

1999

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Iii (western Ridge) - Fall 1998

North American Bird Bander

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Recommended Citation

North American Bird Bander (1999) "Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Iii (western Ridge) - Fall 1998," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 24 : Iss. 4 , Article 12.

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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge) - Fall 1998

Elizabeth W. Brooks, Coordinator
1435 Waterwells Road
Alfred Station, NY 14803

Cooperative weather patterns in most of Region III resulted in improved banding results overall. Numbers were up at all but Presque Isle and Smith Farm. Allegheny Front and Big Run doubled their birds/100 net hours, and Allegheny Front had its best fall since the early 1980s. There were 33,711 birds banded at the 15 stations.

The 'best days' came as early as 3 September at Long Point and as late as 30 October at Smith Farm, but the periods between 12-17 September and 2-9 October were particularly good at many stations.

Magnolia Warbler made the 'top ten' at 10 of 15 stations and junco and Ruby-crowned Kinglet at nine of 15. Myrtle Warbler numbers were up overall and Powdermill had the biggest Myrtle flight ever. Blackpoll Warblers were up at Ruthven and Allegheny Front, perhaps a predictor of even better numbers in spring and fall 1999.

There were several interesting re-encounters. A Common Yellowthroat banded in Hebron, PA, was found wintering in Ocala, FL. A Magnolia Warbler banded as a HY near Tadoussac, Quebec, was recaptured at Big Run, PA. There were two excellent direct line re-encounters: a Magnolia Warbler banded at Hebron and retrapped two days later at Allegheny Front, WV; and a Myrtle Warbler banded at Powdermill and retrapped 12 days later at Kiptopeke, VA.

Long Point, Hebron, and Bedford Valley are all participating in the saw-whet owl banding project; but since lure tapes are used, their saw-whet totals are not included in this report.

Several stations' reports mention the steps taken to manage habitat in the banding area not only to keep birds from flying over nets but to keep change

to a minimum. This is critical to an accurate analysis of long-term population trends based on banding results. All of us need to do whatever we can to keep the banding site as unchanged from year to year as possible.



Hairy Woodpecker by George West

Table 1. AFR III, Fall 1998 Summary.

	Lewiston NY	Ruthvn Prk ONT	Selkirk ONT	Long Pt ONT	Presque Isle PA	Hebron PA	Blg Run PA
Frst Day/Lst Day	9/10 - 10/16	7/26 - 11/8	7/20 - 11/14	8/11 - 11/23	7/11 - 10/31	8/3 - 11/18	9/16 - 11/1
Days Operated	15	67	115	185**	22	39	23
No. Nets Used	11 to 20	8 to 14*	15*	0 to 38*	3 to 15	1 to 13	5 to 10
Total Net Hrs.	1028.5	3658	9578	10,371	1878	978	930
Lgst Daily Catch	54 on 9/29	134 on 10/4	55 on 9/7	270 on 9/3	55 on 10/16	85 on 10/4	46 on 9/17
No. Banded '97	489	1158	NA	9108	560	591	320
No. Banded '98	501	2303	1637	9795	446	808	451
No. Species '97	47	76	NA	119	60	70	43
No. Species '98	42	84	82	109	54	65	50
Birds/100 nh '97	58	46	NA	64.9	3.4	76.5	21
Birds/100 nh '98	48.7	62	16.4	94.4	0.9	82.6	48
% HY 1997	78%	84%	NA	82%	70%	75%	38%
% HY 1998	83%	81%	93.3%	83.4%	68%	70%	52%
* plus traps ** station days							

Table 1. (cont'd.)

	Powdermill PA	Bedford Vly PA	Alleg. Frnt WV	Calmes Neck VA	Smith Farm VA	Fernbank Forest GA	Zoo Atlanta GA	Lakeshore Ests FL
Frst Day/Lst Day	8/1 - 11/29	8/13 - 10/3	8/9 - 10/18	8/18 - 10/29	8/19 - 12/12	8/27 - 11/20	9/4 - 10/9	8/15 - 11/15
Days Operated	108	17	69	51	76	9	6	46
No. Nets Used	2 to 45	1 to 11/5	22 to 24	6 to 17	10 to 11	4	5	3 to 8
Total Net Hrs.	15,561	718	8549	9395	7570	72	36	2150
Lgst Daily Catch	245 on 10/9	24 on 10/2	631 on 9/14	49 on 9/14	78 on 10/30	7 on 9/16	18 on 10/2	21 on 9/12
No. Banded '97	6518	NA	3843	NA	1022	35	79	244
No. Banded '98	6381	117	8585	913	918	31	86	296
No. Species '97	108	NA	78	NA	62	13	23	42
No. Species '98	108	38	80	85	71	13	23	44
Birds/100 nh '97	41	NA	50.3	NA	20.5	77	219	12
Birds/100 nh '98	41	16	100.4	9.7	12.1	43	239	14
% HY 1997	NA	NA	NA	NA	73%	9%	NA	63%
% HY 1998	NA	65%	NA	79%	71.5%	30%	36%	69%
* plus traps								

Table 2. Most Commonly Banded Species, AFR Region III, Fall 1998.

