
News, Notes, Comments

The following four notes report on interesting encounters from banding in Michigan.

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Long-distance same-season banding recovery of a Swainson's Thrush.

On 31 May 2014, during the regular migration monitoring and stopover ecology research conducted at the Marsh Station at Lake St. Clair Metropark, Macomb County, Michigan (42° 34' 30" N, 82° 48' 32" W), a Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) was recaptured in the early afternoon when captures were starting to get really slow. The volunteer who extracted the bird had gotten it out of a net close to where we were banding along the closed maintenance road in the park. Naturally I presumed it was the only Swainson's I had banded that morning, but when I looked at the band it was clearly not a USFWS band. The numbers were all along the bottom of the band, with the inscription at the top being "Tierradeaves.com", and a small "c" above the numbers. The full number was c0015818. It was the first ever international recapture at this station!

I immediately recognized this organization as that operated by Manuel Grosselet, who bands at a station in Veracruz, Mexico. I emailed Manuel when I still had the bird in my hand, and heard back from him later that evening when he provided the banding details. This Swainson's Thrush was banded as a SY-U on 7 May 2014 at the Observatorio de Aves del Pantano de Santa Alejandrina (OAPSA), which is east of Minatitlan, Veracruz, Mexico (17° 59' 38" N, 94° 30' 29" W). This bird traveled at least 1828 miles (2940 km) NNE in only 24 days, if it went in a straight line (Figure 3), to get from Mexico to Michigan. I aged the bird as AHY because it was not showing any retained buff-tipped juvenile coverts, it had a fat score of 1 (0-7 scale), and weighed 34.0 g.

Most Swainson's Thrushes winter well south of Veracruz, and breed at least 200 miles (322 km) north of Lake St. Clair Metropark, so

the breeding and wintering sites this bird are not known. It is also not known if this bird flew straight north across the Gulf of Mexico, which would be a non-stop trans-Gulf flight of ~830 miles (~1334 km), or if it took an even longer circum-Gulf path through coastal Texas. So the exact distance it traveled between banding and recapture are not known, but its speed certainly is.

Thank you to Manuel Grosselet for responding so quickly with the details of the original banding of this bird, and thank you to volunteer Jacob Charlebois for extracting it from the net.

Baltimore Oriole banded in Ontario recaptured in two different years in Michigan

On 21 May 2008, during the regular migration monitoring and stopover ecology research conducted at the Marsh Station at Lake St. Clair Metropark, Macomb County, Michigan (42° 34' 30" N, 82° 48' 32" W), an ASY-M Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) was recaptured (band No. 1841-91554). This bird had been banded at Long Point Bird Observatory, Ontario (42° 35' 00" N, 80° 50' 00" W) on 17 May 2007 as SY-M, so moved 125 miles (201 km) W from the banding location in the intervening year. Three years later on 14 May 2011, it was recaptured again at the Marsh Station, now at an age of 4 years 11 months. It will never be known where this bird was in the three years between recaptures, but its return to Michigan suggests that its potential site fidelity may have been to a breeding locale rather than the location where it was originally banded which was perhaps near where it was hatched.

Weight gains and losses of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at a stopover site in Michigan

The presence of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) during the breeding season at Lake St. Clair Metropark, Macomb County, Michigan, is not well documented. Suitable breeding habitat consists of a rather isolated patch of mostly wet woodland and shrub-scrub (~22 ha, with a total park area of ~360 ha) among large open areas of freshwater marsh (~186 ha), beach (~1.9 ha), mowed lawn with sparse trees (~81 ha), a golf

course (~11 ha), and a huge parking lot (~15 ha). Within this woodland and shrub-scrub, banding has been conducted in spring and fall in two areas, a 2.8 ha site adjacent to Point Rosa Marsh from 1989 to 2000 and from 2004 to 2014 (42° 34' 29.9" N, 82° 48' 31.5" W) and a 1.2 ha site adjacent to the Meadow Loop Trail since 2015 (42° 34' 45.0" N, 82° 48' 9.2" W).

The maximum number of hummingbirds banded annually (2004-2021) here in the first week of June, at the end of spring migration monitoring, was 9 in 2013 which was exceptional; typically only one or two are banded here in early June. Reports on eBird are likewise sparse for the months of June and July with reports consisting primarily of single birds, occasionally two individuals, mainly visiting the feeders at the park's nature center. Spring banding totals here from 2004 to 2021 are modest (range 0-18). Fall migration of adult males is well underway by mid-August, with reports (eBird and pers. obs.) before 15 August consisting of fewer than 5 individuals per day. Banding results in fall (2004-2021) have consisted of >90% hatch-year individuals (range 28-158 banded annually). Thus, this location has only a small breeding population and is mainly a migration stopover site for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

An AHY-F Ruby-throated Hummingbird banded on 30 May 2020 was recaptured on 5 Sep 2020 after having likely bred in the park, when she weighed 3.19 g. She was recaptured again 16 days later on 21 Sep 2020 with a weight of 3.80 g. This gain of 0.61 g was an increase of 19.1%. Another Ruby-throated Hummingbird, a HY-F banded on 26 Sep 2020 with a weight of 4.15 g, was recaptured 5 days later on 1 Oct 2020 with a weight of 5.90 g. This gain of 1.75 g was an increase of 42.2%. Hou and Welch (2016, *Animal Behavior* 121: 87-99) documented Ruby-throated Hummingbirds gaining up to 44% in just 4 days putting this individual near that maximum range. Two others recaptured in fall of 2020 lost weight. An AHY-M banded on 8 Aug 2020 (3.25 g) was recaptured 28 days later on 5 Sep 2020 (3.09 g), a loss of 0.16 g (-4.9%). A HY-F banded on 19 Sep 2020 (3.89 g) was recaptured 2 days later on 21 Sep 2020 (3.79 g), a loss of 0.1 g (-2.6%).

Numerous individuals, mostly hatch-years, have been captured in fall migration here with weights in excess of 4.0 g (up to 5.52 g) but very few are recaptured to enable the documentation of weight gains or losses.

Two interesting White-throated Sparrow re-encounters

On 26 Sep 2009, during the regular migration monitoring and stopover ecology research conducted at the Marsh Station at Lake St. Clair Metropark, Macomb County, Michigan (42° 34' 30" N, 82° 48' 32" W), a HY-U White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) was banded (band no. 2431-38314). This bird was then re-encountered (found dead) after hitting a window at a private residence about one mile [1.6 km] NW of Purvis, Lamar County, in southern Mississippi (31° 09' 16" N, 89° 23' 54" W) on 7 Feb 2010. This bird had moved 867 miles [1395 km] SSW of where it was banded and is one of the farthest re-encounters of any species banded so far at Lake St. Clair Metropark. It is also near the southern end of the wintering range for the species.

Another interesting report came from the Lake St. Clair Metropark Nature Center staff, who reported that on 23 Jan 2010, during the cleaning out of a metal wash tub ~12 m up in a large tree that Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) have nested in for more than a decade at that time, a band was found. The band (band no. 2281-10058) was put on an ASY-U White-throated Sparrow on 27 Apr 2007 at the Marsh Station. This nest tub is not cleaned out every year, so it is unknown if the sparrow was taken by the owls in 2007, or some other year before 2010. This artificial nest structure is located about 360 yards (325 m) east of the centroid for the Marsh Station net locations. Great Horned Owls are known to take small birds as prey items, including as food for their young, but it is possible that White-throated Sparrow might be a new species on their menu.

