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North American Bird Bander

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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge) – Fall 2003

Elizabeth W. Brooks, Coordinator

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We are sorry to report that Ed Smith has ceased banding operations at Smith Farm. We thank him for his many banding reports over the years. Allen Chartier will move his hummingbird and passerine banding activity to Michigan, but banding operations at the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory in Ontario will be continued by other banders.

Overall, the fall 2003 banding results were mixed, with six stations reporting higher numbers than the previous year and eight stations showing a downward trend. But a truer indicator of the season's comparative results is that all but three stations reported fewer birds/100 net-hours. Region III banders were trying harder but catching fewer birds. The 14 reporting stations banded a combined total of 33,103 birds.

The best days ranged from as early as 30 Aug to as late as 1 Nov, with four stations' peak days fall-

ing between 20-30 Sep, three stations between 6-10 Oct, and three stations between 16-18 Oct.

The eagerly anticipated fallouts from the remnants of September's Hurricane Isabel did not materialize in the banding world, but there was a minimum of banding time lost due to the passage of the storm. Interesting items in the reports were the 25 Scarlet Tanagers captured at Hebron; the high number of bill and leg deformities encountered at Powdermill along with many incidences of birds infected with avian pox; net destruction by white-tailed deer that essentially closed down banding at Little Gap; and the determination and optimism of banders despite unexpected illnesses and surgeries!

I would like to thank all the banders and their support crews who participate in the AFR III report!

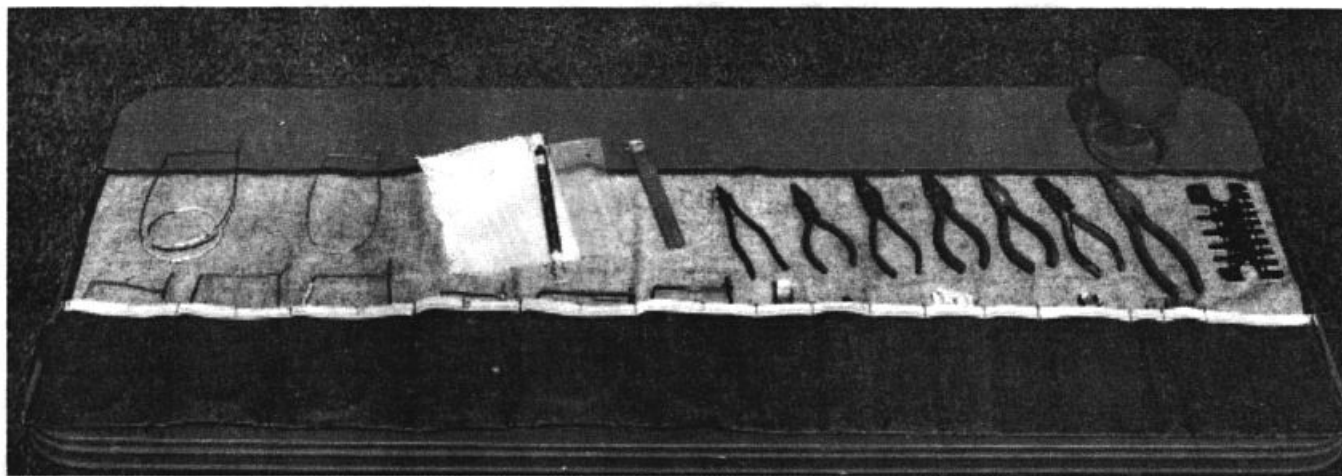


Table 1. AFR III Fall 2003 Summary							
	Lewiston NY	Ruthven Park ON	Rock Point ON	Sekirk ON	Long Point ON	Holiday Beach ON	Presque Isle PA
First Day/Last Day	9/20 - 9/26	7/12 - 11/8	7/18 - 11/8	7/3 - 11/15	9/2 - 11/15	8/9 - 11/23	8/11 - 11/1
Days Operated	3	65	75	129	106	44	14
No. Nets Used	11 to 15	8 to 16	14 to 14.5	1 to 19	0 to 54	12 to 12.5	5 to 15
Total Net Hours	167	4010	5068	15,250	10,078	4174	711
% Caught in Traps	0%	2.2%	0.9%	7.4%	15.3%	12%	0%
Lgst Daily Catch	26 on 9/20	123 on 10/18	111 on 10/10	119 on 10/6	432 on 11/1	104 on 8/30	65 on 11/1
Most Common on BD	SWTH (19%)	MYWA (27%)	WTSP (32%)	MYWA (30%)	MYWA (15.7%)	RTHU (27%)	SCJU (30%)
Most Species Diversity	-	10/18 (21)	9/20,9/29 (27)	10/6 (27)	9/6 (36)	-	10/6 (18)
No. Banded 2002	211	2852	3467	3078	11,405	1231	469
No. Banded 2003	60	2098	3340	2917	10,261	1310	305
No. Forms 2002	40	85	81	89	123	72	49
No. Forms 2003	25	-	87	100	107	76	43
Birds/100nh 2002	29.9	61.7	72.0	19.0	NA	40.9	50.0
Birds/100nh 2003	27.8	51.2	64.8	17.1	101.8	33.5	42.0
% HY 2002	82%	77%	65%	-	-	84%	69%
% HY 2003	87%	83%	65%	68%	76%	80%	66%

Apr. - Jun. 2004

Table 1. AFR III Fall 2003 Summary (cont'd.)							
	Hebron PA	Little Gap PA	Powdermill PA	Bedford Vly PA	Mt Nebo MD	Allegheny Fmt WV	Roan MT TN/NC
First Day/Last Day	8/2 - 11/28	8/31 - 11/1	8/7 - 11/30	8/12 - 10/20	9/23 - 11/3	8/10 - 10/10	8/12 - 10/16
Days Operated		18	87	31	23	55	35
No. Nets Used	1 to 15	4 to 10	5 to 64	2 to 10	11 to 15	1 to 23	3 to 7
Total Net Hours		512	19,410	868	1425	7072	652
% Caught in Traps		0%	NA	0%	0%	0%	0%
Lgst Daily Catch		19 on 10/10	407 on 10/16	20 on 9/25	68 on 10/18	244 on 9/30	91 on 9/20
Most Common on BD		GCKI (53%)	RCKI (21%)		CEDW (43%)	BLPW (29%)	TEWA (69%)
Most Species Diversity		10/8 (8)	9/21 (44)	9/25 (11)	9/26, 10/6 (21)	10/7 (31)	10/8 (14)
No. Banded 2002	427	292	5663	40	576	3684	719
No. Banded 2003	528	128	6796	121	726	3452	1061
No. Forms 2002	49	41	110	25	58	78	47
No. Forms 2003	57	27	106	36	56	69	47
Birds/100nh 2002		48.4	35.0	6.2	29.6	49.3	159.0
Birds/100nh 2003		25.0	35.0	14.0	50.9	48.8	163.0
% HY 2002		50%	NA	-	80%	75%	89%
% HY 2003		71%	NA	-	53%	-	-