Lewiston NY	Ruthven Park, ONT	Selkirk Park, ONT	Long Point, ONT	Presque Isle, PA
%HY	%HY		%HY	%HY
68 RCKI (6) 32	390 MYWA (4) 87	201 GCKI	962 MYWA (1) 88	60 GCKI (8)
66 MYWA 94	183 SCJU (5) 85	169 RCKI	682 RCKI (4) 81	53 RCKI
54 HETH (5) 83	181 AMGO (8) 67	157 SCJU	674 BLPW 62	48 WTSP (1) 90
51 GRCA (4) 98	141 SOSP (1) 82	89 MAWA	515 GCKI (7) 87	33 HETH (9) 70
47 GCKI (9) 85	94 WTSP (2) 94	66 SWTH	509 SWTH 82	27 YWAR (2) 90
38 WTSP (1) 92	82 CEDW 70	56 MYWA	421 MAWA (3) 93	19 GRCA (3) 50
24 BCCH (7) 96	80 RCKI	56 SOSP	404 HETH (10) 87	18 SOSP (6) 80
19 SCJU 79	76 MRO 88	51 HETH	349 WTSP (5) 91	17 WIWR
14 MAWA (2) 79	73 HETH (6) 86	48 BCCH	332 SCJU (8) 73	14 MAWA (10) 100
10 WOTH 80	71 BCCH 82	46 NAWA		12 BRGR

Big Run, PA	Hebron, PA	Powdermill, PA	Bedford Val., PA	Allegheny Front, WV
%HY	%HY		%HY	%HY
108 WTSP (2) 42	98 SCJU (1) 50	883 MYWA (5)	38 CHSP 55	1397 BLPW (2) 75.6
62 SOSP (1) 56	73 WTSP (6) 73	696 SCJU (1)	8 COYE 37	1228 BTBW (1) 72.8
34 COYE (3) 53	67 HOFI (4) 71	421 AMGO (2)	6 BCCH 83	719 BTNW (3) 91.0
24 RCKI 33	40 SOSP (3) 50	336 SOSP (7)	5 INBU 100	654 MAWA (6) 82.7
20 GRCA (6) 85	36 RCKI 72	312 WTSP (4)	5 GRCA 60	531 TEWA (7) 76.2
16 MYWA 56	34 AMGO (2) 84	226 MAWA		521 SCJU (9) 61.9
15 SWSP (4) 60	27 BTNW 85	221 GRCA (9)		421 SWTH (5) 90.4
14 MAWA (8) 64	26 INBU 70	205 COYE (8)		416 BLBW 71.4
12 LISP 42	24 MAWA (8) 59	175 RTHU (10)		358 GCKI
11 FISP 45	21 CSWA (7) 91	172 SWSP		311 CMWA 57.1

Calmes Neck, VA	Smith Farm, VA	Fernbank Forest, GA	Zoo Atlanta, GA	Lakeshore Est., FL
%HY	%HY	%HY	%HY	%HY
125 AMGO 58	186 WTSP (1) 66.1	6 NOCA (10) 83	13 GRCA 54	51 NOCA (2) 90
61 CACH 82	121 SCJU (2) 64.1	5 CARW (5) 40	7 AMRO 29	41 WEVI (1) 51
48 REVI 90	96 SOSP (4) 84.3	4 WOTH (2) 25	7 MAWA 0	23 MYWA (3) 48
44 ETTI 98	52 RCKI (5)	4 ETTI 25	7 NOCA 29	17 HOWA (6) 82
37 CEDW 90	39 SWSP (6) 81.5	3 OVEN (7) 0	7 BRTH 29	14 RCKI (4)
35 GCKI 70	30 AMGO (3) 53.3	3 BLJA 0	6 BLJA 33	12 CARW 100
28 SCJU 75	28 GRCA 57.1		5 CARW 20	11 SWTH 82
28 WTSP 71	27 NOCA (7) 96.1		4 AMRE 100	10 WOTH (10) 40
27 BAWW 90	23 INBU 56.5		4 HOWA 25	9 REVI 89
27 MAWA 80	22 HETH (8) 90.9		3 SWTH 33	9 HOFI 55
27 SCTA 80				
27 CSWA 90				
27 BTNW 95				

() = position last year

Lewiston
Niagara County, NY
Jerald J. Farrell, Bander

431-0790

In 1998, the Lewiston Banding Station was in operation for fall banding between 10 September and 16 October. Banding was conducted on 15 days. A total of 501 birds involving 42 species were banded with the largest catch of 54 birds taken on 29 September. Six local retraps involving two species were recorded. This completes the 21st year of fall banding for this station.

