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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge)- Fall 2009 Lewiston

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Lewiston**431-0790**

Niagara County, NY

Jerald J. Farrell, Bander

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The 2009 fall banding season started on 2 Sep. There were very few warblers in the woods at this time, with only a total of four species being handled, totaling eight birds. This condition did not change throughout the season. This station recorded the lowest number of warbler species as well as total warblers in 33 years of fall operation! Other species, such as Black-capped Chickadee and all the thrushes, seemed to be present in normal numbers. The last day of banding was 14 Oct.

The weather played a minor role in number of days operated; there were a total of four scheduled days lost due to either rain or high winds. There were no new species handled this fall; a total of six local retraps were handled with data being taken.

There were only three visitors to the station this fall with the day of their visit being very disappointing with only six birds being captured and banded.

Ruthven Park**425-0795**

Haldimand County, ON

Rick Ludkin, Loretta Mousseau, Brian Pomfret, Banders

rludkin@hotmail.com

The station is situated on the grounds of Ruthven Park National Historic Site, about 100 m from the historic mansion. The entrance to the site is located about 2 km north of the town of Cayuga. This station is one of three banding stations that make up the Haldimand Bird Observatory - Rock Point Provincial Park and Dry Lake. All three stations are within 40 km of each other.

The station was run from 1 Sep to 8 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 42 days this season.

Up to 16 12-m mist nets (30 mm mesh) were deployed in 10 net lanes. These net lanes are long-standing with some being in the same place since 1995 and all but one being in place since 2000. The lanes have been cut into the dogwood/scrubby edge habitat that acts as a buffer between the lawns and fields of the historic site and the surrounding forest. 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 weather in September was simply wonderful: warm and sunny throughout. October was more “mixed,” with periods of bad weather but not really cold temperatures.

This was a “difficult” season in that I was the only bander available with any consistency (although we were helped out by Loretta Mousseau and Audrey Heagy for a few days each). Consequently, the number of days of coverage was down: 42 days, compared with an average of 58 over the past five years. [Comparative averages given will be based on numbers extending from the 2004 season, when we restricted ourselves to a fall season that ran from the beginning of September to the end of the first week of November. Prior to that, numbers may have included banding time in the summer months.] Our coverage in September was actually pretty good (due to the excellent weather, which was an incentive for me to take time off work), but noticeably reduced in October (when the weather was more often not very good). So the number of birds banded, **2,408**, is down (avg. = 2,888) and the number of net hours is, **3,641** (down from an average of 4,579). Interestingly, the rate of birds captured, b/100nh, remained the same (**63.15** vs the average of 63.11). Last year we banded only 28 more birds despite having almost 2,000 more net hours! The bottom line is that this good year could have been a great year with better coverage. But sometimes it goes like that.