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Table 2. Most Commonly Banded Species, AFR Region III, Fall 2003									
	Lewiston NY	Ruthven Park ON	Rock Point ON	Selkirk Park ON	Long Point ON	Holiday Beach ON	Presque Isle PA		
	% HY	% HY	% HY	% HY	% HY	% HY	% HY		
1.	9 GRCA(1) 100	185 SOSP(3) 87.9	355 RCKI(2) 48.7	377 SCJU(3) 90.5	1587 MYWA 91.4	162 GCKI(3) 68	49 GRCA(6) 50		
2.	7 BCCH(3) 67	175 AMGO(2) 79.4	340 AMGO(1) 62.9	324 RCKI(2) NA	731 RCKI 56.5	137 RCKI(2) 66	41 WTSP(3) 70		
3.	7 SWTH(9) 86	173 MYWA(1) 92.9	321 WTSP(3) 57.6	186 GCKI(1) NA	683 SCJU 74.1	134 RTHU(4) 90	32 GCKI(1) 55		
4.	5 NAWA 100	168 WTSP(6) 77.4	272 GRCA(4) 93.0	149 SOSP(5) 95.3	661 WTSP 76.2	100 MAWA(7) 92	26 RCKI(2) 70		
5.	4 MAWA(2) 100	157 RCKI(4) NA	220 YWAR(5) 88.2	118 AMGO 42.4	488 NSWO 65.2	64 NAWA(9) 89	25 HETH(4) 75		
6.	3 NOCA 66	72 GCKI(8) NA	126 EWCS 46.0	117 YWAR(7) 90.6	413 GCKI 73.6	51AMGO(6) 51	22 SCJU 52		
7.	3 PHVI 100	70 GRCA(10) 91.4	123 SCJU(9) 84.6	112 MYWA(6) 90.6	392 AMGO 77.8	50 WTSP(5) 96	15 BRGR 48		
8.	2 COYE 100	57 REVI 73.6	119 GCKI(6) 45.4	88 WTSP 78.4	365 BRGR 59.7	46 HETH 98	8 YWAR(5) 100		
9.	2 AMRE(5) 100	52 HETH 92.3	111MAWA(7) 61.3	80 GRCA(8) 80.3	329 EWCS 70.2	35 SWTH(10) 88	7 MAWA 60		
10.	2 WOTH(7) 50	49 MAWA 75.0	86 SOSP(10) 81.4	66 RBNU 92.4	294 SWTH 69.7	30 REVI 90	7 WWR 100		
							7 SWTH(8) 75		
() Indicates place on list last year.									

() Indicates place on list last year.

Table 2. Most Commonly Banded Species, AFR Region III, Fall 2003 (cont'd.)							
	Little Gap PA	Hebron PA	Powdermill PA	Bedford Valley PA	Mt Nebo MD	Allegheny Front WV	Roan Mt. TN/NC
	% HY	% HY	% HY	% HY	% HY	% HY	% HY
1.	26 BTBW(4) 77	74 AMGO(1)	536 AMGO(1) 74	18 WTSP 66	152 WTSP 34	706 BTBW(2) 94	377 TEWA(1)
2.	17 RCKI(1) NA	37 SCJU(2)	522 WTSP(2) 55	9 SOS 78	68 GRCA(5) 72	402 BLPW(3) 58	162 SCJU(4)
3.	15 BLPW 87	33 CHSP(6)	414 MYWA 72	8 GRCA 87	58 RCKI 40	338 BTNW(4) 89	157 SWTH(2)
4.	10 GCKI(2) NA	28 RBGR	386 RCKI 54	6 BRTH 83	57 CEDW(8) 40	330 TEWA(1) 78	129 BTBW(3)
5.	9 REVI(8) 89	28 EWCS(5)	371 MAWA(5) 66	6 CHSP 67	51 MAWA(3) 29	173 RCKI NA	25 GCKI(5)
6.	6 MAWA(7) 84	27 SOS(4)	313 GRCA(3) 87	6 RCKI 33	39 AMRO(7) 44	166 COYE 79	19 OVEN(7)
7.	4 BCCH 75	26 HOFI	263 SOS(8) 61		25 BTBW 72	151 SWTH(5) 79	15 RCKI
8.	4 GRCA 75	26 MODO(10)	259 RTHU(6) 92		25 COYE(1) 52	147 CMWA(9) 19	15 RBGR
9.	4 BLJA 75	26 WTSP(3)	257 PUFI 44		23 SOS 65	116 MAWA(6) 79	12 AMRE
10.	4 SWTH 75	25 SCTA	249 REVI 75		21 BCCH(4) 71	101 BLJA 78	11 HOWA

() Indicates place on list last year.

() Indicates place on list last year.

Lewiston**431-0790**

Niagara County, NY

Jerald J. Farrell, Bander

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The 2003 fall banding was very limited at the Lewiston Station. There were only three days where actual banding took place. I was unable to spend the time due to surgery that was scheduled on 8 Sep. After my full recovery, the weather was uncooperative. The plan was to band through the month of October and continue into the first part of November. This did not take place and the station was shut down on 2 Nov.

During the limited banding, there were two returns: a Wood Thrush and a Black-capped Chickadee.

There were banding demonstrations put on at two Pheasant Forever Youth Days.

Hopefully, all will work out well and this station will be back in full operation for fall 2004.

