

Bird Field Note:
Field Observations, Songbird Banding and Lewis’s Woodpecker Banding
6/22/14
Debbie Leick



Sandhill Crane

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Agitated by my approach, a Lazuli Bunting strained his neck to see me as I thrashed through dense shrubs.





Pine pitch congeals into unique formations. Under one tree, concentrated sap hardened into a crusty blue mass. From another tree's broken branch, pitch coagulated into miniature "sapsicles".





The remains of a Red-tailed Hawk littered the forest floor near North Draw. Rob Domenech noted that intact feathers and bones suggest that another raptor had picked it clean.





Two Rocky Mountain Parnassians mated in a precarious spot in the middle of the road.



In the Boondocks, a Dusky Flycatcher made repeated trips to feed his begging mate. She incubated eggs in a nest located in a thick Rocky Mountain maple.





Snow fell at higher elevations this week and drove some birds down to lower terrain. Small flocks of Mountain Bluebirds and Western Tanagers foraged together in bitterbrush above Last and Whaley Draws.



Songbird Banding: Avian Science Center

Heavy clouds and on-and-off drizzle accompanied the June 16th banding session. Gray Catbirds again dominated captures this week. Four left the banding station bearing new PinPoint GPS units. An unusual number of the captured birds carried small to moderate fat stores. Birds typically do not maintain high quantities of fat in the summer due to the demands of the breeding season. Most songbirds forage on insects; the current high density of insects, particularly mosquitos, may allow these birds to accumulate fat.

Bird Species captured and banded during the June 16th session	
Species Name	Number Captured
Gray Catbird	10
House Wren	6
Black-capped Chickadee	6
American Robin	6
Cedar Waxwing	3
Red-naped Sapsucker	2
Warbling Vireo	2
Black-headed Grosbeak	2
Red-shafted Flicker	1
Yellow Warbler	1
Downy Woodpecker	1
European Starling	1
Total	41



Female Northern Flickers lack the red malar stripe, or moustache, of a male.



Warbling Vireos typically move through the floodplain to higher-elevation breeding sites; the ASC captured only three in the previous three banding seasons. This year, several males have territories on the floodplain, perhaps due to the wet conditions.



The presence of multiple generations of feathers, seen here as browner feathers and brown spots (younger) versus blacker feathers and white spots (older), indicates this Downy Woodpecker is at least three years old.



Lewis's Woodpecker Banding

William and Kate captured two additional Lewis's Woodpeckers at the marmot colony.



Little reference information exists to help age these birds. William’s finger points at one secondary feather that showed a difference in color and wear, suggesting a molt limit. We hope to accumulate enough documentation of molt patterns to improve our ability to age this species.



Additional Credits
KS: Kate Stone

