

2005

Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory

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station. Pat Lovallo represented BBBO at the Fall Fun Day sponsored by the Girl Scouts' Stoney Hill Service Team at Braddock Bay Park. Many individuals visited the banding station on an informal basis.

Our fall research assistant was Peter Doherty, and Ryan Kayhart was our senior intern. Thanks to Tom Muller for mowing paths and to Jim Gillette for mowing the field; and to Doug Smith for all his habitat management. Appreciation to the following individuals who helped scribe, tended net lanes, or assisted with other aspects of our educational or banding operation: Liz Barry, Kevin Dockery, Jesse Ellis, Judy Engerman, Cricket Fegan, Peggy Fuller, Marilyn Guenther, Michelle Hall, Mike Harvey, Jennifer Heckler, Donna Hilborn, Anya Illes, Ben Kopec, John Lehr, Chita McKinney, Shirley Meston, Dan Niven, Debbie Reed, Jesse Roberts, Michelle Rogne, Lee Scofield, Jeanne Skelly, Lois Smith, Greta Stephany, Ruth Stork, Tami Walsh, and Scott and Teresa Wolcott. A special thanks to Bob and Charlene Reed for housing and to Bill Kaiser and The Genesee Land Trust for permission to band on their land.

Alfred Station

421-0774

Allegany County, NY.

Elizabeth W. Brooks

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The 28th year of fall banding at Alfred Station (1435 Waterwells Road in the Town of Alfred) began on 10 Jul and ended on 23 Nov. From one to four nets were used on 57 days, for a total of 547 net hours. A total of 223 birds of 27 species were banded. The peak day was 25 Oct, when 25 birds were banded. There were 83 repeats and 23 returns. Of the 23 returns of birds banded in Alfred during previous seasons, five were over four years of age. There were two Blue Jays, one in its fourth year and one in its fifth year! Sixteen Black-capped Chickadees returned, one of which was in its fourth year and another in its sixth year. A House Wren was in its fourth year. All others were younger than four.

One Hippoboscid fly was found on a Slate-colored Junco. Three White-throated Sparrows had orange lores.

As in the previous seven years, no banding was done at this location from 12 Sep to 15 Oct when I was banding at Braddock Bay. This makes meaningful analysis difficult. The number of birds banded has remained steady for the past five years, but the number of species (27) was nearly half the 25-year average (47.8). B/100nh (42.9) was double the 27-year average (21.8).

Several slide presentations on bird banding were given to local clubs and a banding demonstration was held at Foster Lake on 11 Sep.

Kestrel Haven Avian

422-0764

Migration Observatory

Burdett, Schuyler County, NY.

John and Sue Gregoire

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We had a fantastic season despite very un-cooperative November weather, which allowed only a few hours netting. We broke 5,000 for the second consecutive year with 5,002 new birds banded of 93 species in 113 days of operation. We also had 1,470 repeats, 128 returns, and 236 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds which were not banded. The total birds netted was 6,836, making our measure of efficiency 124 b/100nh for newly banded birds and 169 b/100nh overall. Hatching-year birds were again right on the 19-year norm of 87%. It is hard to believe that we have been at this for 19 consecutive falls at this site. Long-term, constant-effort banding at the site continues to lead to better data, particularly in support of species longevity, routing, and timing of migration and weather effects on migration.

We added Northern Shrike to bring our station total to 130 species plus five forms. The shrike was a youngster who had been terrorizing the net lanes for a few days; after banding, he departed the area.

We had 40 days with more than 50 birds banded, including eight days with over 100 banded. Twelve species were banded in numbers exceeding 100 including a notable resurgence of House Finches. Given the large number of young birds, they seem to be making a comeback from the population depressing *Mycoplasma* epidemic. This was only our second fall with very few White-crowned Sparrows; their normal month-long stopover was

reduced to but a few days, although we did band our ninth Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow. Weather was very much in our favor until the very end of October and all of November when winds made netting unsafe. This is largely the difference between this year and last, as we had been tracking slightly ahead of last year's numbers.

While most species were captured within normal parameters, exceptions are mentioned here. Traill's Flycatchers were 50% above norm, and the Black-capped Chickadees were banded in good numbers. The chickadee norm was skewed by the 652 birds banded during the 1999 irruption, making this year's 105 appear less significant. Hermit Thrush at 40 were at about twice their norm, while American Robins were present in numbers only about one-third of their norm. Cedar Waxwing continued a very strong presence equal to last year, although most banded birds were adults. Red-eyed Vireos were twice their norm and we banded our third ever Yellow-throated Vireo. Yellow Warblers doubled their norm. After years of not seeing Louisiana Waterthrush, we banded three. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were again well over their norm with 111 banded. Field nesting sparrows were again very low as a result of habitat loss. Goldfinches continued in spectacular numbers!

Returns were exciting! An American Goldfinch exceeded the reported species longevity record of slightly over nine years of age. Our eldest return was a Gray Catbird at 11 years followed closely by a Hairy Woodpecker at over 10 years of age. Of the 128 returns, 46 were in excess of four years of age. These numbers are truly remarkable when one considers the hazards of so many round-trip migrations. Site fidelity almost goes without saying, although a slight prevailing wind can cause us to miss a bird on any given day. The 46 shred out as follows:

Two Hairy Woodpeckers at 10+ and 7
One Eastern Kingbird at 8
Six Black-capped Chickadees at 4(2), 4+, 5+(2) and 6
Two Tufted Titmouse at 5 and 6
An American Robin at 6
Eight Gray Catbirds at 4(3), 4+, 6, 6+, 7 and 11
Four Yellow Warblers at 4+(2), 5, and 5+

A Chestnut-sided Warbler at 5+
Two Common Yellowthroats at 6+
An Indigo Bunting at 4
Three Song Sparrows at 4, 5, and 5+
A Baltimore Oriole at 5
Thirteen American Goldfinch at 4, 4+, 5(2), 5+(3), 6, 7(2), 8+(2) and 9+

We also had a report of an American Goldfinch that was sighted 90 miles southeast in Dalton, PA. According to the BBL coding, this band was read without capture. Thanks to the great eyes, and patience, of Ellie Hyde!