Ruthven Park**425-0795**

Haldimand County, ON

Rick Ludkin, Bander

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Chief Assistants: Loretta Mousseau, Darryl Edwards, Marylene Boulet

This was the ninth fall banding season at Ruthven Park. Although we started on 12 Jul, we banded sporadically in July and most of August to sample the local breeding birds and their young. Regular banding/migration monitoring started on 28 Aug and went through 8 Nov. We did not band when the weather was poor or, on rare occasions, when work was unavoidable. We banded on 65 days altogether—on 55 during the migration monitoring period.

Ruthven Park National Historic Site is located on the banks of the Grand River about 2 km north of the town of Cayuga and about 20 km directly north of the shore of Lake Erie. The area is a mosaic of agricultural fields, old fields, and forest tracts (some of which are quite large). The net lanes are cut into the scrub which provides a buffer between the open fields and lawns of the historic mansion area and the surrounding forest.

For most of the season we used 15 nets set out in nine net lanes, which have been in place now for over five years. In October we set up another net lane to catch sparrows. We also used up to four ground traps and one Potter trap, all of which were moved periodically in response to bird movement on the property. Banding was carried out in the banding 'lab' – an out-building that was converted last year to house the banding program. It is outfitted with electricity and heat.

Overall, we banded on 65 days through the fall season banding 2,098 birds of 80 species or 'forms'. We band sporadically in July and early-to-mid August as time constraints allow. This is done primarily to band the young of locally breeding birds, especially Yellow Warblers (after the first few days of August we rarely even see a Yellow Warbler). We banded 47, which is slightly above the long-term average of 43.

The first three years of the banding operation at Ruthven (1995-1997) were 'set-up' years – we were getting the program running, establishing net sites, census routes, etc. The banding effort, as measured by number of net hours, was reduced compared to later years. Since 1998, however, the banding effort has been fairly consistent in terms of numbers of net hours and days in the field. Since 1998, this year was the lowest in terms of number of birds banded (2,098), number of species/forms banded (80), and the rate of capture (51.2b/100nh).

September is usually a really interesting month as the Neotropical migrants move through and you never know what you might find in your nets. And toward the latter half of the month the overall number of migrants usually picks up substantially so that you can band large numbers on any particular day. This was not the pattern this year: we got a modest number of birds throughout, banding only 447 (next lowest: 628 in 1999) at a rate of only 31.7 b/100 nh (next lowest: 42.7 in 1999). Although you could jump to the conclusion that there were fewer migrants this year (for whatever reason), I do not think this was the case: reports from stations south of this noted large, even record, numbers. It would appear that the birds were flying over, taking advantage of (or staying ahead of) the prevailing weather conditions.

The first three weeks of October usually provide the 'biggest' days of the migration (as well as the year). It is not unusual for us to have several days when we band over 100 birds a day; and for the past two years, we have had a day with over 200 banded (the highest was 254 on 22 Oct 2001). We waited...and waited but through the first two weeks we got only modest numbers – we averaged 50 birds banded per day, enough to keep you busy but not happily frenetic. Our one 'big day' was 18 Oct when we banded 123 birds. Interestingly, after that the numbers tailed off as one would expect for the last part of October but not by much—we still averaged 46 birds per day through the end of October. This would lend credence to my suspicion that the migration was late this year. The number of birds banded in October (1,277) was the third lowest since 1998 but the rate of capture (74.0 b/100 nh) was the lowest.

We banded for four days in November, capturing 88 birds. Although we finished on 8 Nov, my sense is that we could have kept on catching birds for another two weeks.

Although this was our lowest banding total since 1998 we did band some species in record numbers: Mourning Dove (19), Downy Woodpecker (18), Blue-headed Vireo (7), Yellow-throated Vireo (9), Orange-crowned Warbler (14), Black-throated Green Warbler (16), Western Palm Warbler (8), Field Sparrow (6), Lincoln's Sparrow (15). On the other hand, some species were noticeably reduced: Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler (173, down from 346 in 2002 and 508 in 2001), Chipping Sparrow (12, down from 30 in 2002 and 54 in 2001). We banded both hybrids of the Golden-winged Warbler x Blue-winged Warbler complex – the Brewster's and Lawrence's Warbler.

Overall, we encountered (banded/observed) 142 species/forms through the fall season; some of note were Great Egret, (several) Bald Eagles, Red-shouldered Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Tufted Titmouse, 24 species of warbler (including both hybrids).

This fall we retrapped 133 birds and had 96 returns (birds banded at Ruthven during other banding seasons).

The running of this station depends on the dedication and hard work of a number of banders and interested helpers: **7-8 weeks:** Rick Ludkin; **3-4 weeks:** Loretta Mousseau; **1 week:** Hannah Badger, Linda & Al Thrower; **4-6 days:** Darryl Edwards, Wayne, Beth, Holly & Madison Watson, Cathy Badger; **1-3 days:** Brandon Holden, Matt Pauls, Teegan Docherty, Sonia Sherma, Sarah Fassler, Kathryn Harrison, Heather Pankhurst, Marg Ludkin, Randy & Linda Carter, Erin Gouthro, Elaine Serena, Audrey Heagey, Jeremy Ludkin, Geoff Ludkin.

Enthusiastic support (financial and practical) is provided by the Lower Grand River Land Trust and the Ruthven Park staff – thanks!! This project is also supported financially by the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund of Bird Studies Canada with funds raised through the annual Baillie Birdathon.

Rock Point Banding Station 425-0793

Dunnville, Haldimand County, ON

Jim Smith, Bander

benavis@sympatico.ca

Chief Assistants: Roswitha Mataschek, Rick Young, Dora Young, Gisele Mills, Jack Custers, Chantal Lount

Net locations remained the same except for a short period where a half net was used in a slightly different location. Rock Point remains a six-day-a-week single-volunteer banding operation. A summer period from 18 Jul to 8 Aug enabled us to catch a number of Yellow Warblers before they left the area. Fall banding then resumed on 25 Aug. It is hoped that finding an additional bander will enable us to go seven days a week. The excellent spruce cone crop saw a return of such species as Red-breasted Nuthatch. Many Gray Catbirds dispersed into the area and completed juvenal moult resulting in a high number of catches and 90 retraps.

In total, 441 recaptures were made of 37 species. This resulted in 11 contacts from birds first banded in 2000, 14 from birds in 2001, and 30 from birds in 2002.