I would consider this year to be average as far as total birds banded. Wood Thrush seems to be doing very well, but Swainson's Thrush shows noticeable reduction. Myrtle Warbler counts were up; Magnolia Warbler showed reduced numbers. Overall, the total species count was down.

Excellent weather conditions for mist-netting existed throughout the entire time frame.

Many visitors were in attendance again this year.

Ruthven Park
Haldimand County, Ontario
Rick Ludkin, Bander

425-0795

Loretta Mousseau, Maureen Moore, Marg Ludkin,
Chief Assistants

This fall's banding season (the fourth for Ruthven Park) can only be described as outstanding. While running the same number of nets (up to 14) we nearly doubled the number of birds banded over last year: 2303 vs. 1158. We were able to do this for several reasons: we were open on more days (67 vs 47); we had more consistent, capable help; we had long periods of good weather (although not from the local farmers' perspective); we had a fine berry crop (especially in the dogwoods along the extensive "edge" in which our nets are situated); and (our sense) a lot more birds went through (61.8 birds/100 net hours vs 46.3 last year).

We opened the nets on 26 July and closed them on 8 November, banding for five days in July, 18 in August, 21 in September, 19 in October, and four in November. We aimed for five to six hours of coverage per open day and generally averaged this, although work commitments and/or weather

made this impossible at times. (We are developing a fine "crop" of skilled assistants who, hopefully, will be able to run the station next year in my absence with the possibility of fairly complete coverage).

The field station operated in the same location as it has for the last four years, with net lanes cut into the extensive edge habitat surrounding the lawns and fields of the Historic Site. Bird capture was carried out using three ground traps and up to 14 nets in 10 net lanes. The net lanes have been static for the past two years. We used both Polish and Finnish nets, usually putting the Polish nets, which are tethered top and bottom, in windier locations.

Weather conditions were quite warm and dry. Morning rains were generally light, producing ideal banding conditions much of the time.

We opened the fall migration in the middle of summer—26 July. Despite this early start, we probably missed most of the Yellow Warbler movement here, which may have begun earlier due to an early breeding season caused by the unusually warm spring. Another option is that the dry summer had a negative impact on breeding success of this species.

August was a slow month: the biggest banding day was 34 birds on the fifth, and our capture rate was only 32 birds per 100 net hours. We did not begin to see warblers with any regularity until after the third week of August. However, we did band Ruthven's first Louisiana Waterthrush on 13 August.

September and October were exceptionally good months for us. Until this season, our single biggest daily catch was 87 birds. This fall we broke that mark five times: 99 on 24 September; 103 on 30 September; 134 on 4 October; 92 on 8 October; and 99 on 20 October. The birds came in waves (24-25 Sep; 30 Sep; 4-9 Oct; 19-21 Oct; 24-27 Oct) unlike the experience of John Miles (our Haldimand Bird Observatory partner) at Selkirk Provincial Park on Lake Erie just 12 miles (19 km) to the SSW. Two warbler species (we banded 28 species altogether) showed marked increases: 390 Myrtle Warblers (vs 77 in 1997) and 58 Blackpoll Warblers (vs 9). The first Myrtle of the fall was not banded until 12 September (as was

Ruthven's first Connecticut Warbler) and the first real influx of this species did not occur until the 22nd. The numbers of Red-eyed Vireos doubled (49 vs 24).

The first White-throated Sparrows and Slate-colored Juncos arrived on 12 and 13 September. The number of juncos banded this fall was nearly three times that of last year (183 vs 63) and the number of goldfinches nearly quadrupled (181 vs 47). Although we banded 141 Song Sparrows this fall, their capture rate was only 3.86 per 100 net hours and thus represents a decline that has proceeded over the last three years. There has been a significant decline in the number of Song Sparrows noted by the Ontario Forest Bird Monitoring Program over the past 10 years in the Mixedwood Plains Ecozone which includes the area around Ruthven Park.

Other notable bandings included a Northern Parula (30 Sep), an Orange-crowned Warbler (8 Oct), an Eastern Tufted Titmouse (15 Oct), and a White-eyed Vireo (26 Oct).

