

Report Number 1, Week 1, 13th to 20th April, 2019 by Lead Bander M.A. Ford

The station opened up later than usual this season, but even so got off to a very quiet start, with activity only beginning to pick up on the last day of this report.

I was driven to the station by Monte Neate-Clegg on the afternoon of Friday, April 12th, and the site was set up using the standard protocol net layout on the 13th. The nets were left open for two hours after setup, but with little success.

The first of the two Field Assistants – Sean Carter – arrived on the evening of the 12th, but the other Assistant – Tessa Parker – got lost on her way into Rio Mesa and eventually only showed at 11am on the 13th.

Monte returned to Salt Lake City after completion of banding on the 13th, and normal operations commenced with the two assistants on Sunday the 14th. Neither of the two have done any banding before, so it was a case of teaching them from scratch.

Everything at the station is in good order – the nets being in really good shape, and all equipment, including two two-way radios, is working well. The new banding shed came through the Winter months unscathed and is a pleasure to work in.

Sean is a keen birder and is recording all observations to eBird. However we are still waiting for the codes to be able to share with UU/Rio Mesa.

Special requirements for this season are:

- A further 19 geolocators to be fitted on to re-captured Yellow-breasted Chats as opportunities arise. Additionally, we anticipate re-capturing Chats with geolocators on their return from migration, whereupon the geolocators to be removed and held for data down-load.
- No *empidonax* blood samples need to be collected this season, as Hailey has completed her work in this regard.
- Feather samples from tail and breast of all birds to be collected and stored in refrigeration.

The only problem to date is the shortage of birds. In the first 6 days of the season only 31 birds were processed – 23 new, 1 unbanded and 7 recaptures. However, the week was saved by a very good last day where we had 13 new, 1 unbanded and 1 recapture to give the week's numbers some respectability, with a grand total of 37 new, 2 unbanded and 8 re-captures, and hopefully to indicate that the migration season might be under way at last.

Although bird numbers were low, species numbers were high within these totals and the total of 47 birds was made up of no less than 22 different species. Among the more uncommon species banded were a Myrtle Warbler, a Sagebrush Sparrow, a Townsend's Solitaire, a Western Meadowlark and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. A surprising species in the unbanded category was a single Calliope Hummingbird.

The site is currently inhabited by 4 rather nervous Wild Turkeys, which tend to panic at the unexpected approach of a human, and I am fearful that we will end up with some serious net damage if one of them panics and flies into a net

The week's totals are attached as a separate file.

Best regards

Mike Ford

Summary of Birds Banded, Rio Mesa, Spring 2019

Species	Code	New	Recaps	Unbanded	Total
Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	BGGN	2	1		3
Townsend's Solitaire	TOSO	1			1
Lucy's Warbler	LUWA	3	6		9
Spotted Towhee	SPTO	2			2
Black-chinned Hummingbird	BCHU			1	1
Virginia's Warbler	VIWA	2			2
Song Sparrow	SOSP	4	1		5
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	RCKI	4			4
Gambel's W-C Sparrow	GWCS	1			1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	SSHA	1			1
Sagebrush Sparrow	SABS	1			1
Slate-colored Junco	SCJU	1			1
Lincoln's Sparrow	LISP	3			3
Marsh Wren	MAWR	2			2
House Wren	HOWR	1			1
Western Meadowlark	WEME	1			1
Vesper Sparrow	VESP	2			2
Calliope Hummingbird	CAHU	1			1
Hermit Thrush	HETH	2			2
Pink-sided Junco	PSJU	2			2
Green-tailed Towhee	GTTO	1			1
Myrtle Warbler	MYWA	1			1
Totals to date		37	8	2	47