There were three foreign retraps: a Yellow Warbler banded at Long Point Bird Observatory on 19 May 2001 and recovered at Rock Point 8 Aug 2003; we

are still awaiting information on a Cedar Waxwing and a Black-capped Chickadee

Two birds were recovered: A Yellow Warbler from Selkirk Banding Station first banded 15 May and recaptured 18 May and a number of times after that; and an Indigo Bunting banded 4 Oct 2002 recovered at Phoenixville, PA, on 15 May 2003.

Only one each of Eastern Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren were banded this year, probably as a result of the cold winter and the early spring storm.

International volunteers from United Kingdom and Ireland added interest and afforded an opportunity to compare the methods used in the various countries. A banding slide show was shown to campers at the park. Articles were written for Niagara Falls Nature Club. Demonstrations and talks were given to various school groups.

Again, I give sincere thanks to the regular volunteers who gave one or more days a week to assist. Without permission from Ontario Parks and support from Mark Custers to conduct scientific studies within the park, we would not have such a good location. I appreciate the grant from Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and supplies from Haldimand Bird Observatory in the form of nets, paper, and other incidentals.

Selkirk Provincial Park 424-0795
Haldimand-Norfolk Counties, ON
John Miles, Bander
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Chief Assistant: Mike Furber

The sixth year of operating in the fall at the Selkirk Provincial Park field station of the Haldimand Bird Observatory officially commenced 3 Jul and ended 15 Nov. The station was manned daily once it opened, except for days of inclement weather or personal commitments, with banding taking place 129 days. In addition to the bander-in-charge, 26 volunteers spent one or more days assisting with running the station.

Except for days of extreme adverse weather, e.g. hurricane, when banding was not carried out, the station was manned from ½ hour before sunrise for a minimum of six hours for the passerine band-

ing. On a couple of mornings banding commenced after the morning rain had ceased. In October and November on many mornings the nets were opened 1-2 hours before dawn to catch owls. A hawk banding station was set up to operate on Saturdays starting in mid-September. Unfortunately, the weather on Saturdays was not the most cooperative and the station operated only about half the available weekends and even some of them were iffy.

The summer/fall of 2003 saw a series of warm, dry weather followed by periods of wet, damp weather. These cycles lasted 3-4 weeks at a time. The latter part of August and the first half of September was very warm and dry. The birds were late to appear and then seemed to have gone right on over the station. For several species, catch numbers were well below normal while record numbers were appearing at banding stations 400-500 mi south.

The Selkirk field station has operated in the same location in the southwest part of the park since it was started in 1996. The census route was shortened a bit to exclude the hardwoods at the north end of the study area, which reduced the time to a better time of approximately one hour to do the census. A hawk banding station was set up about 100 m south of the passerine banding area on the edge of the west side of the Spring Creek marsh.

Passerine banding was carried out using 19 mist nets, five ground traps, and a Jay trap. No changes in the net placements were made for the passerine operation and the setup appears to be the most efficient for the area. Hawk banding was carried out with four hawk nets and two bow nets.

July was about normal with a few early stragglers filtering through with the Yellow Warbler flight peaking the last week of July. There were 446 birds of 39 species banded. August was an improvement over August 2002 with over 40 more birds banded, although it seemed as if the migration was delayed by up to two weeks, as the last part of August was dry and with above-normal mid-summer temperatures. This pattern continued into September. September usually is the peak month for variety and number of migrants. Between the warmth of the beginning of the month and the final change in the

weather, the birds at first did not seem to be moving and then they were gone—right over the banding site with very few appearing in the banding area. September was the poorest month of the fall with only 363 birds banded. October started off slowly; but during the last two thirds of the month, the migrants in the banding area picked up and the month ended with 1263 birds banded. This continued into November with 79 birds banded on 1 Nov and 417 birds banded during the 15 days the station was in operation.

There were 2917 birds of 100 species banded at Selkirk in the fall of 2003, which is the fourth best fall at Selkirk. The total banded is within 200 birds of Selkirk's best fall. Several species were banded this fall for the first time: Northern Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, and Wilson's Snipe. The snipe was a real surprise, in a pine plantation at midday!!!

In the fall of 2003, 253 retrapped birds were processed. Some of these birds were retrapped many times.

In fall 2003, 87 birds were returns from another season. While most of these are residents or nesting birds in the area, the recapture of an American Tree Sparrow banded in spring 2003 is noteworthy. Other interesting returns were a Song Sparrow banded in 1997, a goldfinch in 1998, a grackle and Rose-breasted Grosbeak in 1999, and a goldfinch banded in 2000.

There was just one foreign retrap this fall: #1273-55466 Northern Saw-whet Owl banded 23 Oct 2003 at the Long Point Bird Observatory's Old Cut station and retrapped at Selkirk 5 Nov 2003. In two weeks this bird had gone NE about 40 km as the crow flies.

There were 55 visitor days recorded this fall at the banding site. A banding demonstration was put on for the 1st Hagersville Cub pack.

I 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. Hans has been very supportive in many ways. This project was supported financially by the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund of Birds Studies Canada with funds raised through the annual Baillie

Birdathon, the Ministry of Natural Resources CWIP program, the Norfolk Field Naturalists, Ontario Power Generation, and George Pond. Also I thank the Observatory's friends and members whose individual donations were appreciated greatly. These included bird bags, 3 ring loose-leaf binders, file cabinets, other items, and timely cash donations. Goods and services were also provided by Selkirk Provincial Park.

Finally, the volunteers without whose assistance the station's operation would have been very difficult: **2-4 weeks:** Mike Furber, **1-2 weeks:** Mark Bacro, Blake Edwards, Tim Furber, Nancy Furber, Chris Heffernan, Matt Ross; **4-6 days:** Andrew Bacro, Elizabeth Bacro, Mark Cranford, Abby Fletcher, Shirley Fletcher, Allison Furber, Jamie Furber, Matt Furber, **1-3 days:** Charlene Goll, Brandon, Holden, Eric Holden, Gerard McNaughton, Mike Kimber, Sue Kimber, Steve Miles, Holly Nadalin, Angie Williams, Ken Williams

Long Point Bird Observatory 423-0800
Port Rowan, Norfolk County, ON 423-0801
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Chief Assistants: Stu Mackenzie, Roz Ford, and Henri Robert

Fall weather was wonderful at Long Point (LPBO) this fall; however, net hours were decreased by winds that plagued the Tip for much of the season. Hurricane Isabel passed through the Long Point area, which brought high winds and some crazy storms. There were a number of overall highlights at LPBO, not the least of which was a much-needed renovation to the Breakwater field station. This opened the station a little later than usual, further lowering both catch and net hours at LPBO as a whole. Grades three/four of Jarvis Christian School visited Old Cut field station for a banding demonstration and fun learning, as did members of the local The Red Hat Society.

