

2008

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2007 Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory

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upland deciduous forest. This area has been used for this purpose since 1980, except in the years 2004-2006. Twenty-six nets are arrayed along approximately one-half mile that runs generally on an east-west orientation. The habitat is marked by dense 4-6 foot high shrub foliage with very few trees of any height. Trees are purposely kept to a minimum within the right-of-way to avoid arcing with the powerlines. We operated seven days in August and November and 14 days in September and October for a total of 42 days, generally on a M/W/F schedule. Nets were opened by 25-30 minutes before sunrise, and closed about 3.5 hours later. Weather did not have a significant impact on our operations. We did have a few mornings in late October when some nets were frozen, delaying their opening. Only once (13 Nov) did rain necessitate closing nets early.

Comparisons to previous efforts at this station need to be tempered by the fact that from 1980 thru 2003, the effort was from 1 Aug thru 30 Nov with upwards of 100 days per season. This compares to our 2007 effort of operating 42 days from 17 Aug through 16 Nov. There were no new species this year. Seventy percent of our banding totals were from warblers (24%), sparrows (26%) and kinglets (20%).

The banding of 412 warblers of 29 species accounted for 24% of our total banding effort (N=1700). Notable warblers banded included (all HY): two Golden-winged, and one each of Orange-crowned, Pine, and Prothonotary. The banding of only 16 Myrtles seems low. Historically, however, there has been great variation among years in Myrtles banded at this site.

Sparrows accounted for 440 banded birds of 10 species or 26% of our total. Of note, we banded an HY White-crowned; during the previous 20 years only 10 had been banded.

Other highlights included an AHY/M Sharp-shinned Hawk, an AHY Bicknell's Thrush identified by its small wing length (88 mm), and an HY Carolina Wren that had an extra tail feather which appeared to be upside down and growing out of the uropygial gland.

Our most productive period was 15, 17, 18 and 22 Oct. During those four days (138, 119, 75 and 88, respectively), we banded 420 birds or 24.7% of our year's total.

We had 429 recaptures of 297 birds of 37 species. The earliest banded recapture was of a resident Gray Catbird (0941-85652) originally banded at Patuxent on 20 Aug 2000 as an AHY/F. We also recaptured a White-throated Sparrow (1861-22226) on 2 Nov that was originally banded at Patuxent on 24 Nov 2002.

We had several volunteers, most notably Sandy Teliak (who also wrote the first draft of this report) and Mike Quinlan. Special thanks also to regulars Susi Ponce, Tony Celis, Woody Martin, and Jo Anna Leachman and to the many others who showed up occasionally.

**Foreman's Branch
Bird Observatory**

391-0755

Chino Farms, Chestertown

Queen Anne's Co., MD

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Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory (formerly Chino Farms) completed its 10th fall season of banding in 2007. Habitat in the area remained the same as last year with farm and station staff performing habitat modification where needed to maintain the original mix. Drought during the summer of 2007 seemed to have affected some of the local breeding birds, most notably the Grasshopper Sparrows, but overall numbers of local HY birds remained close to the same as in previous years.

East and southeast winds held migration to low numbers during early October, but numbers recovered to expected levels after weather patterns shifted back to normal after the 12th with a record-setting day of 631 birds on 15 Oct. Like other stations, we banded some northern irruptives in good or record-setting numbers with Purple Finch (49) and Red-breasted Nuthatch (30) leading the way. For the first time in ten years, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (360) was not in the top ten species, being our second lowest catch of them. Thanks to Dan Small's and Maren Gimpel's dedication and many reduced hours of sleep, they caught 45 Northern Saw-whet Owls and two Eastern Screech-Owls, both new fall record high totals. We collected hundreds of avian flu and tick samples for two different studies: Maryland Department of Natural

Resources and a graduate student at Yale University. One notable recapture was a Field Sparrow originally banded as an ASY on 5 Apr 1999 and last recaptured in Oct 2007 when it was approximately 10 yr 4 mo old, a new age record. Other highlights included 2 Summer Tanagers (20 and 22 Aug), 1 Northern Shrike (12 Nov), 15 Connecticut Warblers (12 Sep through 8 Oct, our second-highest year), and 2 Bicknell's Thrushes (24 Sep and 2 Oct).

In addition to the banders listed above, the following people volunteered many hours helping at the station: Harry Sears, Patricia Gruber, William Snyder, Henry Davis, Helga Horrick, Doug Gill, Victoria Cadby, Hanson Robbins, Jeannine Fleegle, and Hillary Stayer.

Chincoteague
National Wildlife Refuge
Assateague Island
Accomack Co., VA
Richard N. Roberts

375-0752

This was a year for new species: Gray-cheeked Thrush, Pine Siskin, Wood Thrush and Lincoln's Sparrow. There was also an invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches that was not observed in the previous nine years, and the numbers of Myrtle Warblers were down considerably. Prairie Warbler, Yellow Warbler, and Swainson's Thrush were completely absent. Perhaps the long term eastern seaboard drought had a negative effect on the success of the nesting season.

Kiptopeke
Songbird Banding Station
Cape Charles
Northhampton Co., VA
Jethro Runco

371-0755

The Kiptopeke banding station was in operation for the 45th consecutive year, starting back in 1963. The 2007 season started on 15 Aug and ran through 22 Nov. The station operated for 92 of those days, capturing 92 species. A total of 5,507 individuals were banded this season, making it the lowest season total since 1997. Average capture rate was only 0.464 b/nh. During the years 2004 and 2005, a lot of habitat management took place in and around the banding station. Since then, those areas were

replanted with native trees and shrubs in hopes of creating a more diversified forest and food supply for migrating birds. With the help of recruiting plants and shrubs, those areas are starting to fill in and produce fruit and seeds.

The 2007 fall season saw its lowest total in over a decade. Migrant birds, especially Neotropical migrants, just did not pass through the Kiptopeke area this season. Capture rates were extremely low from 15 Aug to 11 Oct. During that 58-day span, 1,376 individuals were banded with 6,800 net hours for a capture rate of 0.202 b/nh. Remove the four biggest days during that span (1, 13, 24, 29 Sep) and the remaining 54 days netted only 770 birds in 6,239 net hrs, for a capture rate of 0.123 b/nhr, or an average of 14 birds per day: highly unusual for the Kiptopeke station. The large storm system that passed over the eastern part of the US in mid-September packed five days of strong northeast winds that I believe affected the entire eastern seaboard by pushing a large segment of migrants (mainly Neotropicals) toward the west, away from the coast. Of course this is just a hypothesis. By mid-October, the first waves of temperate migrants started showing up, but the normally large wave of Myrtle Warblers just did not hit; their migration appeared to be more drawn out, occurring later than normal. Unusual for Kiptopeke, more Myrtles were banded in November than October. Peak date came on 14 Nov when 489 were banded.

Few unusual species were captured this season, but did include Common Grackles, Prothonotary Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, seven Lincoln's Sparrows, and Clay-colored Sparrow. The most unusual species banded were two Eastern Bluebirds, only the 4th and 5th historically, and six Rusty Blackbirds (4th-9th historically). We did band some extremely late migrants, including a Worm-eating Warbler on 22 Oct, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on 7 Nov and a Gray-cheeked Thrush on 8 Nov. All three are new extreme late dates, or close to it, for the state of Virginia.

This season was good for catching Palm Warblers (293 banded), Red-breasted Nuthatches (17 plus one foreign recapture!), and Northern Saw-whet Owls (2) plus four recaptures (all from the nearby NSWO banding project). We had two huge misses this season—no Nashville Warblers or Blue Jays!