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## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge)- Fall 2008 Allegheny Front Migration Observatory

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banded. As usual for this location, there were 27 repeat/returns.

Winter Wren and Hermit Thrush had not been encountered here for many years. Warbler species banded were: Northern Waterthrush, Ovenbird, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Magnolia Warbler, American Redstart, Blackpoll Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Myrtle Warbler. It was unusual to get 14 Ruby-crowned Kinglets to band.

Most frequently banded were Chipping Sparrow, and the number could have been greatly increased had a helper been available.

Returns were a Carolina Wren, banded 18 Mar 2006; and the very worn band was replaced. Two Eastern Towhees also returned—one female banded 25 Apr 2006 and a male banded 24 May 2005.

**Mt. Nebo Banding Station**                      **392-0792**  
Oakland, Garrett County, MD  
**Connie Skipper and Fran Pope, Banders**  
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This was the eighth season of banding at Mt. Nebo Wildlife Management Area. The station was open 44 days, from 24 Aug through 7 Nov. A total of 1363 birds were banded of 74 species, with a station effort of 3746 net hours. Capture rate was 36 b/100nh. Four new species were added to the station list: Northern Parula, Yellow Palm Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and Pine Siskin. This brings the station total species to 87.

The top three species banded were White-throated Sparrow (10% of the total), Indigo Bunting (9% of the total), and Gray Catbird (8% of the total). This is the first year that Slate-colored Juncos made it into the top ten. Mild temperatures allowed us to remain open into November, and most of the juncos were captured during those seven days.

Station highs included 22 Hermit Thrushes, 60 Cedar Waxwings, 13 Blue-headed Vireos, 4 Blue-winged Warblers, 18 Nashville Warblers, 68 Magnolia Warblers, 69 Black-throated Blue Warblers, 28 Black-throated Green Warblers  
Oct. - Dec. 2009

(highest annual banded to date was 8), 6 Black-and-white Warblers, 13 American Redstarts, 58 Slate-colored Juncos, 18 Pine Siskins, and 11 American Goldfinches. These numbers are not adjusted for net hours. This year we had the second highest net hours of the eight years at Mt. Nebo.

The largest daily catch was 99 birds on 10 Sep with 29 species. The second largest daily catch was 77 birds on 11 Oct with 15 species, including 34 Cedar Waxwings that hit the nets that day. Five other days had catches of 50+ birds: 11 Sep (69), 21 Sep (58), 22 Sep (56), 4 Oct (56), and 10 Oct (54).

One exciting event was a foreign recapture of a bird banded at our station. A hatch-year male Black-throated Green Warbler, banded by Skipper on 13 Sep 2008, was recaptured on 17 Sep 10 mi SE of Davis, WV, at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory. We recaptured two birds banded in 2004, two birds banded in 2005, five birds banded in 2006, and 16 birds banded in 2007. Most interesting was the Purple Finch banded as AHY-M on 25 Sep 2006. He was recaptured 25 Sep 2006, 30 Aug 2007, and 13 Sep 2008.

Ten visitors spent considerable time at the station enjoying the birds and the great outdoors.

Many thanks to Rick Latshaw, Mike Fazenbaker, and the Mt. Nebo WMA technicians for their help in clearing net lanes, and to Samuel and Irene Yoder for their expert help in tending the nets.

**Allegheny Front**  
**Migration Observatory**                      **390-0791**  
Grant County, WV  
**Ralph K. Bell and Joan Bell Pattison, AFMO**  
**Banding Leaders**  
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Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) conducted its 51<sup>st</sup> year of bird banding at Dolly Sods, WV, this fall. AFMO is located 10 mi southeast of Davis, WV. Banding began on 15 Aug and ended on 22 Oct 2008. In total, 5,653 birds were banded of 81 species, with a station effort of 72.0 b/

100nh. The overall percentage of hatch-year birds (using known-age birds only) was 81.7%.

In total, 226,050 birds have been banded from 1958-2008. The Station was open for 60 days and closed eight days due to rain. There were nine days when over 100 birds were banded, three days over 200, three days over 300, one day over 400, and the best day of the season was 14 Sep, when 621 birds were banded. The most dominant species banded on that day were the Black-throated Blue Warbler (288), the Black-throated Green Warbler (112), and the Tennessee Warbler (74).

The Black-throated Blue Warbler was the most numerous species this year, with 1400 banded, which is 34.8% over the 10-year average (including 2008). It has been the leader for the past eight out of 10 years. The Black-throated Green was the second highest, with 634 banded (14.2% above the 10-year average), and the Blackpoll Warbler was the third highest, with 586 banded (-2.9% under the 10-year running average). The Tennessee Warbler was the fourth highest, with 361 banded (8.3% over the 10-year average), and the Slate-colored Junco was the fifth highest, with 332 banded (3.6% over the 10-year average). The total of the top five species banded was 3,313, which was 58.6% of the total birds banded this season.

The nets were closed on 25, 26 and 27 Sep due to rain, and early on 28 Sep due to fog. Evidently, many birds were waiting to migrate and, after feeding for several days, they were fat and ready to continue southward. This was a set-up for disaster in the form of bird kills in large proportions. One of the bird tragedies occurred on 29 Sep at Tucker County High School, located in an isolated area on top of a mountain in West Virginia. Rob Tallman of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the US Forest Service, and others were called to investigate. Approximately 500 birds had been killed when they hit the high school. The birds were migrating in dense fog at night and became disoriented when "they encountered a dome of light thrown up by the high school's new security lights" (*The Highlands Voice*, Vol 41, No.