Highlight banded birds include Northern Goshawk, Snow Bunting, Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow, a very late Black-throated Green Warbler banded on 7 Nov, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Eastern Tufted Titmouse.

Snow Buntings have been caught every fall since 1998; similarly, Eastern Tufted Titmouse has been banded every fall since 1999. LPBO posted its second highest banding totals for both Northern Saw-whet Owls and Myrtle Warblers this fall, the records being 811 set in 1999 and 1596 set in 1993, respectively. New record totals for the fall were reached in a few species including Chipping Sparrow (114), Slate-colored Junco (683) and Common Grackle (115). Other noteworthy events include the highest banding totals for: Blue Jay, since 1980; Lincoln's Sparrow, since 1985; and Eastern Towhee, since 1990. The lowest banding totals were recorded for: Canada Warbler, since 1974; Philadelphia Vireo, since 1990; American Redstart, since 1990; Eastern Phoebe, since 1991; and Hermit Thrush, since 1994. The first fall-banded Blue-winged Warbler and Eastern Bluebird in three seasons were trapped this fall, as was Louisiana Waterthrush, which was last trapped in the fall of 1997.

Capture rate fluctuated for some species. Those that decreased more than 50 % from 2002 include American Goldfinch, Yellow, Black-throated Blue and Blackpoll warblers, and Northern Waterthrush. Those that showed an increase of more than 50% from 2002 include Common Grackle, Magnolia Warbler, and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

A special thank you goes out to all of the volunteers who made this season one to remember!

**Holiday Beach
Migration Observatory**

Essex Co., ON

Allen Chartier, Bander

Amazilia1@comcast.net

Banders: Bob Hall-Brooks, Carl Pascoe, Steve Greidanus (trainee)

Chief Assistant: Rachel Powless

The Holiday Beach Migration Observatory (HBMO) is an organization, formed in 1986, devoted to monitoring migration at the Holiday Beach Conservation Area (HBCA), Essex Co., Ontario. For directions and information on our site, go to the HBMO website at: <http://www.hbmo.org>

This summary covers only those birds banded at the Beach station during the day (two additional stations for hawks are also operated in this area

and Northern Saw-whet Owls are banded at the Beach station at night). This year (2003) was our seventh fall of passerine banding and our fourth fall of hummingbird banding.

A total of 76 species was banded this year, the highest ever since we opened the station in 1997. The previous high was 73 species in 2001. A total of 1310 new birds, plus 89 recaptures was our second highest ever. The station was open a total of 44 days between 9 Aug and 23 Nov, which is significantly more than last year's high of 36 days. Two additional nets were added this season, which, in addition to the increase in daily coverage, gave us a significantly greater number of net-hours (nh). This year's total of 4174 nh is significantly higher than last year's high of 3011 nh.

Some numerical increases of many species clearly were due to increased coverage. Comparison of the number captured per 100 net hours this year to the previous six-year average/100nh is a better measurement. Using these figures, some numerical increases are actually decreases when the effort is taken into account. A good example is Golden-crowned Kinglet, with a season record of 162 (six-year average is 82.5) banded, while the capture rate was only 3.88 b/100 nh (six-year average is 5.41).

Of the 73 species with previous banding data for comparison, eight species showed no significant change, 30 species showed significant decreases, and five species showed significant increases.

Three species were banded for the first time at the station this year: Eastern Screech-Owl, White-eyed Vireo, and Eastern Towhee. Species missed this year included Black-capped Chickadee, Cedar Waxwing, and Blackburnian Warbler (third year in a row). Perhaps most interesting was a vireo that appeared to be a hybrid Red-eyed X Philadelphia, which could represent the first report in more than 120 years! Details will be published elsewhere.

Significant encounters included the station's first recapture of a species that is not resident in the area, with two White-throated Sparrows: one on 7 Nov 2003 that was originally banded on 3 Nov 2002, and one on 22 Nov 2003 that was originally banded 2 Nov 2002.

Record highs were recorded for Sharp-shinned Hawk – 12 (4.8), Ruby-throated Hummingbird – 134 (37.3), Golden-crowned Kinglet – 162 (82.5), Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 137 (72.2), Veery – 9 (3.3), Blue-winged Warbler – 2 (0.2), Orange-crowned Warbler – 7 (1.3), Common Yellowthroat – 8 (2.8), Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco – 29 (9.7).

One final note: this is my last year as a bander at this site. My future efforts will focus on Michigan which, though only a few miles west of Holiday Beach, falls within the jurisdiction of the Inland Bird Banding Association. Future passerine and hummingbird banding operations at the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory, and any reports, will be compiled by Bob Hall-Brooks and Carl Pascoe.

Thank you to the Essex Region Conservation Authority for allowing access to the site, and to the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory for providing funding. Thank you to this year's banding assistants and trainees: Cindy Cartwright, Ellie Cox, Steve Greidanus, Bob Hall-Brooks, Carl Pascoe, Rachel Powless, Jason Sodergren, and Dan Webb.

Presque Isle **420-0800**
Erie, PA
Ronald F. Leberman, Bander

Extreme weather conditions and a general lack of birds resulted in the second poorest banding total at our station on Presque Isle bay. The total this season was 305 birds of 43 species in 711 net hours. In 1960, our first year of operations, only 287 birds were banded. A total of 14 days were spent in the field compared to 18 days last fall. Operations began on 11 Aug and ended 1 Nov; 1 Nov was also our best day with a total of 65 birds banded. There were no new species for the station this fall. We had two returns (a catbird banded in July 2001 and a Song Sparrow banded in April 2002), six repeats, and a few hummingbirds were caught and released unbanded.

I thank all those who helped at the station in any way and the visitors that stopped by to watch. Thanks especially to Barb Mitchel, Sam Stull, Larry Johnson, Larry Massey, Krish Miller, Jae Mohlmann and the Park staff and crew.