There were 151 birds recorded in or from the study area during this period. Noteworthy sightings included an Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and an immature Bald Eagle (25-26 Sep). Due to the shallowness of the river, 10 species of shorebirds were seen at various times picking over the exposed sandbars.

This fall, we retrapped 316 same-season birds, some several times. We also handled 40 returns from prior banding seasons.

I would like to thank the Lower Grand River Land Trust and, more specifically, the Ruthven Management Committee for their continuing support of and their enthusiasm for this project. This year we received financial support from the James L. Baillie Birdathon; from a Ministry of Natural Resources CWIP Grant; from the Shell Environmental Fund; and from the Haldimand Bird Observatory's friends and members. Audrey Heagy, Gail King, and the ladies of the Stratford Field Naturalists donated some greatly appreciated bird bags. Appreciation to Kim Belshaw, Colleen Mousseau, Sharon McBurney, Pat Mousseau, Jamie Miles, Geoff Ludkin, Shawn

Robertson, Danny Bernard, Mike Schmidt, and Zachary, Adrian, Mike and Maria Henderson. Special thanks to Don and May Bull who kept our net lanes and trails clear and erected and closely monitored 22 bluebird boxes.

Selkirk Provincial Park 424-0795

Haldimand-Norfolk Counties, Ontario

John Miles, Bander

Jonathan Ariail, Heather English, Jacob Kubel, Michael Libsch, Jim Smith, Heather Whitford, Chief Assistants

The first year of fall operation of the Selkirk Provincial Park field station of the Haldimand Bird Observatory commenced 20 July and ended 14 November. The station was manned daily during this time period except for three days, with the banding effort taking place on 115 days. Twenty-four volunteers spent one or more days assisting with the running of the station. Except for days of extreme winter weather when banding was not carried out, the station was manned from one half-hour before sunrise usually for a minimum of six hours.

The fall was warm and very dry. Very little rain occurred during the mornings with little disruption in netting activity. The station did not operate due to inclement weather on one day only, 10 November, by which time most of the migration had passed by. Consequently, there was little if any bird fallout due to adverse weather conditions. The migration pattern seemed very similar to the spring migration—lots of variety but no numbers.

The Selkirk field station has operated in the same location in the southwest corner of the park since it was started in 1996. The census route and study area remains the same. Banding was carried out using 15 mist nets, three ground traps and a jay trap. The same net lanes used in the spring of 1996, 1997 and 1998 were used initially. Some changes in net location were done this fall to improve coverage of the birds moving through the area and to create a circular net run. With the cross winds encountered among the pines, the five-panel, double-tethered Polish nets seem more suited for this location than top-tethered nets.

The passerine migration was already under way when the station opened with the small flycatchers already on the go. The first Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler appeared 1 August and several were banded in August, mostly adults in molt. By the middle of August the warbler migration was well under way. Swainson's Thrushes were first noticed 22 August with the first banded 30 August. Ruby-crowned Kinglets first appeared 7 September with the first of the Golden-crowns arriving 17 September. The first White-throated Sparrows showed up 10 September while the first Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco was not noted until 26 September. As indicated earlier, the migration was steady with no great waves of birds appearing in the banding site.

There were 192 species of birds recorded in or from the study area during the study period. Noteworthy birds included a Prothonotary Warbler that spent at least five days in the area. Also a Lesser Black-backed Gull that appeared on the sandbar periodically, and an immature Golden Eagle circling the Spring Creek marsh with an immature Bald Eagle were of note. An American Avocet that showed up on the Sandusk Creek mud flats 8 November was a surprise.

There were 1637 birds of 80 species banded at Selkirk Provincial Park in fall 1998. Most numerous birds banded were Golden-crowned Kinglet (201), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (169) and Slate-colored Junco (157). Six species were banded for the first time at Selkirk in the fall of 1998. These were Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Whip-poor-will, Hairy Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, and Connecticut Warbler. As well, a couple of Willow Flycatchers were separated from the "Traill's" complex.

In the fall of 1998, 164 birds were retrapped one or more days after being banded. Some of these birds were retrapped regularly with some as many as 30-40 times. Eighteen birds were retrapped from previous seasons. While most of these are resident or nesting birds in the area, the recapture of two Slate-colored Juncos and an American Tree Sparrow are noteworthy.

There were 81 visitor days recorded at the banding site in the fall of 1998. The Norfolk Field Naturalists

were given a group banding demonstration. The Ontario Birding Association held its fall bandout at the station in late September. Unfortunately, the weather was so nice there were no birds to band!

