

Fall 2024 ACNP Banding Report

Prepared by Megan Jones Patterson
3 April 2025

The Allegra Collister Banding Station operated from 26 August to 18 October 2024. The station operated for 24 mornings with a schedule of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. This season had no canceled days due to weather. However, we had to close nets early on 10 days due to excessive heat, 1 day for excessive wind, and 1 day because we had too many birds to safely remain operating! This totaled 1618.96 net hours.

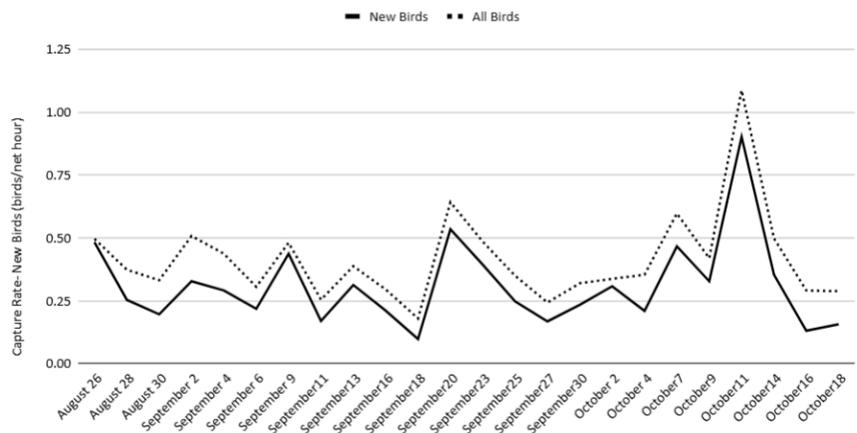
This season, we captured and processed 663 birds. Of these, 493 were newly banded birds from 52 species. This exceeds the number of birds captured in any other fall season by 116 newly banded birds even though we had fewer net-hours than in 2023 (the previous record year). Unless otherwise noted, all comparisons to past seasons in this report apply to 2003-2023 as 2003 is the earliest annual summary data I have available.

The capture rate of newly banded birds per net-hour was higher than in 2023 and is in the middle of past decades for fall banding (0.31 captures/net hour; past range: 0.22-0.67 captures/net-hour). The capture rate of all birds, including recaptured birds, is 0.42 birds/net-hour.

Since 2022, we have lengthened our schedule to more closely match the opening and closing schedule of the other Bird Conservancy of the Rockies banding sites. In addition, we've standardized to having nets open for 5 hours (unless weather, etc. forces shortened net operations). These capture rates could be showing trends in the birds in the area or these operational changes could reflect in slightly lower capture rates than in previous decades. Previously there was a slightly shorter banding period focused on peak periods of the migration season and in prior decades, banding often ended for the day when the capture rate got slow instead of staying open a dedicated amount of time each day.

Interestingly, we don't see a trend in the capture rate across the migration season for newly banded birds or for total captures. This data reflects all species, not just N-S or altitudinal migratory species.

Capture Rate (birds/net hour) by Date



Volunteers & Visitors

In Fall 2023, we had eight ACNP volunteers (all are also BCR volunteers): Maggie Boswell (MB, BCR subpermittee holder), Megan Jones Patterson (MJ, BCR subpermittee holder), Amanda Baker (AB), Courtney Rella (CR), John Malenich (JM), Matthew Fyfe (MF), Michael Patterson (MP), and Renee Haip (RH). Colin Woolley (CW) and Audry Hicks (AH) from BCR also visited the station on 2 October 2024. Greg Levandoski (GL; BCR & BCNA) also helped on two occasions when we were short on qualified banders. In addition, we had two visitors to observe bird banding.



Left: Megan Jones Patterson (L) and John Malenich (R) examining a Black-billed Magpie as part of aging the bird. Photo by Courtney Rella. Right: John Malenich (L) and Matthew Fyfe (R) enjoying a very busy day with lots of birds. Photo by Megan Jones Patterson.

Replacement of Banding Station Roof

After many, many years the old fiberglass roof of the banding station was leaking water and darkened by the covering of lichen, dirt, and UV degradation. On heavy overcast days, we were occasionally needing lights to collect some of the data accurately. We don't have a record of when the roof was installed, but it appeared to be part of the original station construction. In August 2024, Megan Jones Patterson and Michael Patterson removed and replaced the roof of the banding structure so that it can continue to protect our banding operations for years to come.

The cost of the materials was paid for from the fund held by Boulder County Nature Association from the original generous donation from the Guercio family. Megan Jones Patterson and Mike Patterson donated their time and labor.



TL: Banding station on a crisp morning in 2022. TR: Close up of old banding station roof in 2024. BL: Mike Patterson installing clear roof panels for the new roof. BR: So clear! Photos: TL by Mike Patterson; TR, BL, and BR by Megan Jones Patterson.

Highlights from Capture Data

A few notable items from the captures this year.

- This year we captured an Eastern Phoebe, not recorded as captured at the station before (data back to 1991). This brings the total species captured at Allegra Collister Nature Preserve since 1991 to 139 species. Photo by Renée Haip.
- An immature Long-eared Owl. Long-eared Owls roosted in the cottonwood trees along this section of the gulch in at least the early 2000s but hadn't been seen/heard in more recent years. It is only the 3rd banded at the station.



- We captured a male Spotted Towhee that had a band so worn thin that we decided to replace the band with a new one (2501-95180). Once the data were submitted, we found out that this bird was originally captured as a young, hatch-year bird in fall of 2016. We captured it again in fall of 2021 and had to replace its worn band with a new one (2501-95139). From our data, we know this bird was 8 years old when captured in fall 2024. The Bird Banding Laboratory longevity records lists 11 years, 00 months; 10 years, 00 months; and 8 years, 8 months as the current longest known lifespans for Spotted Towhees. If we catch this male again in the next few years, he'll be one of the top three longest lived Spotted Towhees on record!
The worn bands are not terribly surprising given that Spotted Towhees are ground foragers and actively use their feet to scrape away debris and soil looking for food.

Species	New Captures	All Captures	Species	New Captures	All Captures
AMGO	1	1	ORJU	12	14
AMRO	8	8	PSJU	8	9
AUWA	33	36	RBGR	1	1
BBMA	1	1	RCKI	17	25
BCCH	24	56	REVI	1	1
BGGN	2	2	RNSA	1	1
BLGR	1	1	ROWR	1	1
BLJA	6	6	RSFL	8	10
BRCR	2	2	SATH	4	4
BUSH	13	14	SCJU	2	3
CAVI	1	1	SOSP	7	8
CHSP	1	1	SPTO	35	59
DOWO	6	7	SSHA	1	1
DUFL	1	1	SWTH	1	1
EAPH	1	1	TOSO	1	1
EUST	1	1	TOWA	1	1
GRCA	43	81	UDEJ	1	1
GTTO	2	2	UWCS	1	1
GWCS	28	30	VESP	5	5
HETH	4	8	WAVI	4	4
HOFI	11	11	WBNU	2	2
HOWR	11	13	WETA	4	5
LEOW	1	1	WEWP	2	2
LISP	6	7	WIFL	1	1
MGWA	2	2	WIWA	94	111
MODO	1	3	WTSP	1	1
NOWA	5	6	YBCH	14	28
OCWA	46	57	YEWA	1	2