Hebron **414-0780**
Coudersport, Potter County, PA
David W. Hauber, Bander
haubers@penn.com
Chief Assistant: Alexandra Aikens

Total number of birds and species rebounded in 2003 to about the same numbers as in 2001. There were 17 species of warblers compared to 11 in 2002.

New for the station was Orange Crowned Warbler.

Of interest is an Indigo Bunting that was banded here 10 Sep 2000 as an HY-U that was found 15 Oct 2003 near Santa Maria, Cuba.

Saw-whet owl numbers (which are not included in the numbers above) were down, with 76 banded compared to 116 in 2002.

Little Gap **404-0753**
Northampton County, PA
Brad Silfies, Bander
bssilfies@entermail.net
Chief Assistants: Greg George, Adam Miller, and Susan Guers

In our second year of operation it was white-tailed deer, not the birds, which caused the largest commotion. Regularly during the season, nets (some of them brand new—just hours old) were totally destroyed by deer. We shut down early due to heavy net loss and concluded the season early when hunting pressure increased deer activity.

We had no returns and no foreign recoveries. New species for the station included Least Flycatcher, American Robin, Veery, Common Grackle, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Tennessee Warbler, and Eastern Phoebe.

Visitors this year included New Quest and Monagacci Schools and Hawk Mountain interns.

Powdermill Nature Reserve **400-0791**
Rector, Westmoreland County, PA
Robert C. Leberman and Robert S. Mulvihill, Banders
rcleberm@charterpa.net, mulvipnr@westol.com

Chief Assistants: Mike Lanzone, Adrienne Leppold, Annie Lindsay

Powdermill Nature Reserve's Bird Banding Program, located on the 2,000-ac biological station of Carnegie Museum of Natural History in the Laurel Highlands region of southwestern Pennsylvania, completed its 42nd fall migration banding season in 2003. The station was operated on 87 out of a possible 122 days from August through November. We banded 6,796 birds, which fits well within one standard deviation of our long-term average of 6,286 and not counting our record fall total in 2001, is the highest fall banding total since 1995. We banded 100 or more birds on 24 days during the season (compared to 16 days last fall). Peak banding dates were 16 Oct (407; our eighth highest daily banding total ever), 10 Oct (233), 23 Oct (232), 11 Oct (215), and 19 Oct (211). We banded 13% of our cumulative total during August, 33% in September, 46% in October, and 8% in November.

Hurricane Isabel swept the east coast in September; however, the storm path stayed just east of Powdermill and, aside from a loss of a few banding days due to rain, we did not experience any of the storm's effects in the way of a great fallout of birds. The wetter-than-normal fall and preceding summer season, however, may well have contributed to the higher incidence of the bill and leg deformities among our banded birds—in particular, avian pox. This disease is vectored by mosquitoes, which, of course, thrive in wet environments. We observed an unusually high number of pox lesions and other bill and foot deformities this past fall, a number of cases of which we illustrated and discussed on our website, <http://www.westol.com/~banding>

Banding effort for the fall 2003 season totaled 19,410 net-hours (avg. 223 net-hours/day). While the number of days of operation was one less than for fall 2002 (both near the long-term average), total net-hours of effort this fall was well above the 41-year average of 15,274 net-hours, which means the average number of net-hours per banding day also was above average. Our average daily effort in fall 2003 even exceeded fall 2001, when we logged a near record number of total net-hours (21,640 nh) over a greater number of banding days

(average daily effort of 216 nh/day) than 2002. The larger number of net hours in fall 2003 is attributable to the four, week-long bander workshops hosted this fall at Powdermill and, consequently, to more than the usual amount of help on hand.

A total of 106 species of birds was banded this fall, which is just about average for fall species diversity. Although they accounted for less than half the total number of birds banded, August and September accounted for 89% of the species banded this fall. Only nine new species were added in October and only two (American Tree Sparrow and Red-winged Blackbird) were added in November. Species diversity at Powdermill peaked two to three weeks before banding totals. The day with the highest diversity was 9/21 with 44 species banded; our record high banding total for the season was on 10/16 with 407 birds banded.

Summer Tanager was added as a new species for the cumulative Powdermill fall banding list, which now stands at 171 (167 species plus two hybrid forms and two recognizable subspecies). Banded in September, it was the fourth SUTA banded at Powdermill but the first fall banding for the species. A few other good "gets" (species for which we average less than one banded per fall) included Green Heron, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Henslow's Sparrow (the eighth ever banded here at Powdermill and only the fourth in the last 26 years).

Conversely, conspicuous "misses" this fall (i.e., species for which an average of one or more has been banded during fall), contributing to our just-average species total included: Baltimore Oriole, Barn Swallow, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Evening Grosbeak, Great Crested Flycatcher, Prairie Warbler, and Savannah Sparrow.

As always, a handful of species makes up a large proportion of our total catch. This fall's "top ten" list bumped up four new species that were not included on the 2002 list: Red-eyed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler (one of the long-term top ten placeholders), and Purple Finch. As noted in fall 2002, if this current trend continues, the most abundant species now for the last three fall seasons, American Goldfinch, will soon supplant the former perennial leader, Dark-

eyed Junco, which has been decreasing inexplicably at Powdermill in both fall and spring migration over the past several years.

Similar to last fall, there were very few unusually high or low banding totals this fall. In fact, only Red-eyed Vireo set a new record high number with 249 banded, beating out the previous maximum of 223 in 1989. While not record setters, four species doubled (or more than doubled) last year's fall totals. They were Ruby-crowned Kinglet (386 vs. 146), Yellow-rumped Warbler (which is reflected in this fall's top ten, 414 vs. 79), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (106 vs. 64), and Purple Finch (257 vs. 42). Magnolia Warbler (371 vs. 271), American Redstart (217 vs. 117), and White-throated Sparrow (522 vs. 392) were also netted in much higher numbers than last year. Conversely, species banded in much lower numbers this fall included Cape May Warbler (18 in 2003 vs. 51 in 2002), Fox Sparrow (23 vs. 66), Dark-eyed Junco (160 vs. 348), and House Finch (8 vs. 47).

