

2006

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

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### Recommended Citation

Leberman, Ronald F. (2006) "Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge) Fall 2005 Presque Isle," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 31 : Iss. 4 , Article 18.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol31/iss4/18>

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100 hatch-year and 97 after-hatch-year birds banded. By the end of the fall, LPBO had banded 900 Blackpoll Warblers, the highest total ever.

To put October in perspective, LPBO banded an average of 300 birds a day! These high banding totals can be attributed partially to Myrtle Warblers, which pushed through in large numbers after the Blackpolls. Of the 443 birds banded at Old Cut, on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 306 were Myrtle Warblers. Large flocks of Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned kinglets, Brown Creepers and White-throated Sparrows made up the bulk of the rest of October. Normally, movements between the kinglet species are segregated at least by a few days but not this fall. On the 9<sup>th</sup>, 565 Golden-crowned Kinglets were estimated at Old Cut, compared to 800 Ruby-crowned. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, 968 Golden-crowned were estimated, compared to 373 Ruby-crowned. A few Gray-cheeked Thrushes lingered through October and even into November, with a record late bird observed on 13 Nov. Two of these thrushes nearly doubled their weight in a two-week stay in the Long Point area. When one was banded around the end of September, it weighed 26.4 g. It was re-trapped 15 days later and weighed 51.4g! By 20 Oct we thought we had seen the bulk of the migration, but the Black-capped Chickadees had other plans; 182 of 348 birds banded at the Tip on the 20<sup>th</sup> were chickadees and the 21<sup>st</sup> was even more impressive, with 348 of 368 birds banded being chickadees. And then they were done.

LPBO had some good luck with raptors as well this fall, with 27 Sharp-shinned Hawks, six Cooper's Hawks and two Merlins banded. The highlight was LPBO's sixth Peregrine Falcon, a hatch-year female banded on 15 Oct. Northern Saw-whet Owl migration monitoring began at Old Cut and the Tip on 25 Sep and 1 Oct, respectively, and ending on 1 and 15 Nov. There were 31 nights of coverage at Old Cut and 12 at the Tip. An average number of 457 N. Saw-whet Owls were banded, slightly less than the 583 banded in 2004. We did, however, band 11 Long-eared Owls—surpassing a previous LPBO record of nine set in 1965.

The season ended like most other years, with as many as two million blackbirds flying over Old Cut to roost in the Long Point marshes. Fifty-five Cave

Swallows were recorded in the Long Point area this fall, as part of a major northeast irruption. Individuals were seen at Old Cut on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.

In fall 2005, LPBO's 34 volunteer field biologists logged over 5000 field hours collecting migration data on 269 species and banding 16,798 birds of 115 species and forms. This compares to 9787 birds banded of 117 species in 2004. LPBO had 109 days of coverage, yielding 12,328 net hours with a catch rate of 123.0 b/100nh (slightly above 114.4 in 2004). Twenty volunteer 'Friends' of LPBO helped to service over 1000 visitors and students of all ages, who enjoyed banding demonstrations among other marvels of the fall migration through the Old Cut field station. A heart felt thank you goes out to all the volunteers and supporters who made the fall season at LPBO so successful.

**Presque Isle**

**420-0800**

Erie, PA

**Ronald F. Leberman, Bander**

The weather this fall was very placid, much warmer, and drier than the last several. However, there were several days too windy to use nets and other days that were almost birdless in the area. Our best day was 14 Oct with a total of 214 birds, most of them kinglets. I was alone that day and had put up the usual 10 nets; by 10 o'clock, I had to close all the nets to catch up on the banding process. In mid-afternoon, I reopened five of the nets and banded until 5 PM. Had I had help and left up all the nets, I most likely would have had 300 or more birds on that day.

Overall, 869 birds of 55 species were banded in 1,1888 net hours. Notable highlights were two Orange-crowned Warblers, three Blue-headed Vireos, and our first fall Scarlet Tanager in several years. No new species were banded for the station this fall; as usual, about 10 hummingbirds were netted and released unbanded. While we had no birds with deer ticks, we did band a Wilson's Warbler with a crossed bill that seemed perfectly healthy.

