

2011-2012

# Wekiva Basin Banding Station at Lake Lotus Annual Report



## Land Bird Studies at Lake Lotus

Altamonte Springs, Florida

Banders: J. Andrew Boyle • Richard Poole

Susan Angermeier • Christine Brown •

Charles Giles • Maria Kreps

<http://wekivaband.blogspot.com>



## Who We Are

The Wekiva Basin Banding Station is run by a Master Bander, sub-permittees, and dedicated volunteers for the purpose of capturing, banding, and releasing land bird species. The station is open for a few hours every Sunday, weather permitting, from the first week in August through the end of May at Lake Lotus Park in Altamonte Springs, FL.



## Why Birds are Banded

Birds are banded to aid in birding studies throughout the world. Data can be gained through banding and recapture to determine longevity, migration routes, population fluctuations, site fidelity, and habitat uses, to name a few. We collect a number of those data points at Lake Lotus.

One reason we chose Lake Lotus is because it is an oasis in the middle an urban development. We wished to determine what species used the site yearly and how many stop through during their long journeys during migration to rest and feed along the way. Banding birds helps us find out which species prefer the original habitat to live and raise families and which species move through and/or spend the Winter in our neck of the woods.

We band every species we are legally permitted to and keep thorough records of their age, sex (if it can be determined), weight, and how much fat they may be storing for any long trips. We employ mist nets which safely trap the birds long enough to be collected, affixed with aluminum bands weighing less than a gram, and released back into the wild. Each species has a specifically sized band to not interfere with their normal routines. The nets have assigned numbers and positions so we can determine which habitat is most preferred.

All Lake Lotus volunteers, some with a decade or more experience, are trained in the proper handling, record-keeping, and release of all birds. Visitors are welcome to take photos and learn more about the birds from our knowledgeable staff, many of them birders themselves who were drawn to the deeper study of these winged wonders.

The data we collect are then transferred to the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) where it is entered into a national database for further study. If a bird we have banded previously at our site is recovered by other individuals, dead or alive, that data, too, can be sent to the BBL for inclusion in their vast records. If one of our specific birds is reported to the BBL we get notification for our records.

Bird banding and related studies are rich in rewards and give us a better understanding of these creatures we enjoy and how we can help them to survive and adapt to our ever-changing environment. If you are ever in the area, please stop by and experience some of these birds up close. Information on how to get in touch is on the following page.

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## Location and Directions

Lake Lotus Park is located at 1153 Lake Lotus Park Rd in Altamonte Springs, FL (GPS: 28.642031, -81.424742) on Maitland Blvd (FL 414) just West of I-4. Take exit 90 if heading West on I-4 (from the North), exit 90B if heading East (from the South) and travel 2.5 miles West on Maitland Blvd.

The park is open to public parking Thursday and Friday. Parking for Saturday and Sunday is restricted to the tram parking lot across from the park entrance. A tram will drive visitors into the park on these days. The park is closed to the public Monday–Wednesday.

Visitors are welcome at our banding site during any day we are operating. If you are planning on attending, please contact us to receive more specific directions from your location and get detailed parking instructions. The banding site is not open to the general public.

Florida weather can change quickly and there may be days that we cannot band, either due to rain or sudden cold, for the safety of our volunteers and the birds. We attempt to make decisions regarding weather cancellations in a timely manner and if we have to cancel the planned banding day that information is posted at our banding station blog:

<http://wekivaband.blogspot.com>

It is always best to check before you head out. You can also email us so we can keep you updated even more quickly.



*The Lake Lotus banding area (highlight in yellow) is part of the Lake Lotus property surrounded by urban development.*



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## Contacts

Andrew Boyle, Bander in charge: [andybgator@yahoo.com](mailto:andybgator@yahoo.com)

Lake Lotus Ranger on Duty: 321-436-4146





## Our Bird Studies Objectives

Our Lake Lotus location is a continuation of a long-running banding project in the Wekiwa Basin that began within Wekiwa Springs State Park. The current phase of this project is focusing on what types of species reside in or travel through this location which is surrounded by heavy urban development.