Of 121 species analyzed, seventeen species were one or more standard deviation above average in fall 2003 in terms of raw banding totals, and seven were below average. Confirming the importance of adjusting for effort in comparing banding totals from year to year, examination of capture rates gives a very different picture, with just five species being above average and fourteen below average. Five species were above average both for raw banding total and capture rate: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Yellow-throated Vireo, Winter Wren, Wood Thrush, and American Redstart. Another twelve were above average with respect to either raw banding total or capture rate, including Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Yellow-bellied and Acadian flycatchers, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, and Chestnut-sided Warbler. Five species were below average for both raw banding total and capture rate, Downy Woodpecker, House Wren, Canada Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, and American Tree Sparrow. Eleven others were below average with respect to either raw banding total or capture rate and included the following Neotropical migrants: Least Flycatcher, "Traill's" Flycatcher, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Mourning Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler.

Finally, a banding operation of this magnitude is made possible only with the help of several regular and dependable volunteers, and we sincerely thank the following for their contribution to the success of the program in fall 2003: Hope Carpenter, Mary Helen Chiodo, Randi Gerrish, Carroll Labarthe, Trish Miller, and Carole Shanahan. For occasional help with the banding, we also thank Brian Jones and David Liebmann.

We benefited once again from an extended visit by Dr. David Norman, our British friend and ringing colleague from the Merseyside Ringing Group, whose visit this fall coincided perfectly for adding assistance and some "overseas" banding insight during two of our four bander workshops where discussions and instructions on species identification, ageing and sexing, and measurement techniques were main topics. We appreciate the help and patience from all those who attended the workshops, especially during the very busy days when "regular" workshop activities were put on hold: Guy Ubaghs, Rosemary Spreha, Sue Finnegan, Cindy Cartwright, Danielle Skoncey, Tom Greg, Aura Stauffer, Barbara Chambers, Joanna Taylor, Kelly Williams-Seig, Sandra Wilmore, Cindy Marino, and Bill Teetz.

This fall, we also welcomed Dr. David Smith, Powdermill's new Director, whose hands we quickly filled with bags full of birds. And, as always, we are extremely fortunate to have a highly skilled data entry operator at Carnegie Museum's Section of Birds, Marilyn Niedermeier, who painstakingly enters, checks and double checks all of our banding records, and who is responsible for generating banding schedules and filling data requests.

Bedford Valley **395-0783**
Bedford County, PA
Janet Shaffer, Bander
jgshaffer@yellowbananas.com

Two six-meter and 10 twelve-meter nets were operated for a total of 41 days during fall 2003. This was the longest fall netting season ever since the station started. Beginning 12 Aug, it was operated whenever possible between the hours of 6 a.m. and 12 noon and closed on 20 Oct 2003. There were 121 new birds banded of 36 different species resulting in 14 b/100nh. There were 26 recaptures.

Last year's drought was replaced by too much rain this fall, but nets were opened in between showers and rainy days. I observed one robin's nest which dissolved and fell to the ground. Eight species of warblers, including six Black-throated Blue and six Blackpoll warblers were banded. Three thrush species were: Hermit, Gray-cheeked and Swainson's. No Wood Thrush were caught. Wrens were Winter, House, and Carolina. August and September were extremely slow, with eight days with NO birds netted. Finally, on 25 Sep, things picked up and 15 new birds were banded. On 20 Oct and 11 Oct good flights came through, so it was worthwhile to extend the banding operation into October.

Mt. Nebo Banding Station **392-0792**
Oakland, Garrett County, MD
Connie Skipper and Fran Pope, Banders
connieskipper@hohnet.com

The Mt. Nebo Banding Station was open 23 days from 23 Sep through 3 Nov. Our largest catch was 68 birds on 18 Oct. We banded 21 species on both 26 Sep and 6 Oct. Our season total was 726 with a station effort of 1425 net-hours, using 10 to 15 nets. We had 51 b/100mh, the highest since I have been keeping statistics (18 years).

We moved our station back to Mt. Nebo WMA this fall. We banded here in 1998 and 1999. We then moved to Herrington Manor State Park for the next three years where we gave banding demos to numerous visitors and school groups. Though we were more accessible to visitors at Herrington Manor SP, the Mt. Nebo site is far more productive. Both locations are within the same 10-minute block. Mt. Nebo is on the east side of a ridge while Herrington Manor SP lies four miles to the west in a wetlands area. The site at Mt. Nebo WMA once again had an abundant crop of berries on the autumn and Russian olives and the honeysuckle bushes. Many *Prunus* species in the orchard produced heavily, especially a hybrid crabapple on which many species of birds fed.

Notable recaptures included a Black-capped Chickadee banded as HY in 1999, a Gray Catbird banded as AHY in 1999, a Common Yellowthroat banded as HY in 1999, and a Common Yellowthroat banded as HY in 2002 at Herrington Manor SP.

Apr. - Jun. 2004

As in previous years at Mt. Nebo WMA, White-throated Sparrows and Gray Catbirds were part of the top four. White-throated Sparrows made up 21% of our total with 152 birds. Ruby-crowned Kinglets made an excellent showing. Magnolia Warblers made an unusually high showing of 51, (33 in 1998 and 27 in 1999). I wonder what the numbers would have been if we had opened at our usual time in mid-to-late August. No Myrtle Warblers were captured, or even seen, during our banding effort. This was rather unusual. The thrushes were present in good numbers, no doubt attracted to the bountiful mast crop.

New species banded this year were the European Starling, Blue-winged Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Traill's Flycatcher, and Common Grackle. This brings the station total to 79 species.

Allegheny Front Migration Observ. **390-0791**
Grant County, WV
Ralph K. Bell and Joan Bell Pattison, AFMO
Banding Leaders
George A. Hall, Compiler
Ghww@aol.com

The 46th year of bird banding at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory was another season of modest results. The number of bandings was only 62% of the long-term average, making this the sixth poorest season since we have had full-time coverage.

The station was in operation from 10 Aug to 10 Oct. The rainfall for the period was unusually heavy but most of the heavy storms occurred in the afternoon or nighttime hours and so did not affect the banding operations. The station was shut down by rain or high winds on only four days, including a day for the passage of the remnant of Hurricane Isabel, but on 12 additional days, rain or heavy fog caused early closing of the nets.

