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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge) Fall 2005 Mt Nebo Banding Station

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Dark-eyed Junco (675), and White-throated Sparrow (810) were among the species that, despite not setting a new record high, still staged an impressive flight and were banded in large numbers.

Notable highlights from the season were the fourth ever bilateral gynandromorph (half male, half female side-to-side) to be banded at Powdermill—a hatching-year Rose-breasted Grosbeak banded on 7 Sep and only the seventh-ever Cooper's Hawk, banded on 1 Oct. Other "good gets" (species for which the long term average is < 1) this season included: Chimney Swift (only the seventh ever to be banded in a fall season), Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Warbler (only the 10th ever banded at Powdermill during the fall), and "Brewster's" Warbler. There were no record low numbers of any species, but there were conspicuously few Cedar Waxwings both banded and observed around the station throughout the fall season and even into December.

Additionally, there were a handful of "misses" (species for which the long term average is > 1): Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Marsh Wren (missed for the second year in a row), Cerulean Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat (no more than two have been banded in any fall in the last 14 years), and Evening Grosbeak (none has been banded in the last four fall seasons).

Following such a fantastic season, there are, of course, many visiting bander friends and colleagues, interns, and volunteers to thank. For regular help with banding we thank: Emma DeLeon (Bioacoustics intern from the Univ. of Pittsburgh), Pam Ferkett, Dan Hinnebusch, Matt Shumar, Kristin Sesser, Molly McDermott, Jessica Maggio. We also enjoyed visits and help from fellow banders: Fred and Carol McCullough, Rosemary Spreha, Guy Ubaghs, Tom Greg, Mark Hopey, Lynn Brandon, and Joe Schreiber. We are also grateful to our bander development workshop participants for their help and participation: Sandy Polcyn, Jennifer Maxwell, Jennifer Hanley, Margaret Fritze, Keri Parker, Tyler Beck, and Jessica Scopel.

We once again enjoyed an extended visit by Dr. David Norman, our British friend, ringing colleague, and research associate from the

Merseyside Ringing Group. We were also fortunate to have Cokie and Annie Lindsay, Trish Miller, and Bruce Horner, additional Powdermill staffers, who took time out of their normal daily activities to help whenever needed during busy banding days. We also thank Dr. David Smith, the Director of Powdermill Nature Reserve, for his unfailing support of the banding program and ongoing research at the Powdermill Avian Research Center. Last, but not least, we acknowledge the work of our data entry operator at Carnegie Museum's Section of Birds, Marilyn Niedermeier, who enters, checks, and double checks all of our banding records, and who is responsible for generating banding schedules and filling data requests.

Mt Nebo Banding Station 392-0792
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Our bird banding effort got off to a slow start on 2 Sep and ended prematurely on 15 Oct due to an early and very heavy, deep snow. Normally, early snows melt off within a day, but this one would be around for weeks. Therefore, I slogged more than two miles round trip through 9" to 12" of snow to check on the nets and retrieve them if possible. Trees had fallen and branches had snapped off, mashing many of the nets to the ground and ensnaring them in the twigs and leaves still on the limbs. It was quite a job getting the nets untangled, bagged, and carried back to the truck.

We were in operation 28 days, banding 615 birds. Sixteen nets were opened with a total of 1945 net hours. This was 31.6 b/100nh, below the average of 39 b/100nh for this station. We banded 52 species of birds, with Gray Catbirds, Common Yellowthroats, and Song Sparrows making the top three. These are not unexpected species, considering the surrounding habitat of a wildlife management orchard and hedgerows of autumn and Russian olive and numerous other berry bushes.

No new species were added to our list this fall. Common Yellowthroats made up 14% of the total, compared to the three previous years where they were less than 4% of the total. Black-throated Blue

Warblers were also extraordinarily high at 7% of the total, compared to about 4% the other four years at this site. Our White-throated Sparrow and kinglet numbers were down from normal, likely because we missed the last half of October.

We recaptured a Black-capped Chickadee that was banded in 1999. He has been captured and released seven times over the years. Five birds were recaptured that were banded in 2003 (two Gray Catbirds, an Ovenbird, a Black-capped Chickadee, and an Indigo Bunting). We banded an AHY Wood Thrush on 25 Sep 2004, and he was recaptured 21 Sep 2005.

Thank you to Sam and Irene Yoder who helped with the banding process and to Gary Yoder who constantly sharpened our observation skills with his insightful questions.

Allegheny Front Migration Observ. 390-0791
Grant County, WV
Ralph K. Bell and Joan Bell Pattison, Banding Leaders
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The 48th year of bird banding at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO), 10 mi southeast of Davis, WV, began on 13 Aug and ended on 16 Oct. A total of 5493 birds were banded this season of 78 species, with a station effort of 8549.75 net hours, giving a capture rate of 64.2 b/100nh. This was the best year for number of birds banded since 1999 when 5562 birds were banded.

The station was open for 59 days and closed for a total of six days due to bad weather. There were 10 days when over 100 birds were banded, five days over 200, one over 300, one over 400, and one over 500. The edge of Hurricane Katrina passed through on 31 Aug, then good westerly winds began and 439 birds were banded on 2 Sep and 207 on 3 Sep. A weather front passed through the area on 15 Sep and provided westerly winds on 16 and 17 Sep. Sep 17 was the best day of the season, when 510 birds were banded. Westerly winds on 18, 20-23 Sep also produced good flight days and even a slight easterly wind on 19 Sep was a good flight day. Another front went through 29 Sep and following the front, 195 birds were banded on 1 Oct and 153 on 2 Oct. Then there was a stalled weather front with rain

from 6-14 Oct over the northeastern U S, and this probably contributed to the lower number of migrants going southwestward through the banding station area early in October.

Migrating White-crowned Sparrows and their first capture date would be a good example of how weather affected the migration. Most, if not all, White-crowned Sparrows nesting in eastern Canada and Labrador would have been going southwestward, as many spend their winters in Texas. This year, the first of this species were banded on 15 Oct, after the rains had, for the most part, moved out of New York. The first of this species was banded on 6 Oct in 2004 and 7 Oct in 2003.

The Black-throated Blue Warbler was the most numerous species with 1057 banded, which is 45.6% above the 10-yr running average. It has been the leader for the past eight out of 10 years. Blackpoll Warbler was second highest with 1036 banded (108.1% above the 10-year average); Black-throated Green Warbler was third highest with 568 banded (42.5% above the 10-year average); Magnolia Warbler was fourth highest with 327 banded (39.7% above the 10-year average); and Cape May Warbler was fifth highest with 280 banded (148.9% above the 10-year average). The total of the top five species banded is 3268, which is 59.4% of the total birds banded this fall.

An unusual bird was banded by Bob Dean at the station on 20 Sep. It was a bilateral gynandromorphic (male and female) Black-throated Blue Warbler. The right half of the body was female and the left half was male. The wing chord of the male side was

4 mm longer than the female side, with both wing chords being an average length for the representative sex of this species. The bird was released alive and in good condition.

An AHY female Blackpoll Warbler was caught as a foreign retrap on 15 Sep 2005. It had been banded at Farm Island State Recreation Area, three miles east of Pierre, SD, on 24 May 2005. Apparently, it was traveling to its nesting grounds at the time it was banded and was recaptured at AFMO on its fall migration to South America.