We are also restoring the habitat by removing invasive plants and planting native Florida plants throughout the property. Data will also be gathered on which of the native plant types birds seem to prefer over any others.

Along with the weekly banding station operation, our volunteer team welcomes the opportunity to expand public awareness at community events throughout the year. We can provide banding catch and release demonstrations as well as share information about birds, native plants and animal life, and suggest ways to help improve the environment.

Details of our banding sessions are available on our blog and visitors are always welcome to experience a day of banding. For information on contacting us, please see the previous page.



*Removing invasive Air Potato plants.*



*Newly planted native Mulberry trees.*



*Banded American Redstart*



*A young volunteer releases a banded Ovenbird.*

*Recording data from a recaptured Carolina Wren.*





## Session 4 Overview

It was not a bad season overall, but we did miss out on a number of banding days. A 7-inch rain event washed away a couple of weeks one month and a series of March storms kept us from banding for nearly a month. Only one banding day in March! Some days were also lost to cold temperatures and a few more due to calendar/holiday line-ups. Still, we managed 301 birds over 37 Sundays, including one at the Orlando Wetlands Festival and one at the Lake Lotus Earth Day event.

We met some new and returning friends, continued our native plant restoration, and caught some interesting new birds for our banding station. Highlights of Session 4 are featured on page 10. Besides the festival events, we banded birds for the Avian Reconditioning Center before their release back into the wild, helped round-up Sparrows and other birds in Weeki Wachee Preserve and gave talks to students about banding. More information and photos of those events are on pages 8–9.

A new net location was added out at the mouth of the Little Wekiva River as it enters Lake Lotus. This location was chosen for its diversity of Winter migrants and local water birds. It was set fairly late in the season so we missed many of the migrants but are looking forward to this next Winter to see if we can begin tracking the many Warbler and Sparrow species that use that portion of the park. Red-winged Blackbirds are now on our growing list of birds to study with this netting set-up.

Our blog format was updated this Session so we could include large images for each of our posts and we made business cards that match the look of the blog so we can have something more to hand out to visitors at the banding station and at events where we perform banding demonstrations. We hope to expand the blog even further to include more information for downloading (such as our annual reports) and for links to other relevant sites. Gears are always spinning, thinking of new things to add about our station and for public outreach.

We continued our efforts to remove invasive plants and to add native vegetation to the site. We hope to include data about which birds prefer particular plant types as our plantings mature over the years. Just wish they could grow faster! As these projects progress, we also continue to maintain the area for the most productive habitat and food sources for migration species. For example, we are leaving some non-native plant types, such as Guinea Grass (*Panicum maximum*), which is a favorite of many migrating birds as a food source. Leaving this species in place has attracted large numbers of Buntings and we hope to continue this trend with some tending as needed.

Now we prepare for Session 5. Time to trim some vegetation, secure net poles, and prepare to expect the unexpected!



*Black-throated Blue Warbler*



## BANDING TOTALS FOR 2011-2012 (BIRDS NETTED FOR SESSION 4)

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\* Birds captured and banded at the Orlando Wetlands Festival in Christmas, Florida.

‡ Birds captured but not banded due to lack of permit or need.



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## Outside Projects

Through our network of friends and contacts within outside organizations we occasionally band birds in other locations upon request. We have banded birds prepared for release after rehab, assisted in other birding projects around the state, and give demonstrations of banding procedures at local festivals and for the Lake Lotus Earth Day events. We have more opportunities to do this in the coming years and it is always a pleasure to assist in any way we can. Here are some of the things we did outside of our usual banding duties this past session.

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### Avian Reconditioning Center

The **Avian Reconditioning Center** in Apopka, FL takes in injured or orphaned raptors and owls and nurses them to health for a safe release back into the wild. Over the years we have been asked to band certain birds before their release. This past Session the crew banded many raptors and owls, including Red-shouldered Hawks and Bald Eagles.