I would like to extend my appreciation to Parks Ontario, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, and the Park Contractor, Hans Lutzi, for permission to band in the park. This project was supported financially by the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund of Birds Studies Canada with funds raised through the annual Ballie Birdathon, Canada Trust's Friends of the Environment Fund and the Haldimand Bird Observatory's friends and members whose individual donations were greatly appreciated. These included bird bags, chairs, timbits and timely cash donations.

Finally, the volunteers without whose assistance the station's operation would have been very difficult, include (in addition to the chief assistants listed above) Jamie Miles, Chris Kimber, Sue Kimber, Abel Pol, Judith Brown, Lori Brown, Tom Crooks, Bill Don, Dave Don, Paul Foster, Michael Kimber, Gerald McNaughton, Ann Miles, Kathy Parker, Martin Parker, Peter Shilton, William Smith, John Whitford.

Long Point Bird Observatory 423-0800
Port Rowan, Haldimand-Norfolk RM 423-0801
Jul Wojnowski & Christine Jamieson 423-0802
Banders

Fall 1998 banding at Long Point Bird Observatory began on 8 August and continued for 185 station-days until 23 November. A number of traps were used in addition to mist nets; 12.6 % of our total was caught in these traps.

There were 443 saw-whet owls (66% HY) banded at Long Point during fall 1998, but since lure tapes were used, these totals are not included in our report.

Chief Assistants were: Mariamalia Araya, Simon Bonner, Stepahen Bonneville, Mary Boswell, Rafael Brito-Aguilar, Hanneke Brooymans, Brenda Carter, David Casson, Eric Davies, Lea Doan, Chris Dunn, Philina English, Guillermo Fernandez Aceves, Trina Fitzgerald, Caroline Fournier, Charles Francis, Francois Gagnon, Todd Hunter,

Jacques Ibarzabal, Andrew Ingersoll, Andrew Keaveney, Stuart MacKenzie, Hugh McArthur, Bev McBride, Tanya McGregor, Linda McLaren, Sandy McNeil, Carolyn Murphy, Kristen Niwanski, Chris Robinson, David Ross, Mike Settington, Katie Simmons, Colin Smith, Adam Timpf, Sarah Trefrey, Paolo Viola, David Wege, Claudia Wolff.

Presque Isle 420-0800
Erie, PA

Ronald Leberman, Bander

Thelma Patton, Sally Senger, Chief Assistants

Fall 1998 bird banding operations started on 11 July and ended on 31 October. Banding covered 22 days, mostly weekends. In spite of above-normal net hours, fewer birds than normal were captured. A total of 446 new birds were banded, aged and sexed when possible, and measured. Species totals were also down slightly with many flycatchers and warblers in the area, but not in the nets. A new species was added to our list when we banded our first Red-bellied Woodpecker on 25 July. Other interesting birds banded were our first American Woodcock since 1966 and a late Yellow-breasted Chat captured on 15 October, released and recaptured the next day.

Weather for the most part was rather mild and dry. We had one cold front in October but no hard frost.

There were a total of 81 recaptures of 22 species. Of birds returning from a previous season, a Yellow Warbler was at least nine years old, a Baltimore Oriole returned after three years, and a Blue Jay, catbird, two chickadees and two Downy Woodpeckers were at least two years old. Seven Song Sparrows repeated 28 times and 19 Yellow Warblers repeated 43 times!

A special thanks goes to the Presque Isle Audubon Society for honoring me in September, giving me their 1998 Environmental Award for the years of field work and bird banding at Presque Isle. I did not do it alone and must thank all those who have helped over the years.

In addition to the two chief assistants listed above, thanks to Susan Smith, Roger Dunn, Randy Neyer (Park Naturalist), and the park staff.

Hebron 414-0780
Coudersport, Potter County, PA
David W. Hauber, Bander

Total figures for the 1998 season seem closer to normal than last year. We banded 808 new birds of 65 species in 978 net hours. However, a number of species broke records for number of individuals captured (both high and low). White-crowned Sparrow 20 (5), Lincoln's Sparrow 0 (3.5), Blue-headed Vireo 5 (1), Blue-winged Warbler 0 (5.5), Tennessee Warbler 0 (9.4), Cape May Warbler 20 (1.5), Black-throated Blue Warbler 18 (7), Magnolia Warbler 24 (12), Blackpoll Warbler 15 (2), Black-throated Green Warbler 27 (3), and Ruby-crowned Kinglet 36 (6). The number in parenthesis is the yearly average.

New species for fall banding were Cooper's Hawk, Carolina Wren, Northern Parula, and Prairie Warbler, bringing the total species for fall banding to 96 and one subspecies since 1989.

