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## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge)- Fall 2006 Rock Point

James A. Smith

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There are small copses of trees distributed sporadically around the landscape. The nets have been placed around two feeding stations. A large maple tree stands in the middle of the yard and above the nets. There is a hedgerow at the north end of the property composed of evergreens (pines and spruce) and another hedgerow on the west property line composed of tall deciduous shrubs. A fenced-in pool with miscellaneous shrubs hems in the east side of the banding site.

#### **Ruthven Park**

**425-0795**

Haldimand County, ON

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

rludkin@rogers.com

The station was run from 4 Sep to 5 Nov. Although fall migration is well underway 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. Even so, due to periods of poor weather and work commitments of its banders, the station was in operation for only 35 days this season. The station operated for 14 days in September, 16 days in October, and five days in November.

Up to 15 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. Usually we add a net to the spring configuration to capture birds that use a brush pile that accumulates through the course of the summer, but there was no brush pile this year—so no net. 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 fall was fairly wet and windy. We experienced rain on 18 days in September (123 mm) and 16 days in October (133 mm). We would band if it was light and intermittent and the temperatures were mild, but otherwise we would not. When it was not

raining but the winds were up, we would not open some nets. (Many of our nets are vulnerable to west or northwest winds.) It was not a particularly cold fall; we experienced only three nights in October with below freezing temperatures.

The reduced amount of banding time translated into reduced numbers of birds banded—even though our rate of capture, 73.79 b/100nh was the highest ever. The total of 2,075 was our lowest total since 1997, as were our total net hours: 2,755.

While the number of birds banded was significantly higher in October (1,179) than September (737), September had the best variety—62 forms/species banded in September and 40 in October. The most species banded in a single day was 34 on 9 Sep. Our “biggest day” was 21 Oct, when we banded 133 birds.

There were no surprises on our ‘top ten’, although the 123 Hermit Thrushes was a new record (the previous high being 73 in 1998). Interestingly, we did not band a single Purple Finch this season despite banding 183 of them last year.

I 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 this season!!

#### **Rock Point**

**425-0793**

Dunnville, Haldimand County, ON

**Bander: James A. Smith**

benavis@sympatio.ca

Chief Assistants: Roswitha Matuschek, Rick Young, Dora Young, Gisele Mills

Net locations remained the same from previous years except that a net which crossed a weedy pond was moved onto dry land. The more northern nets were used only when I had additional help, meaning that usually I used only nine nets instead of 15.

Weatherwise, the beginning part of the season was very hot and humid and dry. September had showery weather with some windy days. In October it stopped showering and just rained, sometimes for days at a time. On the 13<sup>th</sup> we had enough snow to cover the ground and points east experienced more severe snow. The wet weather made for some really flooded and wet trails. The addition of boardwalks this past summer made possible by a grant from T.D. Friends of the Environment Foundation and my son Alex's hard work in building them made for easier walking.

Some compromises were made to my overall protocol because of health concerns. I had a kidney transplant in January, so my strength was just building through the fall season. Some days were missed because of appointments that were unavoidable. In addition, we started later in the season and did not do consistent banding through the summer. My chief assistant Roswitha also had an accident in early September and was unable to help the rest of the season.

We remain a purely volunteer organization made possible only by the dedication of those individuals who are willing to commit at least one day a week to come out and give assistance. Being the only licensed bander remains a difficulty which does not allow for continuation of the program when I am not available. This is a limiting factor which I do not think will be solved without volunteers willing to take on the responsibility required.

We experienced record numbers of Slate-colored Juncos (182) and Swamp Sparrows (89) this year. More noteworthy were the species we did not catch this year—Sharp-shinned Hawk, Eastern Phoebe, Purple Finch, Eastern Towhee, Canada Warbler, and Wood Thrush. American Goldfinches for some reason have shown a steady reduction from 833 in 2000 to 136 this year. Some common species, such as Red-winged Blackbird, European Starling, and Brown-headed Cowbird, were in the area but did not come down.

Only two bands were recovered this season. An American Robin, banded on 25 Oct 2004, was recovered near Beamsville, ON, on 4 Apr 2006. A Chipping Sparrow, banded on 21 Apr 2004, was recovered at Oak Lake, ON, 30 Apr 2005.

We had two school classes visit on separate days. One nature club visited and, in addition, we had 43 casual visitors.

Again, I give sincere thanks to the regular volunteers who give one or more days a week to assist. Without permission from Ontario Parks and Mark Custers to conduct scientific studies within the park we would not have such a good location.

Financially, we are supported through grants or donations by Haldimand Bird Observatory, James L. Baillie Memorial Fund of Bird Studies Canada, T.D. Friends of the Environment Foundation, Ontario Power Generator and individual contributors.

**Selkirk Provincial Park 424-0795**

Haldimand-Norfolk Counties, ON

**Bander: John Miles**

Chief Assistants: Stacey Logan, Al Thrower, Linda Thrower, John Dickie

John Miles' Selkirk Station had its best fall banding season ever. Before he was hospitalized, John sent out his fall 2006 totals and a brief summary of the season. My thanks go to Linda Thrower for supplying additional information about the season for the tables.

There were 15 species where totals tied or surpassed the all-time seasonal high for Selkirk, including Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, American Goldfinch, Cedar Waxwing, Red-eyed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Lawrence's Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Gray Catbird, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet and American Robin.

**Long Point Bird Observatory 423-0800**

Port Rowan, Norfolk County, ON 423-0801

**Bander: Stuart A. Mackenzie 423-0802**

lpbo@bsc~eoc.org

Chief Assistants: Mike D. Boyd, Yousif Attia, John Brett, Audrey Heagy, Hugh McArthur, Fergus Nicoll

LPBO's 47<sup>th</sup> fall season officially began on 15 Aug at all three field stations. The first official bird was a moulting adult Swainson's Thrush banded at Old