Overall health was quite good. Thankfully, we did not see a repeat of the high incidence of avian pox and deformities seen last year. Of two pox cases, one was a HY-M Common Yellowthroat that presented with pox and pox lesions on the right hallux, proximal, and distal. In the second case, a 5Y-M Song Sparrow returned healthy on 1 Sep only to later present on 27 Sep with enough pox on the right foot to give a clubfoot impression. This bird had returned many times over the years and had always been healthy. We had two cases of feather mites—one on a Veery and the second on a Blue Jay. The jay was completely bald with the resulting sunburned scalp. That left his ear quite visible and allowed us to take detailed close-up photos to share with our supporters. We additionally posted those shots in our newsletter and on our website for all to see and for educational use.

We had only two incidents of bill deformity. A Veery had its upper mandible so crossed that it left a 5-mm gap. The second case was less extreme, as a Blue-headed Vireo presented with a slightly elongated upper mandible. Unlike last year, we had no cardinals or grosbeaks with excessive keratin layers on the bill. Of the huge number of goldfinches netted, only two showed problems, both with tumors on otherwise healthy birds. One had a soft tumor on its right tarsus but was able to navigate quite well. The other had a sub-cutaneous tumor in the belly area. This tumor was quite sinister in appearance but the bird was seemingly unaffected.

Hippoboscids were present in normal numbers. That was unusual considering the very wet year

and we had expected more. House Finches were the most attractive to these parasites with Song Sparrows a close second. Two Sharp-shinned Hawks carried three flies each and every one was quite large compared to the smaller versions we normally see on songbirds. As a matter of proportion, those on Black-throated Green Warblers and Yellow Warblers were quite small. We saw no conjunctivitis until a couple of wintering House Finches arrived late in the season.

Our fourth year of identifying and marking dragonflies incidentally netted, resulted in identification of 45 individuals of 12 species. The station total of odonates is now at 65 species. Incidental to banding, we netted *Anax junius*, *Aeshna umbrosa* and *tuberculifera*, *Libellula lydia*, *pulchella* and *luctuosa*, *Sympetrum internum* and *vicinum*. New and exciting were *Celithemis elisa*, *Perithemis tenera* and two unusual *Somatachloras* – *tenebrosa* and *walshii*.

We thank Susann Argetsinger, Carol Bratton, Don and Doris Cohrs, Bob and Judy Cosgriff, A.L. Donahue, Bob, Kathy and Laura Fabia, Victoria Bond Kelly, Jay Schissell, Robin Tuttle, and Ruth Young for their generous support and several others who contributed equipment, advice and assistance. These include Stillman's Greenhouse, Gary Herzig, Natural New England, Pine Tree Farms, Spidertech, and Barlow Rhodes. Special thanks to Susann who helped us make bird holding bags last winter and to Vicky who continues to do amazing things with the website.

Northview Sanctuary

421-0762

Candor, Tioga County, NY

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We started on 7 Jul and ended on 17 Oct. Weather was extreme and record setting. Normal July precipitation averages one inch or less. This year, some local areas recorded as much of 10 in of rain. Much time was spent opening and closing mist nets; however, this station managed to open nets and band on 76 days.

We accumulated 616.3 net hours banding 590 birds of 57 species with eight returns and 14 repeats. Two Gray Catbirds returned at five and six

years of age. Peak day happened on 16 Jul with 21 birds banded. In 2003 we had 44 species, in 2004, 57, an increase of approximately 23%.

The top three species are the same as last fall. We more than doubled our total number of catbirds this season, probably due to the super crop of honeysuckle berries. Also increasing slightly in numbers banded were Song Sparrow and Common Yellowthroat.

Only seven species of warbler were captured and banded at this station, as the habitat is not conducive for netting. This banding station is surrounded by large fields of multiflora rose and is ideal habitat for the top three species banded here.

Highlights this year include the first ever Orchard Oriole banded at this station and three HY Eastern Kingbirds. The three kingbirds were caught in the same net on 28 Jul. EBBA's new monograph, *Relationships Among Body Mass, Fat, Wing Length, Age, and Sex for 170 Species of Birds Banded at Powdermill Nature Reserve*, helped cinch the identification, age, and sex of the Orchard Oriole. It also was a treat to examine the plumage of the three young kingbirds.

Powderhouse Road Station

420-0775

Vestal, Broome County, NY.

Gail Kirch

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The 2004 AFR season was anything but boring. The first day of banding produced a young, female Cooper's Hawk. She, her parents, and siblings had been in my woods for several weeks. She had nailed a cardinal, so I decided I was going to brave her impressive talons with my bare hands. I carried her back to my banding site using both hands hugging her to my body. I put her in my dark laundry room and called Harriet Marsi who came and helped me band and measure her. (By now I had my leather gloves on). Her wing cord was 265 mm, the largest bird I have ever caught and banded. I caught her two more times and she was easily removed from the nets with bare hands. Fortunately, she and her family moved to the neighboring woods and shortly were gone.