We had several recoveries for the fall of 1998. A Magnolia Warbler that I banded on 6 September 1998 was caught and released two days later at Allegheny Front Migration Observatory. A.M.F.O. is located about 10 miles west of Petersburg, WV. A House Finch I banded on 28 October 1994 was caught on 20 August 1997 by Rick White in Portville, NY. A Common Yellowthroat I banded on 25 May 1996, and recaptured here on 2 August 1998, was found on 9 October 1998 in Ocala, FL.

We continue our participation in a saw-whet owl project as we banded 31 saw-whets using an audio lure and up to seven nets for a total of 255 hours. These figures are not included in the information above.

Many thanks again to Gary Witmer and family and Ralph and Deb Seifken for all their help during 1998.

Big Run Banding Station 410-0801
Lawrence County, PA
Robert Baldesberger, Jr., Bander
Elizabeth Baldesberger, Chief Assistant

This was Big Run's third fall season and, other than a late start, it turned out to be a pretty good one.

Precipitation was again lower than average and temperatures were above the average for the area. Nets were open from 19 September through 1 November for 23 days. Ten nets, in the same positions as previous seasons, were operated on all but one of the days, accumulating 930 total net hours (about 228 less than last year).

This year's 451 birds banded (of 521 captured), is the station's highest number. Birds per 100 net hours (48) more than doubled from the previous season's (21). Fall recaptures included two titmice from fall '97 and a Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, towhee and Black-capped Chickadee from fall '96. There were 55 repeats from this fall and nine others that were banded during spring and MAPS of '97 and '98. A foreign retrap Magnolia Warbler had been banded as a HY in September '96 near Tadoussac, Quebec.

The fall station list of banded species now stands at 64. Eleven species were banded that weren't encountered during other fall samples including Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Connecticut Warbler, Northern Parula, and Wilson's Warbler. Four species that were missing, and not even observed this fall, were Hooded Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, and Orange-crowned Warbler.

Thirty-one of the 50 species banded this fall have been encountered all three years of operation. There were particularly good showings of Lincoln's Sparrow, American Redstart, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. The 108 White-throated Sparrows (up from last season's 62) represented 41% of the total birds banded.

A big thank you to Bonnie and George Casselberry for the use of their land. My wife Liz and mom Pat have my thanks for their support and help.

Powdermill Nature Reserve 400-0791
Rector, Westmoreland County, PA
Robert C. Leberman and Robert S. Mulvihill,
Banders

Perhaps the best word to describe the 1998 fall migration at Powdermill Nature Reserve would be "average." During the August-November period, we banded a total of 6381 birds—exactly 300 above

the average of the previous ten years. Our totals included 107 different species plus one hybrid form (Lawrence's Warbler). On the plus side, Myrtle Warblers staged their second heaviest flight ever at Powdermill. With 883 banded, they were at a significant +3 S.D. over the average of the previous ten fall seasons. Blue-headed Vireos, with 49 banded, were netted in numbers at +2 S.D. above average. Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Hermit Thrush were each at +1 S.D. over the ten-year average. On the low side, four species were netted in numbers at -1 S.D. below average: Least Flycatcher, House Wren, Blue-winged Warbler, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Among our more unusual captures was an American Bittern netted on 7 October in a lane that crosses a small marshy spot; this was just our second banding of the species in the 38-year history of the Powdermill program. A Sora and two Common Snipe were also among unusual water bird bandings. And like the bittern, an immature Northern Shrike, netted on 2 November, was only our second banding record of the species.

We recently received data on an interesting direct-line recovery of a fall-banded Myrtle Warbler from Powdermill. An immature female banded on 18 October 1997 was netted 12 days later at the Kiptopeke Banding Station, Townesend, Virginia, by Bob Siegfried.

During the period there were over 250 visitors to the Powdermill banding lab; banding demonstrations were provided to six university classes, a children's nature class, a retirement community outing, and to the Westmoreland County Bird Club.

We thank research assistant Marilyn Niedermeier for her help with much of the day-to-day record keeping associated with a large banding station like Powdermill. In the field, the following volunteers contributed greatly to the success of the program this season: Mary Helen Chiodo, Don Connell, Don Koch, James Gruber, Carroll Labarthe, Carole Shanahan, Bob Shaw, and Mike and Evaleen Watko.

Bedford Valley
Bedford County, PA
Janet Shaffer, Bander

395-0783

Fall migration banding was carried out for 17 days, from 13 August through 3 October, on my property at the foot of Evitt's Mt. Bedford County, about 20 miles north of the Maryland line. There were 117 new birds and 29 repeats. Nets were operated each morning for approximately five hours. Overall, not many birds were captured. Weather was generally very warm. There were 13 warbler species banded along with three vireo species. A Canada Warbler and Black-throated Green Warbler visited my drip bird bath but were not netted. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was caught on 22 August.

