

WOODLANDS CONSERVANCY BIRD BANDING REPORT DECEMBER 12-13, 2013

by Donald Norman

The Woodlands Conservancy banding got underway on Thursday and Friday, December 12 and 13, 2013. On a windy Thursday at the restored area at Woodlands Trail, Jared Wolfe came down from Baton Rouge (and just back from Equatorial Guinea!) to help Don Norman set up nets, along with Katie Brasted, Derek Landrum and Jackie Bergeron from Woodlands Conservancy. Because of the wind, nets were somewhat visible to the birds and we ended up with only 4 captures, not counting all the leaves!



Typical dense blackberry thickets at the Restoration Site along Woodlands Trail in Belle Chasse. *Photo by Donald Norman.*

Northern Cardinal – hatch year
Eastern Phoebe – hatch year
Carolina Wren – adult
Carolina Chickadee – adult

We plan to revisit this site later in December under better conditions with more nets bringing the net count up to 13-15. Possible dates include the 20th, 24th and 26th. There are many birds in this area, so we hope to have a lively day there.



Hatch Year Eastern Phoebe. *Photo by Katie Brasted, Woodlands Conservancy.*

Banding at the Woodlands Conservancy's Delacroix Preserve tract fared much better, despite being Friday the 13th, with 17 captures. Erik Johnson from Audubon Louisiana, Soodong Lee from LSU, Katie and Derek from Woodlands Conservancy, and Jessica Henkel from Tulane helped check nets and process birds. After a cold morning, the birds trickled in, with birds still in the nets at 12:45 when we closed up for the day.

4 White-eyed Vireos (3 hatch years and one unknown age)
3 hatch-year male Myrtle Warblers (Yellow-rumped warblers)
3 Ruby-crowned Kinglets (1 unbanded male, 1 hatch-year female, 1 unknown-age male)
2 hatch-year Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (1 female and 1 possible female).
2 Northern Cardinals (1 hatch-year female and 1 really bright unknown-aged male)
Orange-crowned Warbler (adult male)
And adult Gray Catbird!



Typical successional forest in the Delacroix Preserve. Other areas are heavily infested with privet. *Photo by Donald Norman*



Banding crew at Delacroix Preserve, Woodlands Conservancy, December 13, 2013. Soodong Lee, Donald Norman, Jessican Henkel, and Derek Landrum. *Photo by Erik Johnson*. Missing from Picture, Katie Brasted. Your typical geeky photograph!



White-eyed Vireo. Woodlands Conservancy, 2013. *Photo by Erik Johnson.*



Wing of White-eyed Vireo, showing eccentric molt, the outer 6 primaries (including the smallest P10) being replaced, along with the innermost secondaries, SS7-9. *Photograph by Erik Johnson, at Woodlands Conservancy, December 13, 2013.*

The hatch year Blue-headed Vireo was a nice surprise, as this winter visitor is quite uncommon, but occurs in flocks, which was how it was captured.



Blue-headed Vireo. *Photo by Katie Brasted*



Gray Catbird, captured December 13, 2013 at the Delacroix Preserve, Woodlands Conservancy. *Photo by Erik Johnson.*

Every time the sun came out, the White-eyed Vireos were singing. It will be interesting to see how many we capture here! Other interesting sightings include two woodcocks seen by Erik, and a deer and a pig giving us fear of net destruction!

On Friday we had the feather envelopes and we collected the outer tail feather (R6) as well as the 5th secondary on the White-eyed Vireos to possibly determine the origin of this species, which may be possible with stable isotopes. Because White-eyed Vireos may undergo their partial preformative (the first fall) molt in a different location from either their breeding and/or wintering grounds, we could begin to learn about movements of these birds between natal areas, subsequent molting areas, and their known wintering location at Woodlands Conservancy.

It was interesting how quiet the woods were, yet we had plenty of captures. It will be interesting as we place more nets in the forest and get a better idea of what types of net locations capture birds. We captured all 17 birds in only 5 of the 10 nets, with nets 7 and 2 capturing 5 and 4 birds, respectively. Since many wintering birds move around in flocks, it was not surprising to catch birds in groups. But as we monitor the area more, we can learn more about winter bird movements in the Woodlands Trail restoration site and the more natural Delacroix site. Similar work at Bluebonnet Swamp in Baton Rouge has revealed some interesting movements of Northern Cardinals so the recapture the Northern Cardinal in net 6, in the opposite direction of net 2 where it was initially captured, may not be that unusual.

If you would like to visit, volunteer or learn more about the banding project, , visit www.woodlandsconservancy.org or contact Katie Brasted at Woodlands Conservancy – 504.433.4000.