We had about 200 visitors at the station, and Stacy Small and Kim Van Fleet (of Pennsylvania Audubon) volunteered to help us for three days in

mid-September. Tracy Graziano also spent several days video-taping the station, some of which may be used at the new Presque Isle Visitors Center.

Seventeen birds returned or repeated here this fall. Of special interest was a banded Blue Jay we first thought was dead in the bottom panel of a net. It was stiff and lifeless, but as I pulled off the last string of netting the bird opened one eye—it had been playing possum. It was a bird I had banded on 11 May 2002. I have banded 1,350+ Blue Jays over the years, but this was the first time one buffaloed me!

We had three interesting retraps of birds banded elsewhere. A Tree Swallow banded on 9 Jun 2000 at Darby, PA, was caught and released here on 12 May 2004. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet banded on 25 Oct 2004 40 mi north of Long Point, Ontario, was caught and released here on 3 Nov 2004. And a Common Yellowthroat banded 19 Jul 2003 at McArthur, OH, was retrapped and released here on 16 May 2004.

Many thanks to Barb Mitchell, Jean Joyce, George and Donna Eckert, Susan Smith, Evelyn Anderson, Ken Anderson, Ruth Swaney, Linda McWilliams, Tracy Graziano, Stacy Small, Kim Van Fleet, Dennis Cole, and the park staff.

**Powdermill Nature Reserve      400-0791**

Rector, Westmoreland County, PA

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Powdermill Nature Reserve's Bird Banding Program, located on the 2,200-ac biological field station of Carnegie Museum of Natural History in the Laurel Highlands region of southwestern Pennsylvania, completed its 44<sup>th</sup> consecutive fall migration-banding season in 2005. We banded 9,914 birds this season, the third highest fall total in the history of the program. We also amassed 20,435 net hours, the fifth highest effort put forth in the 44-year history of the program, reflecting favorable banding conditions throughout the

majority of the season. The overall capture rate for this fall (48.5 b/100nh) is well above the long-term average of 42 b/100nh and is the highest we have recorded since the record-setting fall migration season in 2001, when 10,655 birds were banded.

We banded 100 or more birds on 34 days this season. Overall, 11% of the cumulative total was banded in August, 29% was banded in September, 43% in October, and 17% in November. This is actually the highest percent composition of birds banded in November in, at least, the last five years, attesting to a strong, late migration of northern sparrow and finch species. Unfortunately, predators around the banding area and windy weather throughout much of the month of November limited our effort. Otherwise, November totals likely would have boosted the overall fall season total for 2005 into contention for the highest fall season total ever. Additionally, an unexpected storm that dropped five inches of heavy wet snow on the area the morning of 25 Oct precluded banding for that entire day and limited our effort the rest of the week because downed branches and trees made our net lanes impassable. With a limited number of nets and no power on 27 Oct, we still managed to band 446 birds, which was the eighth highest daily total in the history of our program. So, given a full effort, it is easy to imagine that we might have set even higher record breaking totals that week.

We banded 111 species of birds this season, making it the fifth highest species count for any fall season. The most specious days (43 each) at Powdermill were on 24 Sep and 9 Oct. While higher species counts usually do not coincide with a high daily banding total, 9 Oct was also the second highest daily total for the season with 349 birds banded.

Thirty-four species were one or more S.D. above average in terms of the raw banding totals and only two were below. Eastern Towhee (92 vs 85 in 1995), Gray Catbird (398 vs 390 in 1995), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (160 vs 156 in 2004), Ruby-throated Hummingbird (319 vs 309 in 1962), and Winter Wren (71 vs 66 in 2002) were the five species that set record highs this fall, with Black-throated Blue Warbler being only one shy of tying the record of 101 set just last year. American Goldfinch (1302), Black-capped Chickadee (374),