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Western Station Reports - 2004

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Western Regional News

Western Station Reports

Alaska Bird Observatory, 2004

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Migration Monitoring: The Alaska Bird Observatory's (ABO) Creamer's Field Migration Station (CFMS) completed its 13th year of spring and fall banding in 2004. During fall migration (15 Jul – 30 Sep) we banded 2,601 birds of 31 species over 11,759.5 net hours (one 12-m net open for one hour). Our most abundant species were Yellow-rumped Warblers (415), Orange-crowned Warblers (408), Dark-eyed Juncos (388), and Lincoln's Sparrows (282). These comprised 57.4% of all birds banded. Notable captures this fall included a hatch-year Townsend's Solitaire, a hatch-year Western Palm Warbler, and three Golden-crowned Sparrows. In addition, we captured a record number of Swainson's (234) and Hermit (26) thrushes and near record numbers of American Robins (74) and Hammond's Flycatchers (52). We saw no large fallouts of birds but had a steady passage of birds and caught large numbers from late July through August, followed by very low numbers in September. Both July and August had above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. As a result, Alaska experienced the worst forest fire season in history (over six million acres burned). Smoke lowered visibility and raised particulate levels to unhealthy levels. The station

was closed for three days but then resumed banding with no obvious effects on birds or volunteers.

Our education staff conducted banding demonstrations at CFMS for 66 school, camp, and community groups (1550 people) in 2004. Participants observed bird-banding and learned about bird identification, migration monitoring, avian ecology, and conservation. At least 256 independent visitors to the station interacted with banders, interns, and volunteers.

Breeding Ecology of Arctic Warblers: ABO began a three-year study of the breeding ecology of Arctic Warblers in central Alaska in June of 2004. The study site is near the eastern limit of its North American breeding range along the Denali Highway between the Tangle and McLaren rivers. In addition to establishing habitat associations, we are documenting the breeding chronology of this Old World migrant. One aspect of this part of the study is site fidelity. Twenty-two Arctic Warblers were color-banded in 2004. As of 22 Jun 2005, eight of these birds have been re-sighted, all near where they were banded. We have color-banded an additional 15 adults so far this field season. Forty-eight nestlings were banded with USFWS bands in 2004 and we will band nestlings again this field season. A full report of the 2004 field season is available under Research Reports on our website: <http://www.alaskabird.org>

Pictures to illustrate this report may be found on WBBA's website.