The most unusual thing encountered was a Brown Thrasher which looked like it had mumps. There was a black, sticky substance around the upper and lower mandibles and also on the tongue and in the roof of the mouth. Under its eyes, the skin was badly swollen. I cleaned the bird as best I could, banded it, and released it. Probably the Banding Office would not approve of this "experimental bird," but I want to know in case I encounter it again.

Allegheny Front
Migration Observatory
Grant County, WV
George A. Hall, Compiler

390-0791

The 41st year of bird banding at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory was very successful. After several poor years, several factors came together to produce one of the best banding seasons since the early 1980s. The station was in continuous operation from 9 August to 18 October, and closed on only two days because of the weather. Some banding was carried out on 69 days.

A total of 8585 birds (fourth highest) of 80 species was banded with a station effort of 8549 net hours (highest ever) giving a capture ratio of 100.42 birds per 100 net-hours (17th highest). An unusually high total of 1095 birds were banded during August (23 days), 6147 in September (30 days), and 1343 in October (16 days). The station has now banded 176,065 birds of 119 species. No new species were captured this year.

Migration followed the historical pattern, except that the timetable was advanced and events took place earlier than usual. Thus, the first good flights occurred about a week early—on 16 August. There were several flight days through the rest of the month and a record number of birds were banded in August. The first major flight came on 6 September when 441 birds were banded. This was followed by the major flight of the season. After a strong cold front moved through the north, 11 September ushered in a flight that lasted about a week, with a peak of 631 bandings on 14 September. During this week, 2672 birds were banded. Another heavy movement came through on 21 September. These two waves apparently brought most of the warblers out of the north country, since the usual late September-early October big waves did not occur. The October movement of kinglets, juncos, and sparrows began early, but numbers were not great.

Besides the highest count of 631, three days had more than 400 bandings, two had more than 300, eight more than 200, and 16 days more than 100. These days of heavy flights followed the classical pattern with the warbler flight starting about a half-hour after sunrise and continuing until 10 o'clock. For the first time in several years, large numbers of migrants were seen coming up the slope below the banding station.

Nine species were banded in record high numbers. The Blackpoll Warbler with 1397 bandings was the most numerous species. The Black-throated Blue Warbler with 1228 (record high) bandings and the Black-throated Green Warbler with 719 bandings were next in line. Of 40 species for which meaningful analysis could be made, 22 were in numbers more than 1 S.D. above the 10-year average. Of these, the Magnolia Warbler and the Dark-eyed Junco were more than 4 S.D. above the average, the Chestnut-sided Warbler was more than 3 S.D. above, and 10 other species were more than 2 S.D. above the average. Seven species were below the average but none were more than 1 S.D. below. As a group, the Neotropical migrants were above the 10-year average as well as the long-term (26-year) average, but the "Spruce Budworm Specialists" (Tennessee, Cape May, and Bay-breasted warblers) were 23% below the long-term average.

The thrush migration was much better than in recent years, and more flycatchers were caught than normal. Only 44 Blue Jays were banded, and one Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Several factors contributed to the increase in bandings. The weather was almost ideal, and the movement of the frontal systems was favorable. Most species apparently had successful breeding seasons. The cutting of tall vegetation at various parts of the station reduced the number of birds that flew at elevations too high to be captured. All of these factors must be considered when we attempt to relate the increased number of captures with a possible increase in populations of the various species.

The visual migrant counts were continued. The Blue Jay flight did not amount to much as only 920 were counted. Other seasonal counts were lower than last year with 475 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, 2687 American Goldfinches, and 986 Monarch Butterflies.

During the season, 1659 people signed the visitor's book. These guests came from 19 states, District of Columbia, Brazil, China, Scotland, and Zimbabwe. The educational part of our operation continued with several elementary and high school classes as well as several college classes visiting the station.

The banders who participated this year were Lynn Barnhart, Robert Dean, Walter Fye, LeJay Graffious, Ken Heselton, Sue Heselton, Joan Bell Pattison, Randy Ritter, Janet Shaffer, Judy Ward, Charles Ziegenfus, and station co-leaders Ralph Bell and George Hall. LeJay Graffious was also responsible for the banding shelter. Randy Ritter was campground host and resident bander. JoAnn Graham made most of the Blue Jay-Hummingbird counts. Appreciation is extended to 46 additional individuals who aided in tending nets, carrying cages, keeping records, and in many other ways.

