

Avian Science Center banding update, field observations
July 18, 2014, Eric Rasmussen



A Red-naped Sapsucker
drills rows of tiny holes in a
serviceberry shrub.

Avian Science Center: Songbird Banding

Warm weather accompanied the July 9th banding session; it was 60° at sunrise. Captures started off strong, with 15 birds captured in the first round of net checks, and remained steady throughout the rest of the six-hour session. Compared to the previous session, banders saw an increase in the proportion and diversity of young birds. They caught hatch-year birds of five different species: House Wren, Yellow Warbler, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, and American Robin. They also recaptured a color-banded Gray Catbird originally target-netted in a shrubby draw on the Sapphire Ranch.

Bird Species captured and banded during the July 9th session	
Species Name	Number Captured
House Wren	18
Yellow Warbler	9
American Goldfinch	2
Willow Flycatcher	3
Gray Catbird	8
Calliope Hummingbird	4
Black-chinned Hummingbird	1
Northern Waterthrush	1
Cedar Waxwing	7
Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Red-naped Sapsucker	1
House Finch	1
American Robin	2
TOTAL	58



Young birds often show unique physical characteristics as a result of the development process. They display definitive juvenal plumage, in which the coloration as well as the texture of the feathers differs from an older bird. This House Wren shows several unique “baby” qualities. Because young birds are not born with a fully developed bill (it hardens a few weeks after leaving the nest), they display a “gape”, or fleshy skin at the corners of the bill (left). Young House Wrens also have rufous, non-barred undertail coverts that are loosely textured and soft, whereas an older wren has barred, more grayish-brown undertail coverts that are better quality and more tightly knit (right).





Banders captured their first Northern Waterthrush on the ranch. She had a brood patch, suggesting she has a nest near the banding station (top). A young Yellow Warbler showed tufts of juvenal down poking through more adult-like contour feathers, indicating it just fledged from its nest (bottom).




A male Nashville Warbler does not stray far from thick underbrush in Davis Creek.




A Warbling Vireo looks
curious at my presence.



A close-up photograph of a female black-chinned hummingbird. The bird is shown in profile, facing right, with its long, thin beak pointed forward. It has a greenish-brown head and back, a white throat, and a long, thin tail. It is hovering near a red plastic hummingbird feeder, which is partially visible on the right side of the frame. The background consists of out-of-focus green foliage.

Female Black-chinned Hummingbirds lack cinnamon or rufous tones on their body and face. A long tail accentuates their thin, stretched-out appearance.

A photograph showing two black-chinned hummingbirds at a red plastic hummingbird feeder. The feeder is a cylindrical glass container with a red cap and a red base. One bird is perched on the left side of the feeder, while the other is hovering on the right side. The background is filled with green leaves and branches.

Fledgling and dispersing hummingbirds will be on the move in the coming weeks. Numerous individuals at a feeder will be common.

A Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel catches the morning sun.



A male Red Crossbills sang for ten minutes while other crossbills foraged in nearby conifers.



A Boisduval's Blue takes a quick
break on a raspberry leaf.

