

2006

## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge) Fall 2005 Selkirk

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- 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

September. This problem hampered the mobility of the bander-in-charge up to closedown but the condition was improving steadily as the season progressed.

During the period, the station operated 109 days. July was pretty good considering the time of year but August and September were so-so. October started off slowly. But tropical depressions coming up the Atlantic seaboard spilled back into southern Ontario backing up the migrants. These conditions persisted for almost two weeks. Long time birders could not remember seeing so many migrants in their favorite spots at one time.

The three Haldimand Bird Observatory stations rarely band more than 100 birds per day at the best of times. Two to three such days make a good banding season and 150 birds is a really good day. You can count on the fingers of one hand the number of 200+ days that have occurred at any of the stations since they started. On 8 Oct the roof fell in at Selkirk and by day's end 323 birds had been banded, and the following day another 299. Things slowed down the day after, a quiet day with 164 birds banded. While numbers did decline over the next few days there still were some exceptional days, 135 on the 13th, 184 on the 16th, 204 on the 17th. The day's catch returned to more normal levels on 20 Oct. All told 2242 birds were banded in October, 2140 of them on and after the 8th.

Low numbers of Veerys, Magnolia Warblers and Wilson's Warblers were banded this fall and this is attributed to the station not operating late in August and early September when the peak numbers of these species go through.

Two foreign retrap Northern Saw-whet Owls were caught this fall. One was banded 14 Oct 2005 at Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory and retrapped 8 Nov. Another Northern Saw-whet Owl was banded 21 Oct 2003 near Pt. Rowan, LPBO and retrapped 20 Oct 2005 at Selkirk.

There was one foreign recovery: a HY-F Northern Saw-whet Owl banded at Selkirk on 26 Oct 2004 was recovered near Sudbury, MA on 30 Oct 2006.

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Mike Boyd, Benoit Gendreau, High McArthur,  
Fergus Nicoll, Chief Assistants

The fall season officially started on 15 Aug at the Old Cut field station and the Tip with Breakwater opening on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The first big push hit Breakwater on 23 Aug, where the crew banded 106 birds, including a hatch-year male Kentucky Warbler—suggesting that the species bred in Ontario! Hurricane Katrina roared up on 31 Aug. By 0700, Long-tailed and Parasitic jaegers were identified far offshore and at 0730 a Sooty Tern (a first record for Long Point) flew past about 500 m offshore.

On 14 Sep, a hatch-year male Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was found at Breakwater. September was also particularly good for some of the not-so-common migrants, such as Yellow-throated Vireo (two banded, 10 observed), Connecticut Warbler (14 banded, nine individuals observed) and Prairie Warbler (two banded, six individuals observed). On 18 Sep, a spectacle of migration began on Long Point. At the Tip, 23 warbler species (dominated by Blackpoll, Myrtle, Magnolia and Nashville) contributed heavily to the 323 birds banded of 44 species. The 19<sup>th</sup> was also busy at the Tip, banding 196 birds. The 20<sup>th</sup> started off mediocre but at about 0730, small flocks of warblers, mostly Blackpoll and Yellow-rumped, started streaming on to the Tip heading west. On the morning census, between 0815 and 0930, 460 Blackpoll Warblers were counted, along with 340 Yellow-rumped Warblers and a flurry of other activity, including one Le Conte's Sparrow. The Tip banded 197 Blackpolls, released 275 unbanded and estimated 1158 for the day. Old Cut was slow and steady that morning until about 1100, when they got hit with a similar mixed-warbler flock dominated by Blackpoll, Cape May and Yellow-rumped. There were 313 birds banded at the Tip and 226 at Old Cut, while Breakwater missed the flight completely, banding only 12, and had very few on census. In the days prior to the big Blackpoll push, adult birds made up between 5-30% of the catch. On the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the ratio was almost equal, with