing important scientific data, banding has offered a unique way for children and adults at NBNC to connect with birds. Over 75 children and 20 adults attended banding demonstrations, getting an up-close look at how scientists study birds. Some kids even helped release birds, a privilege that has inspired awe, curiosity, and a greater consciousness of how extraordinary birds are.

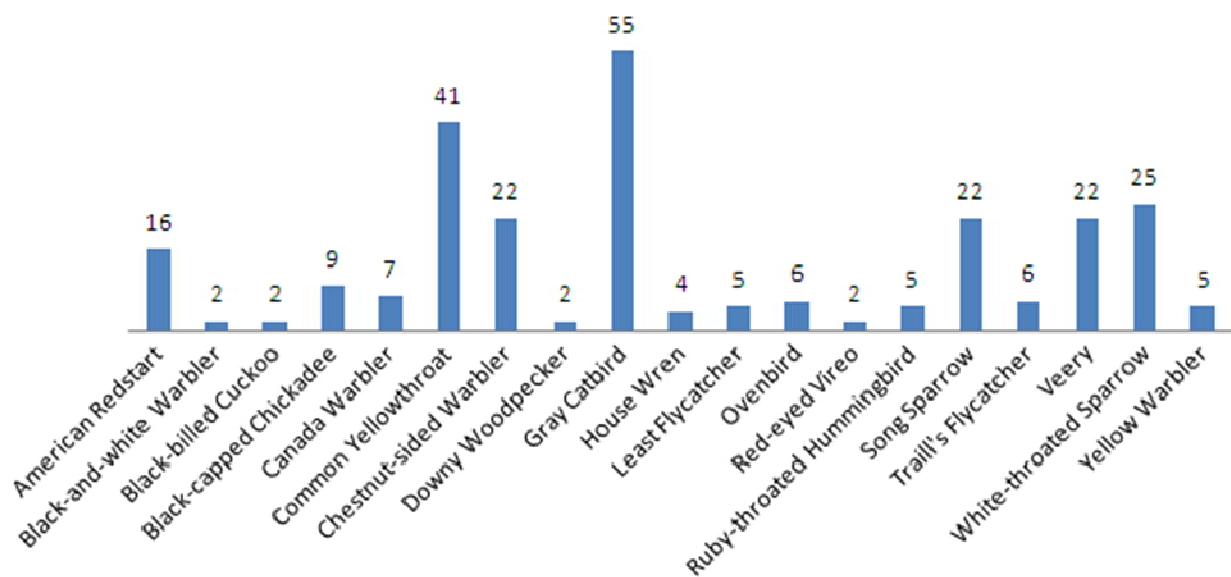


Black-billed Cuckoos are elusive and rarely seen, but catching this adult allowed close examination of its exquisite eye ring. A juvenile cuckoo was also caught this year, indicating that these secretive birds likely bred at or near NBNC



A summer camper delicately holds a Cedar Waxwing before releasing it.

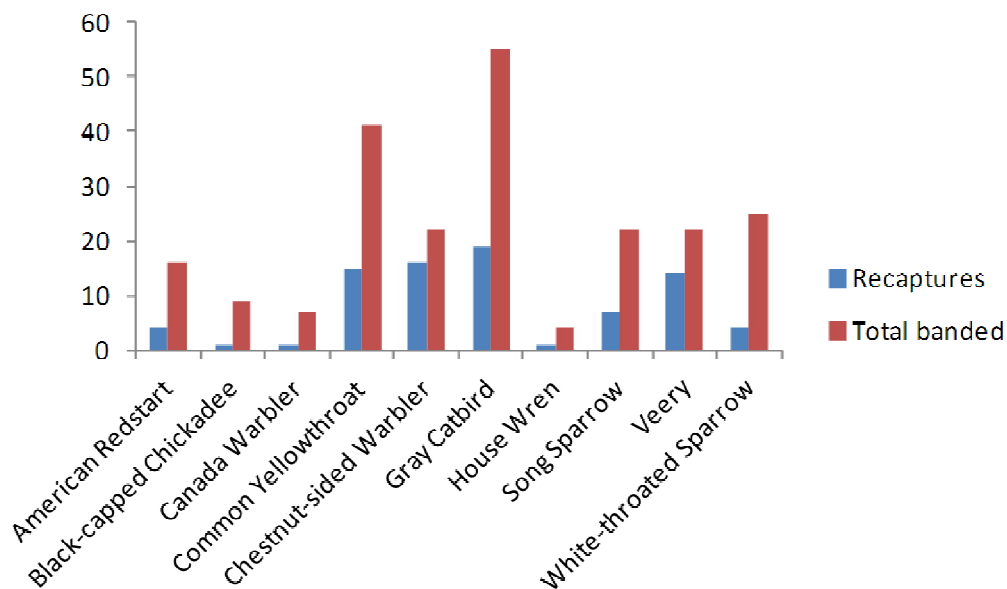
Birds Banded in 2011 @ the North Branch Nature Center



Species banded only 1 time

- Blackburnian Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Cedar Waxwing
- Eastern Phoebe
- Hermit Thrush
- Magnolia Warbler
- Mourning Warbler
- Nashville Warbler
- Purple Finch
- Savannah Sparrow
- Wilson's Warbler
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Yellow-rumped Warbler

Recaptures of Birds Banded at NBNC



Species Captured at NBNC by Date

	TOTAL	1-Jun	6-Jun	15-Jun	20-Jun	12-Jul	16-Jul	25-Jul	4-Aug	17-Aug	30-Aug	11-Sep
American Redstart	20	3	-	3	4	4	-	3	2	1	-	-
Black and White Warbler	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Black-billed Cuckoo	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Black-capped Chickadee	10	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	8
Blackburnian Warbler	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black-throated Blue Warbler	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Canada Warbler	8	-	-	-	1	1	3	2	-	1	-	-
Cedar Waxwing	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Common Yellowthroat	56	3	3	4	3	5	7	7	10	7	6	1
Chestnut-sided Warbler	38	4	8	2	3	2	3	4	7	1	3	1
Downy Woodpecker	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easterh Phoebe	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Gray Catbird	74	5	9	6	4	9	5	8	6	7	3	12
Hermit Thrush	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
House Wren	5	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Least Flycatcher	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	-	-
Magnolia Warbler	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Mourning Warbler	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Nashville Warbler	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Ovenbird	6	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	2	-
Purple Finch	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-eyed Vireo	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	-
Savannah Sparrow	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Song Sparrow	29	3	4	-	-	2	4	6	7	-	2	1
Traill's Flycatcher	6	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-
Veery	36	1	4	3	7	4	5	6	5	1	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	29	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	4	1	5	14
Wilson's Warbler	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yellow Warbler	5	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-