11, Nov., 2008). DNR biologists identified the birds (31 species in all) and the species were taken to AFMO to be verified by AFMO banders and Mike Lanzone, a bander from Powdermill, who was at AFMO doing research on night bird calls (see next paragraph). Two-thirds of the birds killed included three species: Blackpoll (176), Black-throated Blue (72), and Cape May (67) warblers. The other species were: Common Yellowthroat (42), Ovenbird (27), American Redstart (26), Red-eyed Vireo (16), Magnolia Warbler (13), Connecticut Warbler (9), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (6), Northern Parula (6), Palm Warbler (5), Black-throated Green Warbler (5), Mourning Warbler (4), Gray-cheeked Thrush (3), Black-and-white Warbler (3), Blackburnian Warbler (2), and a Yellow-breasted Chat, Scarlet Tanager, Bobolink, Savannah and Grasshopper sparrow, Swainson's Thrush, Ruffed Grouse, Sora, Gray Catbird, Northern Waterthrush, and Bay-breasted, Chestnut-sided, Tennessee, and Yellow-rumped warblers. The Tucker County School Board is working with officials to remedy the lighting problem.

We were honored to have Mike Lanzone from the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Powdermill Avian Research Center, Rector, PA, and his research assistant, Emma Deleon, carry out some of their research work at AFMO this fall. They were using Portable Recording Chambers to record detailed samples of nocturnal flight calls. Migrating wood warblers and other selected species were first netted, documented, and banded at AFMO. Mike and Emma then placed the selected birds in their Recording Chamber and played previously recorded flight call notes. This often elicited calls from the birds in the Recording Chamber. According to Mike Lanzone, et al., "This recording method rapidly produces many high quality recordings of the flight calls of individuals of known age and sex. Our analyses show recorded flight calls of captive birds are inseparable from those of free-flying migrants. This result is a crucial precursor for the development of automated sound analysis algorithms critical for implementing and strengthening future acoustical monitoring applications." We were also honored to have Mike Lanzone's wife, Trish Miller,

and their daughter, Phoebe, visit our station. Trish is a Golden Eagle researcher working on her Ph.D. at Penn State, and Phoebe has an amazing knowledge of birds at her young age of two.

AFMO had two foreign recoveries this fall: An AHY female Blackburnian Warbler was banded by Dr. Paul Rodeward from Ohio State University on 28 May 2006 at Lamb's Woods, near Niles Beach, OH. It was recaptured and released at AFMO on 4 Sep 2008. A banded HY male Black-throated Green Warbler was recaptured and released at our station on 17 Sep. It had been banded by Connie Skipper four days earlier on 13 Sep at Mt. Nebo Wildlife Area, six mi north of Oakland, MD. AFMO is about 30 mi due south of the Mt. Nebo banding station.

Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas (LaMNA) and UCLA's Center for Tropical Research (CTR) is coordinating a landbird sampling of migrating birds. Linda Long, Ph.D., USFS Redwood Sciences Laboratory invited the writer (JBP) to participate in the project. This is the second year AFMO has participated. Cloacal and feather samples were collected from 93 birds of 40 species. UCLA is screening for the Avian Influenza Virus (AIV) from samples taken from AFMO and other stations throughout the country.

The Flyover Count was started in 1990 and has continued every year during the fall banding season at AFMO. Results from the 2008 fall counting of four selected species, which make up the majority of the Count are: 325 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, 4,086 Blue Jays, 493 American Goldfinches, and 172 Monarch Butterflies. The American Goldfinch and Monarch Butterfly numbers were very low at AFMO this fall compared to 2007, and also the previous 18-yr average (which was 3,034 for goldfinches and 1,231 for Monarchs).

This fall, 850 people signed our visitors' book. These visitors came from 19 states, Washington DC, and five foreign countries (Canada, England, Germany, India and Japan). As usual, several elementary and middle schools and colleges visited AFMO, including The Highland Adventist School

from Elkins, WV, Audubon Naturalist Society Group, Allegheny College of Maryland Forestry Students, and the Georgetown University freshman group.

We thank the personnel of Monongahela National Forest, Supervisor Clyde Thompson, Cheat/Potomac District Ranger Jeff Hammes, Special Use Manager Laura Hise, Forestry Technicians Ed Lang, and John Waggy, and all others for their cooperation and help. We also thank the West Virginia DNR. for the use of their building for storage of our banding shed. We also thank the Ralph K. Bell Bird Club, The Brooks Bird Club, and many visitors and volunteers for their financial support. It is our only means of replacing our mist nets.

The banders who participated this year were Bob Dean, Ken & Sue Heselton, Fred & Carol McCullough, Randy & Beth Ritter (also Campground Hosts), Todd & Kim Schnopp, Charles Ziegenfus, and Station Leaders Ralph K. Bell and Joan Bell Pattison. We are pleased to welcome Todd & Kim Schnopp as AFMO's newest banders, who are apprenticing under the Master Permit of the writer (JBP). AFMO volunteers Bill Agee and Ken Heselton contributed countless hours of computer time and expertise to put together the banders' information. The scheduled volunteers (besides the banders) who stayed and worked for extended periods of time were: Bill Beatty, Tom & Dawn Fox, LeJay Graffious, Jack & Joleene Minear, Tim Newlin, Don Pattison, Maggi Perl, Jan Runyan, Todd & Kim Schnopp, and Stephen Sushinski. We are grateful to Todd Schnopp, who donated and constructed a much-needed new roof for the banding shed. LeJay Graffious, Todd Schnopp, and others erected and took down the shed for the season. We want to thank all of the above volunteers and other interested people who helped in many ways this year.

Hermit Thrush  
by George West