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### The 2012 Orlando Wetlands Festival

For the past several years we have been asked to present banding demonstrations for the public at the **Orlando Wetlands Festival**. Our bird captures were down this year but many visitors came out and got to watch as we banded the few birds we did get. We also bring along data sheets and give out information about bird habits and why we band birds.





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## Weeki Wachee Sparrow Round-up

Our good friend and bird biologist Marianne Korosy handles many projects along the west coast of Florida including banding Least Tern chicks and other bird species. One of her other favorite birds are sparrows. This marks the 5th year of her project at Weeki Wachee Preserve where she is studying Grasshopper, Swamp, Savannah, and LeConte's Sparrows. We help round up the birds for her when we can and were able to go out for a couple of weeks this year.



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## School Presentation

Richard and Maria went on another field trip this year. They gave a presentation to students and faculty at the Lawton Elementary school in Oviedo, FL.

They were not able to band any birds at this event but they provided information about birds and bird banding studies to an enthusiastic crowd of future birders.

Many more events are scheduled for the 2012–2013 during Session 5 including some we have not previously attended to add to our usual slate of events.





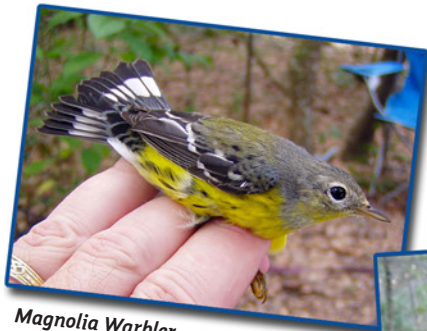
## Session 4 Highlights

Some of our special moments from Session 4: We had some interesting first time catches and special returning birds.



1st Green Heron. Just missed a 2nd!

Session 4 started  
with a bang with our  
1st Yellow-bellied  
Flycatcher!



Magnolia Warbler



Indigo Buntings everywhere.

Cute little bat.



Birds aren't the only thing  
to watch at Lake Lotus!



We recaptured one of our Whip-poor-wills for  
the 2nd year in a row.



Net 21 was added and provided warblers, sparrows,  
and our 1st ever Red-winged Blackbirds.



One of the Barred Owl pair found the  
nets and was gently released.



## Links

### Birding Links



#### **Bird Banding Laboratory**

Information on bird banding and where you can report any found banded birds, dead or alive.

<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/>



#### **Orlando Wetlands Park**

Over 20 miles of roads and woodland trails providing spectacular birding opportunities not far from Orlando.

<http://tinyurl.com/cfb66pm>



#### **Orange Audubon Society**

Orange County Florida chapter with information and guided birding opportunities.

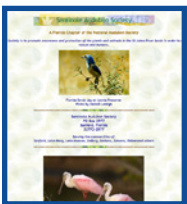
<http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/>



#### **Tomoka Bird Banding Station**

Birding studies held in Tomoka State Park with links to Halifax River Audubon.

<http://tinyurl.com/bwedvm6>



#### **Seminole Audubon Society**

Seminole County Florida chapter with information and guided birding opportunities.

<http://www.seminoleaudubon.org/>



#### **Nature Conservancy/Jay Watch**

Information about the yearly Jay Watch. Volunteer to help count Florida Scrub Jays.

<http://tinyurl.com/7fvk9x8>



#### **Avian Reconditioning Center**

This Apopka center cares for and rehabilitates injured birds of prey. Tours and volunteer opportunities available.

<http://www.arc4raptors.org/>



#### **Audubon Center for Birds of Prey**

This Maitland center cares for and rehabilitates injured birds of prey. Tours and volunteer opportunities available.

<http://fl.audubon.org/audubon-center-birds-prey>

### Nature Links



#### **Cuplet Fern**

Seminole County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Meetings and Trips

<http://cupletfern.fnpschapters.org/>



#### **Tarflower**

Orange County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Meetings and Trips

<http://tarflower.fnpschapters.org/>



#### **Drew's Birds**

Keep up with Andrew's birding adventures when he is not banding at Lake Lotus.

<http://drewsbirds.blogspot.com/>







Wekiva Basin Banding Station at Lake Lotus

<http://wekivaband.blogspot.com>

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