We also thank the personnel of the Monongahela National Forest, Supervisor Chuck Meyers, District Ranger Elizabeth Schuppert, and others of the Potomac District Ranger Station for their cooperation and support. Thanks also to Walt Lesser of the D.N.R. for the use of the shed for storage of the banding shelter. The Brooks Bird Club supplied some financial support.

Calmes Neck

390-0775

Clarke County, VA

J William Oberman, Bander

This was an ordinary fall. The increased numbers of warblers in September seems related to the increased number of net hours. While Cedar Waxwings are caught regularly during the fall, this year the concentration in two nets and capture of a female with a brood patch indicate probable nesting—a first for this station.

Smith Farm

382-0781

Madison County, VA

Edgar Smith, Bander

This was a warm, dry autumn with record heat the first week of December. First frost was 21 October. Several frosts had little effect on the small number of birds netted. Despite 35% more net hours, I banded 10% fewer birds this year than last. August and September were very slow. It took 2000 net hours for the first 100 birds banded. Capture ratio was very poor this fall with only 12.1 birds per 100 net hours, an all-time low.

Flycatchers remained down with no Least, one Acadian, two pewee, three Traill's, five Yellow-bellied and 17 phoebe. I banded no nuthatch, Brown Thrasher, House Wren, gnatcatcher, hawk, and only one Brown Creeper, one Wood Thrush, and one bluebird.

The highlight of the year was a Marsh Wren banded on 23 September, the only Marsh Wren recorded on the farm in our 33 years there.

Species were up, with 71 compared to 62 last year. I had 42 returns and very few ectoparasites or abnormalities.

Fernbank Forest

335-0842

DeKalb County, GA

Georgann Schmalz, Bander

Banding in Fernbank Forest during the fall of 1998 was limited to nine days and 31 individuals conducted with third graders and ninth graders in attendance. We may not get big numbers of birds, but we certainly get big eyes of wonder from the students. While they should be interested in the

data collected from young birds and recaptured individuals, they mostly like the birds that bite hard and poop a lot!

Zoo Atlanta

334-0842

Fulton County, GA

Debra Forthman, Bander

Banding operations were carried out on 12 days, resulting in the banding of 127 birds representing 33 species. Banding assistants were Melanie Haire, Christine Mallar, Veronica Hawk, Brad Parks, and Shon Garner.

Lakeshore Estates

302-0841

Leon County, FL

Peter H. Homann, Bander

As in previous years, netting was done at my residence and within 300 m south of it in a wooded area and in a temporary bog that is located adjacent to a clearing with a telecommunication tower. After a very dry early summer, it was hot much of the time with sufficient rain to maintain surface water in the bog from early September to mid-October, and to allow mosquitoes to raise a myriad of offspring. During my fall banding I became convinced that netting in the bog is less successful now than it used to be, presumably because the shrubs in it are growing and spreading, and an increasingly dense canopy closes above it as trees mature.

Overall, migratory activity was what I consider normal. Among the migrants, thrushes were caught in above-average numbers even though the dry summer had wiped out almost entirely the beauty-berry (*Callicarpa americana*) crop and other delicacies. This experience taught me that I was wrong when in earlier reports I blamed low numbers of netted thrushes on a lack of berries. Inexplicable was the scarcity of Acadian Flycatchers which usually make my top-ten list. In 1998 I rarely heard an individual, and I captured only one. In fact, earlier in the year I already had missed this flycatcher in a local habitat along a stream where its presence as a summer resident was a sure bet for years.

Among some noteworthy encounters was a very late hatching-year Worm-eating Warbler on 15

November which was not netted but found sitting near a window of my home, obviously stunned. When I released the bird an hour later, it appeared fully recovered. Another late migrant was a very emaciated Hooded Warbler on 31 October. On 8 November this bird was recaptured in good condition with normal weight. Finally, I cannot help but mention a puzzling capture of an AHY Veery on 17 January 1999, which my fellow birders find hard to believe (I have a witness, though).

During the period covered by the report, I had several returns of migrants which are winter residents in this area. Of interest is the return of a Chipping Sparrow that had been banded as a hatching-year bird in December 1993 and of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet known since December 1995. Only very occasionally do Ovenbirds take up residence in northern Florida during the winter. I recaptured one individual several times during the winter of 1997/98, and it returned on 25 September of this year and repeated on 24 October.

Two recaptured resident birds deserve to be mentioned for longevity: a female Northern Cardinal banded in April 1989 with a ragged beak that told of her at least 10 years of age, and a Carolina Chickadee banded in October 1992.