A total of 3452 birds (average = 5528) of 69 species was banded with a station effort of 7072 net-hours, giving a capture ratio of 48.8 b/100nh, compared with 49.3 in 2002, 50.8 in 2001, and 50.1 in 2000. In August 886 birds were banded (21 days); 1670 in September (27 days); and 896 in October (7 days). The station has now banded 195,734 birds

of 120 species. No new species were banded this year; the number of species was lower than normal.

Twelve birds banded in earlier years were recaptured: six had been banded in 2002, one in 2001, four in 2000, and one in 1999. There were two foreign retraps: a Ruby-crowned Kinglet banded in Pennsylvania and a Black-throated Blue Warbler banded in New Hampshire.

The migration pattern was a good example of what we have come to call the normal one: low numbers in August until the first wave around 31 Aug. This is followed by a period of low numbers until the main waves arrive in the second half of September. This year, the "main" waves were late, were usually preceded by bad weather, and lasted only one day. The day after the hurricane, 20 Sep, had the first wave of the month. The second one-day wave came 30 Sep when 244 birds were banded, the season high. The most concentrated movement of the season came on 6-8 Oct when 638 birds were banded. Only three days had over 200 bandings and only four more had over 150.

The Black-throated Blue Warbler was the most numerous species with 706 bandings, which is 4.5% above the ten-year running average. The Blackpoll Warbler (the usual leader) was second with 402 bandings (24% below the average) followed by Black-throated Green Warbler with 338 bandings (7% below average), and Tennessee Warbler with 330 (16% above the average). These four species constitute 51% of the total bandings. No other species had more than 200 bandings.

Of the 39 species selected for analysis, 21 were caught in numbers less than the ten-year average. Nine of these were less than one standard deviation (SD) below the average and nine were more than two SD below average. Eight species were caught in numbers less than one SD above average.

The below-average capture numbers for October migrants (e.g. Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco) probably indicate that many of these birds migrated after the station closed, but the low numbers of Magnolia Warblers and Ovenbirds are warning that these species should be watched.

The number of Yellow-rumped Warblers caught in the early part of the season is a good indication that this recently established local population is thriving.

The visual migrant counts listed 450 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (seventh highest count); 4308 Blue Jays, 968 American Goldfinches (lowest); 318 Monarch Butterflies (second lowest); and 34 dragonflies (poorest).

During the season, 1310 people signed the visitor's book. These visitors came from 23 states, District of Columbia and Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, and Switzerland. As usual, several elementary and middle school classes including the Pendleton County Middle School and the Adventist School from Elkins as well as some college classes visited the station.

The banders who participated this year were Lynn Barnhart, Robert Dean, LeJay Graffious, Ken and Sue Heselton, Carol and Fred McCullough, Randy Ritter, Charles Ziegenfus, and station co-leaders Ralph Bell and Joan Bell Pattison. LeJay Graffious and John Jacobs were responsible for the banding shelter. Randy Ritter was campground host, JoAnn Graham made most of the Blue Jay-hummingbird counts, Bill Agee and Ken Heselton did the computer work. Others who were present for extended periods of time were Dawn and Tom Fox, Phil Graham, Don Pattison, Beth Ritter, and Carl and Joan Rowe. The following people aided in tending nets, carrying cages, keeping records, and in many other ways: Doris Agee, Chris Broyles, Robin and RuthAnn Dean, Charlotte Duffield, Jay and Matt Fox, Walter Fye, Linda Hollenberg, John Jacobs, Mark Johnson, Gordon Knight, Jonavieve Lockhart, Jack and Joleene Minear, Tim Newlin, Joe Schreiber, Janet Shaffer, Steve Sushinski, and Hannah Wisinsky.

We thank the personnel of the Monongahela National Forest, Supervisor Clyde Thompson, District Ranger Jeffery Hammes, and others of the Potomac District Ranger Station for their cooperation and support. Thanks also to the West Virginia D.N.R. for the use of the shed for storage of the banding shelter. The Brooks Bird Club supplied some financial support.

Roan Mountain

360-0820

Carter County, TN / Mitchell County, NC

Richard L. Knight, Bander

rknight@preferred.com

Autumn bird banding was conducted at Carver's Gap (elevation 5512 ft.) on Roan Mountain for the fourth consecutive year and sixth year out of the last eight. The station was open for 35 days from 12 Aug through 16 Oct, with a breakdown of 11 days in August, 19 days in September, and five days in October. This year the station was opened about ten days earlier than average. Temperatures this season were near normal. Rainfall was heavy during August but occurred mostly during the afternoons and evenings, while September and October received near average amounts. Windy conditions disrupted netting on only a few days, mainly late in the season. Nets were placed in the same lanes used previously, with one new net lane initiated.

The number of birds banded this season (1061) was nearly double the average of the previous five years (577, up 84%). This is largely explainable by an increase in days (up 30%) and net-hours (up 65%). The capture rate this season (163 b/100nh) was up 18% from the average of the previous five years; however, the capture rate during the last three years has been fairly consistent (159-168 b/100nh). The number of Tennessee Warblers was double their previous high. In addition to the best day of 91 banded, there were three days of 60+ and three days of 50+.

The number of species banded this season (47) matched the high mark set last year. Five species were new to the station list (Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Alder Flycatcher, Connecticut Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Pine Siskin) bringing the cumulative list to 70 species. In addition, 14 hummingbirds and a Cooper's Hawk were released unbanded. The top four species banded have remained the same every year, although not always in the same sequence. Most, if not all, of the juncos and Golden-crowned Kinglets banded here are local breeders.

A juvenile Hermit Thrush banded on 29 Aug was undoubtedly from the local breeding population,

near the southeastern terminus of their known summer range, as were this season's Alder Flycatchers (4) and Pine Siskins (10). A Chestnut-sided Warbler recaptured on 7 Sep had been banded here as an HY-male in August 2000 and has been recaptured each year since; this, too, is likely a locally breeding individual. Two Blackpoll Warblers were rare here in fall, whereas they are abundant at Allegheny Front, WV, just 250 miles to the northeast.

A Lincoln's Sparrow banded on 1 Sep established a new record: early arrival date for both Tennessee and North Carolina.

My thanks to the Cherokee National Forest (TN) and the Pisgah National Forest (NC) for permission to band birds at this site.



Cooper's Hawk
by George West