

2009

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2008 Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory

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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 where early morning frost delayed the opening of some nets.

Comparisons to previous efforts at this station need to be tempered by the fact that from 1980 through 2003, the effort was from 1 Aug through 30 Nov with upwards of 100 banding days per season. When the effort resumed in 2007, we operated only 42 days from mid-Aug thru mid-Nov. New norms will have to be established under the new protocol.

Overall 1,787 birds of 75 species were banded compared to 2007's 1,700 birds of 77 species. Of the 1,595 birds that were aged, 74% were HY. This is a high percentage for this station (last year was 58%). One new species was added to our station species list: Cooper's Hawk (HY/F). Eighty-five percent of our bandings were from the following: sparrows at 27%, warblers at 20%, mimids at 14% (overwhelmingly Gray Catbirds), kinglets at 11%, thrushes at 7% and vireos at 6%. Our Top Ten species once again accounted for about 64% of all bandings. For the first time since 1980, Gray Catbirds were our most-banded bird. Ruby-crowned Kinglets, which frequently are the station's #1 banded species, dropped to an uncharacteristic #3.

Notable warblers banded included (all HY except one AHY/Yellow Warbler): four Nashville, two each Cape May and Yellow, and one each Kentucky, Wilson's and Tennessee. Kentucky Warblers are relatively uncommon to this station; this was the first one banded here since 2002. Tennessee Warblers were once relatively common at this station. During the 1980s, an average of 105 Tennessee Warblers were banded per year. In the 1990s, this average dropped precipitously to 22 per year (100+ days per season in those years). We also banded 11 Blackpoll Warblers (3-AHY/8-HY) this

season. We have not seen these numbers since we were banding on a near daily basis compared to our current three days per week.

Other highlights include: banding one HY/M Sharp-shinned Hawk, five Purple Finches (AHY/4, U/1), and three HY/U Warbling Vireos. Warbling Vireos are very unusual for this station with fewer than 20 having been banded since 1980. On 19 Aug we banded a leucistic House Wren (AHY/U). The outer five primaries and corresponding coverts on the left wing were white. Finally, we banded an HY Gray Catbird with a 79-mm wing and an 80-mm tail (no tail molt). These are unusually small wing/tail measurements for a Gray Catbird.

We had 754 recaptures of 481 birds of 40 species. The earliest banded recapture was of a resident Blue Jay originally banded at Patuxent in 2002. We also recaptured a Red-eyed Vireo that was originally banded at Patuxent in 2003.

Our regular volunteers include Sandy Teliak (who wrote this report), Mike Quinlan, JoAnna Lutmerding, Woody Martin and Jay Pape. A special thanks to Deanna Dawson who filled in as the bander-in-charge on occasion. Our thanks also to the many others who assisted.

**Foreman's Branch
Bird Observatory**

391-0755

Chino Farms, Chestertown
Queen Anne's Co., MD

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Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory's 11th fall banding season was somewhat of a disappointment in both numbers and species totals. While habitat has remained virtually the same since 1998, the weather patterns this fall, like last year, were not the best for the area's breeding birds or for bringing in fall migrants from the north. The 2007 summer drought was repeated in 2008, but lasted longer, until mid-November this year. We experienced no strong cold fronts through the area until mid-

October. Earlier ones from later August through mid-October were weak in nature and stalled just south of Maryland forming low-pressure systems that lingered for days just off the Atlantic coastline. This produced more easterly winds rather than the hoped for northwest winds that bring migrants to our nets. The past two summer droughts seemed to have little effect on most of our primary breeding species like Indigo Bunting, Field and Chipping sparrows, Blue Grosbeak, and Common Yellowthroat; however, this year all these species were down significantly in numbers.

One new species was banded for the station: a Great Egret, on 2 Oct. Two northern irruptives, Purple Finch (33) and Pine Siskin (8) staged good flights through the area again this year, with many lingering into winter. Record highs for the fall included two Red-tailed Hawks and nine Warbling Vireos. Other interesting bandings were a Clay-colored Sparrow on 19 Oct, a Dickcissel on 10 Nov, and two Brewster's Warblers, one each on 29 Aug and 1 Sep. We again collected hundreds of tick samples for a researcher at Yale University. In addition to the banders already listed, the following volunteered many hours helping at the station: Harry Sears, Henry Davis, Doug Gill, Victoria Cadby, Hanson Robbins, and Jeannine Fleegle.

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge

375-0752

Assateague Island, Accomack Co., VA

Richard N. Roberts

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Ten years ago, when this project was started on Assateague Island, many more birds were captured in August and September. This table lists b/100nh for the months and years noted:

	1999	2000	2002	2003	2008
August		27	23	27	10
September	93	40	34	24	6.7

These data indicate a large change in fall migrants during a rather short period of time. The 2008 October data (159 b/100nh) are difficult to interpret since 83% of these birds were Yellow-rumped Warblers, as is common most years.

The data from May, June, and July (not shown here) indicate that some of this decrease may be a result of a decreased breeding population on Assateague Island.

Kiptopeke

371-0755

Songbird Banding Station

Cape Charles, Northhampton Co., VA

Jethro Runco, head bander

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The Kiptopeke banding station was in operation for the 46th consecutive year, starting back in 1963. The 2008 season started on 15 Aug and ran through 23 Nov. The station operated for 90 of those days, capturing a total of 91 species. A total of 6,726 individuals were banded this season, making it the third lowest season total since 2000. Average capture rate was 59.2 b/100nh.

During 2004 and 2005, much habitat improvement took place in and around the banding station. 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 filling in and are now producing fruit and seeds.

The weather basically broke this season into two parts. The first month was very dry, but mild, with average high temperatures lower than normal. Rainfall was also lower than normal and wind speed was not much of a problem. Only a few minor cool fronts passed through the area; therefore, migrant numbers stayed a bit lower than normal. We did not band on 6 Sep when Tropical Storm Hanna passed by. Starting on 16 Sep, wind and rain settled into the area for the next ten days, dropping net hours and causing the station to miss three days during that span. After that storm system passed, the station