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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) Fall 2006 Alfred Station

Elizabeth W. Brooks

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Rachel Muheim of Virginia Tech conducted research on nocturnal migration orientation cues of White-throated Sparrows. Kristi Hannam and Laura Janik of SUNY Geneseo took blood samples from some thrushes and catbirds for Hannam's research on immunocompetence of migrating birds.

Stefan Hames and Jim Lowe of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology installed electronic recording devices in our field to record nocturnal flight calls of migrating birds during the fall.

Ten students successfully completed our Bander Training Course. We welcomed students from Sara Morris's Field Biology class at Canisius College; Mark Deutschlander's students from Hobart and William Smith Colleges; Kristi Hannam's Animal Behavior Lab from SUNY Geneseo; and Rick Shearman's Environment and Society class at RIT.

Pat Lovallo represented BBBO at the Fall Fun Day sponsored by the Girl Scout's Stoney Hill Service Team at Braddock Bay Park. We enjoyed visits from Cathy Muller's Girl Scout troop, members of the Hill and Dale Garden Club of Fairport, and students from the Christian Calvary School in Farmington. Many individuals visited the banding station on an informal basis. Eagle Scout candidates Jared Bennett and Matthew Humnicky of Boy Scout Troop #278 of St. Mark's Church in Greece completed building a kiosk for our Memorial Garden area, and a worktable for the banding lab as well as spreading much-needed gravel on our trails.

Weekly banding summaries from the fall 2006 season may be found on our website at <http://www.bbbo.org>

Our fall Research Assistant was Ryan Kayhart.

Thanks to Tom Muller for mowing paths, to Jim Gillette for mowing the field, and to Doug Smith for his assistance with building management. Appreciation to the following individuals who helped scribe, tended net lanes, or assisted with other aspects of our educational or banding operation: Blair Brown, Nancy Chevalier, Jennifer Cumbo, Andy Garland, Marilyn Guenther,

Gary Herbert, Donna Hilborn, Kathleen Holt, Jim Keefer, Peggy Keller, Susan Kieren, Marian Klik, John Lehr, Chita McKinney, Shirley Meston, Jane Miller, Harold Mills, Dan Niven, Justine Parada, Jesse Roberts, Lee Schofield, Jeanne Skelly, Carol Southby, Greta Stephany, Ruth Stork, Dee Weber, and Scott and Teresa Wolcott.

A special thanks to Bill Kaiser and The Genesee Land Trust for permission to band on their land.

Alfred Station

421-0774

Allegany County, NY

Elizabeth W. Brooks

brookser@infoblvd.net

The 30th year of fall banding at Alfred Station began with a change of address. We sold our home on Waterwells Road and moved to 5540 Jericho Hill Road, less than one mile SE and almost exactly the same elevation as our former place (both in the Town of Alfred). Banding began on 18 Jul and ended on 28 Nov 2006. From one to 1.5 nets were used on 67 days, for a total of 438 net hours. In total, 230 birds of 35 species were banded (52.3b/100nh).

Hatching-year percentages for all birds where age could be determined was 63.8%. The peak day occurred on 30 Oct, when 15 birds were banded; 27% of those banded were juncos. The day with the most species was also 30 Oct, with seven species banded. There were 54 repeats and two returns of second-year chickadees.

Hippoboscids were found on a Song Sparrow and two Blue Jays. A Common Yellowthroat had mites. A Chipping Sparrow had an old healed fracture of the left tarsus and a Red-eyed Vireo's bill was displaced side-to-side.

As in the previous seven years, no banding was done at this location from 11 Sep to 14 Oct when I was banding at Braddock Bay. The new location is surrounded on one side by open field and on another by fairly mature woodland. There is less development surrounding the new site, so meaningful comparisons between sites are difficult. There were record high numbers of Chipping Sparrows banded during fall.

Several slide presentations on bird banding were given to local clubs, including the Alfred Lions Club and the Allegany County Bird Club. A banding demonstration was held at Foster Lake on 9 Sep.

Kestrel Haven 422-0764
Avian Migration Observatory
Burdett, Schuyler County, NY
John and Sue Gregoire
khmo@att.net

We had a nice, but average season with most of the excitement coming early and followed by lengthy periods of inactivity due to weather during the prime movement periods. The major differences between a 5,000+ individuals and a 3,600 individuals season were the weather and lack of our staple—goldfinch.

We banded 3,591 new birds of 93 species in 89 days of operation. We also had 1,142 repeats, 118 returns and 262 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The hummingbirds were not banded. The total birds netted was 5,113, making our measure of efficiency 112 b/100nh for newly banded birds and 160 b/100nh overall. Hatching-year birds were slightly below the 20-year norm at 86%.

The station's species banded list grew to 131 species plus five forms banded (136) with the addition of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

We had very few "big days" and only one with over 100 birds, which was on 5 Oct, when we banded 113. The reason for that high was amorphous, as numbers were fairly well distributed over 22 species. Overall, 11 species were banded in numbers exceeding 100, including a very unusual irruption of Magnolia Warblers. We banded our second Northern Shrike and had our first ever Traill's Flycatcher return.

American Goldfinch was the big disappointment. As we have reported previously, the last several years have seen a huge increase in their numbers leading to three successive years of around 2,000 individuals banded. That all changed this season with only 425 banded, our

lowest total since 1997. Anecdotal feeder reports from the larger geographic area support our result. We believe the migratory flow moved quite a bit westward this year.

During the last iteration of the NYS Breeding Bird Atlas (2000-2005), we reported very "early" fall Yellow-bellied Flycatchers on two years. In both cases, the adult females presented with very active, vascular brood patches. Unfortunately, atlas criteria for confirmation required an egg to be present in the oviduct, which was not the case. The species was reported as a "probable" breeding species here. On 8 Jul 2006, we again captured and banded an after-second-year Yellow-bellied Flycatcher that presented with a highly edematous brood patch but we could not feel an egg. Once again, we had to assume early southern movement. The closest known breeding area for this species is the Adirondack Mountains to our northeast. Local records and birding publications show a late spring date of 13 Jun and an early fall date of 31 Jul (previous banding here).

Militating for a new breeding record was the recapture of this individual on 5 Aug 2006. At this time, vascularity of the brood patch had receded and molt was beginning. However, the bird may have just liked its surroundings and was in extended stopover. We recaptured this bird two other times between the 5 and 10 Aug.

The clincher came on 10 Aug, when we banded a hatching-year Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in fresh plumage, strongly supporting the breeding of this species in the Finger Lakes highlands!

Despite the weather, most species were captured within normal parameters. A few are significant and worthy of mention: We had our first miss of Eastern Wood-Pewee in 21 years; Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were twice the norm; Least Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Waterthrush and Northern Cardinal were all banded in their highest numbers ever, as was Magnolia Warbler, which exceeded the norm by five times! Sparrows and other species were down, but we believe those to be related to the shutdown of the station during extended bad weather in the prime movement dates.