

2009

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) Fall 2008 Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory

John Gregoire

Sue Gregoire

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A Black-capped Chickadee banded by Paul M Nealen at Bakri Estates, 4.5 miles NW of Creekside, Indiana County, PA, on 16 Mar 2008 was retrapped and released alive here, exactly one month later, on 16 Apr 2008. Alfred is approximately 132 miles ENE of Creekside.

Hypoboscids were found on five birds. No birds exhibited evidence of Avian Pox. A Chipping Sparrow was doing well with its right foot and lower tarsus missing.

As in the previous eight years, no banding was done at this location from 8 Sep to 11 Oct, when I was banding at Braddock Bay.

Several slide presentations on bird banding were given to local clubs, including the Cuba (NY) Senior Citizens Club, the Amandine Club of Alfred, NY, and the Allegany County Bird Club. A banding demonstration was held at Foster Lake on 6 Sep.

Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory
Burdett, Schuyler County, NY
John and Sue Gregoire
khmo@empacc.net

422-0764

All in all it was a pretty slow season for us. Our operating days are not reflective of effort, as winds/weather forced us to close soon after opening on 30% of those days. Additionally, birds either took a more easterly route or overflowed the station, as we had no blocking weather systems to our south. American Goldfinch numbers tanked (only 493 compared to a high of 2,232 in 2003).

The high points of this season were in three unusual captures. We had never netted a Pileated Woodpecker, but this year we brought the station total banded to 132 species with the addition of not one but two Pileated! Both were young females and netted in adjacent nets at the same time. That was quite a handful for both of us. We also banded our first Cooper's Hawk since the first in 1989, and our second Eastern Screech Owl. The first screech was also a gray phase and banded in 1994.

On 16 Jul we banded a most unusual female goldfinch. While a female in most respects, including a developing brood patch and female plumage, she presented with a complete male dark crown patch. As opposed to the bilateral gynandromorphs reported at a few stations last year, this bird exhibited the single male trait completely. We lack a tag for this in ornithology; but in entomology, such a creature would be termed a mosaic gynandromorphy. The bilaterals reflect a lack of an Z chromosome on the female side that occurred very early in zygote development. When the non-disjunction in an Z chromosome in an ZZ individual occurs in later divisions within the zygote, it causes the mosaic, a very rare occurrence.

We banded 2,854 new birds of 89 species in 101 days of operation. We also had 856 repeats, 116 returns, and 192 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The hummingbirds were not banded. The total birds netted was 4,018, making our measure of efficiency 111 birds/100 net-hours (b/100nh) for newly banded birds and 156 b/100nh overall. Hatching-year birds were at the norm of 88%.

The station banded list grew to 132 species plus five forms banded (137), and we increased the sighted list to 220 with the appearance of a Least Sandpiper at one of the ponds.

We banded our highest ever number of Hairy Woodpeckers, Gray Catbirds, Eastern Towhees, and Hooded Warblers. Also high were Blue-winged Warblers. All of the above reflect an increase in the local breeding populations of those species. Veeries were also high, while many species were far below norms and reflective of our missing the migratory flow due to routing and weather.

Returns were wonderful! The eldest was a Gray Catbird that was in excess of seven years old. Of the 116 returns, 35 of 17 species were in excess of four years of age. They shred out as follows:

- One Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at 5.
- One Eastern Kingbird at 4.
- Six Black-capped Chickadees at 4 (2), 4+ (2), 5 and 5+.

- One American Robin at 4.
- Four Gray Catbirds at 4 (3) and 7+.
- One Cedar Waxwing at 6.
- One Warbling Vireo at 4+.
- One Red-eyed Vireo at 3+.
- Two Yellow Warblers at 4 and 5+.
- One Chestnut-sided Warbler at 4+.
- Three Common Yellowthroats at 4, 5 and 6.
- Three Northern Cardinals at 4, 5 and 5+.
- One Chipping Sparrow at 4.
- One Song Sparrow at 4.
- One Common Grackle at 4.
- One House Finch at 4+.
- Six American Goldfinch at 6 (3), 5+, and 4 (2).

In sum, our returns this year represented 3% of our banded total; a very nice return percentage.

Overall health was excellent. Hippoboscids flies were few and the few abnormalities were unremarkable. The rare gynandromorphic goldfinch was by far our most unusual bird ever.

Inadvertent net captures of Odonata were limited to 21 individuals of six species.

We thank Doris Cohrs, Bob and Judy Cosgriff, A.L. Donahue, David Guaspari, Jay Schissell and Ruth Young for their generous support, Victoria Bond Kelly for her talent and time in maintaining our website, and several others who contributed advice and assistance. These include Stillman's Greenhouse, The Hi-Lights printing (Bridgette Goodman), Spidertech, Clara McCarthy and Barlow Rhodes.

Northview Sanctuary **421-0762**
Candor, Tioga County, NY
Robert J. Pantle
bpbird@frontiernet.net

This station did not band this season due to the operator recovering from a torn rotator cuff in his shoulder. He is doing well and we look forward to his return in 2009.

Powderhouse Road Station **420-0775**
Vestal, Broome County, NY
Gail Kirch
gkirch@stny.rr.com

The 2008 AFR banding season began well after a very good MAPS season. August produced the usual number of *Empidonax* flycatchers, early warblers, and local nesting hatching-year birds. Surprisingly, I banded only 17 Red-eyed Vireos in August, a month in which I usually band 50-100 birds. While the shrubs with fruit were not fully ripe at the beginning of August, they ripened steadily throughout the month. September was slow and October was slower.

There were no new species. Red-eyed Vireo numbers were down for the second year in a row, but Gray Catbird numbers were a high for the 20 years I have had this station—128. This is after banding 41 new and 10 returns during June and July. Gray Catbirds were a MAPS target bird for cloacal swabbing and feather pulls and Common Yellowthroats and House Finches were target birds for LaMNA swabbing. All three of those species made the top 10 list.

I compared the top five species of 2008 to the top five in years 1999-2008. None was on that list every year and Song Sparrow made the list only this year. I was surprised that any warbler made the list, as I am not a 'warbler' station. Magnolias were on the list three times.

My banding partner and consultant, Harriet Marsi, passed away in June. She had banded on this land since 1960.

Ellenville Station **414-0742**
Ellenville, Ulster County, NY.
Valerie M. Freer
vfreer@hvc.rr.com

In the 39th consecutive season of operation, fall 2008 results were remarkably similar to those of 2007. The number of birds banded was 626 vs 630 last year, numbers exceeded only four times since 1970. Net hours were above average, and the number of