

2006

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge) Fall 2005 Ruthven Park

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Lewiston**431-0790**

Niagara County, NY

Jerald J. Farrell, Bander

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The 2005 fall banding season started on 1 Sep and ran through 18 Oct. It had been planned to band later but weather set in with rain and high winds. Nets were eventually taken down on 3 Nov.

The thrush family group was well represented this fall. Swainson's Thrush showed a marked increase and reached the top of the list for the most banded. Wood Thrush, Gray-cheeked, and Veery all appeared in the top ten this fall. If the nets could have been opened after the 18 Oct date, I am sure we would have good numbers of Hermit Thrush and also the kinglet count would have been much higher.

The total bird count was up a little this fall. It appears this bander has to accept 25-30 birds per banding outing and not expect the 60-70 bird counts that were experienced in earlier years. The 36.6 b/100nh this year is also up a little from last year but well below the 50+b/100nh a few years ago.

During the banding period, seven local recaptures were encountered (four Black-capped Chickadees, one Wood Thrush, one Tufted Titmouse and one Northern Cardinal).

Banding demonstrations were conducted at the Lew-Port Central School, Pheasant Forever Youth Day Event, as well as at the banding station.

Ruthven Park**425-0795**

Haldimand County, Ontario

Rick Ludkin, Loretta Mousseau,**Brian Pomfret, Banders**

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The station was run from 1 Sep to 5 Nov. Although fall migration is well underway in August (and we would dearly love to have the wherewithal to run the station in August), we did not feel we could man it consistently without jeopardizing our ability to concentrate our efforts in September and October—you can only ask so much of volunteers. The station was in operation for 25 days in

September (83% coverage), 28 days in October (90%), and two days in November (40%) for an overall coverage of 83%. The reason that most days were "missed" was due to high winds and rain.

Up to 20 12-m mist nets (30 mm mesh) were deployed in nine net lanes. These net lanes are long-standing with some being in the same place since 1995 and all being in place since 2000. The lanes have been cut into the dogwood scrub edge habitat that acts as a buffer between the lawns and fields of the historic site and the surrounding forest. We extended one net forming a six-net chain that ran across the floodplain to the Grand River. We have been meaning to do this for some time in order to investigate how birds utilize the site; we had enough staffing this year to run these new nets on most days in October. On some days not all the nets were utilized—especially on days with high winds.

We also deployed up to four ground traps and one Potter trap—especially in October when ground-feeding sparrow species were more numerous.

The summer/fall of 2005 was one of the warmest on record. Most of the fall was also fairly dry in the banding area. The hurricanes that devastated parts of the southern US and the associated rains stayed south of Lake Erie. In mid October these tropical storms blocked the migration south resulting in unprecedented numbers of passerines being grounded in southern Ontario. A general killing frost did not occur until early November. There were a few mornings when there was a frost in low lying areas but some frost-prone plants were still green and blooming into November on the higher ground.

This was a record high season at Ruthven Park—we banded 3,827 birds, which is 616 birds more than the next best season (3,211 in 2001). This total was made up from 81 forms (i.e., species, subspecies and hybrids). Other records included:

- Most banded in one day – 271 (10 Oct); 163 of these were Yellow-rump. Warblers.
- Number of days with 100+ birds banded – 11 (one in September, nine in October and one in November);

- Number of days with 200+ banded – three (all in a row: 8,9,10 Oct; 224, 206 and 271 birds banded respectively). The three-day total of 701 banded was also a record.
- Number of net hours – 5,183 (attributable to the extension of one net)
- Birds caught per 100 net hours – 71.69 (although neither the rate in September or October was a record);
- Record high numbers for 14 species: Downy Woodpecker (28), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (5), Brown Creeper (34), Golden-crowned Kinglet (176), Gray-cheeked Thrush (44), Swainson's Thrush (76), Yellow-rumped Warbler (652), Blackpoll Warbler (76), Mourning Warbler (3), Swamp Sparrow (47), Fox Sparrow (21), White-throated Sparrow (326), Purple Finch (183), American Goldfinch (678).
- The number of birds banded in September (988) and October (2,694) were both records.

While the number of birds banded was significantly higher in October than September, September had the best variety—67 forms/species banded in September and 52 in October. The most species banded was 32 on 17 Sep. This included 12 species of warblers.

The most surprising bird on the 'top ten' list is the Purple Finch. In most years we band only a handful (and in some years, none at all). I am hard-pressed to explain the capture of 183. This number does not represent their concentrated presence on just a few days; they started to show up on 8 Oct and we were still catching them on 5 Nov.

We handled 358 repeats of 46 species. Some birds, like local Black-capped Chickadees, might be recaptured seven or eight times in the season. Of particular interest are long-distance migrants. Some put on several grams of fuel/fat while waiting for good flight conditions in order to continue.

We had 129 birds of 25 species that returned from another season. Noteworthy recaptures included a Hairy Woodpecker, originally banded in 1996 (making it at least 10 years old), and several long-distance migrants, including Red-eyed Vireos,

Gray Catbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and individual Brewster's Warbler and Eastern Wood-Pewee.

We are waiting for word from the Banding Lab in Maryland regarding the origins of a Purple Finch that we captured with a foreign band on 5 Nov.

There were two foreign recoveries—birds banded at Ruthven and recovered elsewhere. An American Goldfinch, banded 25 Oct 2004, was recovered by Mike Furber on 5 May 2005 on Dry Lake Road, Cayuga; Dry Lake is ~10 km west of Ruthven. An Indigo Bunting banded 25 Aug 2004 was recovered by Andrew Dinsmore on 28 May 2005 in Annan, Ontario; Annan is ~150 km north of Ruthven.

I would like to thank the Lower Grand River Land Trust for their ongoing support of the banding program at Ruthven Park. This includes the use of the grounds, use of the banding lab building and financial support. Ruthven staff Marilyn Havelka (CAO) and Linda Jackson have been especially supportive. Haldimand Bird Observatory, of which Ruthven is a part, has received support from the Norfolk Field Naturalists, Ontario Power Generation, George Pond and the Observatory's friends and members.

Many thanks to all who helped in fall 2005: **4-5 weeks:** Rick Ludkin; **3-4 weeks:** Brian Pomfret, Linda and Al Thrower; **2-3 weeks:** Loretta Mousseau; **1-2 weeks:** Peter Thoem, Mike Alkema; **4-6 days:** Richard Joos, Baine Serena; **1-3 days:** Darryl Edwards, Susan Joos, Mary Ellen McCall, Gerald Alkema, Dmitri Malahkov, George Serena. Robert Kortright, Leanne Jennings, Mitch Beck, Rhiannon Leshyk, John Millman, Marg Ludkin, Tami Nolan, Jeff McLeod, Shirley Klement, Louise Unitt.

Selkirk Provincial Park

424-0795

Haldimand-Norfolk Counties, ON

John Miles, Bander (deceased)

Karla Passow, Chief Assistant

The station commenced its eighth year of fall operation 3 Jul and operated daily until 19 Nov inclusive except for inclement weather, personal commitments and a medical break of 16 days over the last week of August and the first week of