

2010

Atlantic Flyway Review: Spring 2009 Long Point Bird Observatory

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throated Blue Warbler. Unusual birds for the station included a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a White-eyed Vireo, an Orange-crowned Warbler, two Prairie Warblers (unusual in the spring), a Worm-eating Warbler, and an Orchard Oriole. We did not catch any Wood Thrushes during spring 2009 (we average 6.4).

| <u>No.</u> | <u>Species</u> | <u>% SY</u> | <u>% ASY</u> | <u>% AHY</u> |
|------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 573 | Common Yellowthroat | 52 | 22 | 25 |
| 395 | Magnolia Warbler | 71 | 20 | 9 |
| 232 | American Redstart | 66 | 20 | 14 |
| 164 | Black-and-white Warbler | 64 | 33 | 3 |
| 159 | Red-eyed Vireo | 8 | 23 | 69 |
| 129 | White-throated Sparrow | 54 | 28 | 18 |
| 90 | Ovenbird | 36 | 44 | 20 |
| 89 | Gray Catbird | 53 | 30 | 17 |
| 78 | Black-throated Blue Warbler | 81 | 15 | 4 |
| 76 | Northern Parula | 72 | 26 | 1 |

The most exciting event during spring 2009 was the banding of the 100,000th bird at AIMS, a Gray Catbird banded on 19 May by Kristen Covino. The station received daily updates as we counted down to that bird, a particularly appropriate species for Appledore. Our other exciting bird was a foreign recovery of a Magnolia Warbler that was captured on 2 Jun. It had been banded on 30 May at Seaside Park, New Jersey.

We continue to provide opportunities for many people to see birds up close, especially the students taking early season classes at the Shoals Marine Lab. We are pleased that the students in field ornithology are able to learn from the station each spring. We continue to benefit from many dedicated volunteers who generously donate time and energy helping run the station. The Shoals Marine Lab and Canisius College continue to provide both financial and logistical support for the station. We also want to thank a very generous benefactor who covered the room and board charges for the station volunteers this year.

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| <u>No.</u> | <u>Species</u> | <u>% SY</u> | <u>% ASY</u> | <u>% AHY</u> |
|------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1944 | White-throated Sparrow | 54.4 | 11.8 | 33.8 |
| 1206 | Brown-headed Cowbird | 62.9 | 6.1 | 30.9 |
| 1075 | Red-winged Blackbird | 8.8 | 58 | 33.2 |
| 836 | American Goldfinch | 59.1 | 34 | 6.9 |
| 786 | Slate-colored Junco | 48.5 | 34.2 | 17.3 |
| 645 | Yellow Warbler | 65 | 27.3 | 7.8 |
| 643 | Common Grackle | 25.2 | 0.6 | 74.2 |
| 539 | Blue Jay | 69 | 23.6 | 7.4 |
| 520 | Ruby-crowned Kinglet | 34.4 | 33.8 | 31.7 |
| 493 | Magnolia Warbler | 64.1 | 28 | 7.9 |

The spring 2009 season of migration monitoring was full of surprises. Though somewhat short-lived, the passage of thousands of Tundra Swans through the Long Point area promised spring would arrive. Long Point Bird Observatory's 49th consecutive spring season commenced on 1 Apr at the Old Cut base station. Warm temperatures in March and open waters permitted an early Tip station opening on 2 Apr. Though it was still too cold for nets, the ground and J-traps provided a seemingly endless supply of Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, American Tree Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos.

Breakwater was armed and ready by 12 Apr. The slow but steady migration in April was punctuated by an influx of temperate migrants and Neotropical overshoots on the 27th. A warm southern front assisted many of these that would have typically stopped well south of Lake Erie. On that day, the three stations shared a total of eight White-eyed Vireos and five Summer Tanagers. Other new arrivals from warmer climes included many of the season's first warblers, including an astoundingly

early Blackpoll Warbler. Spring migration can be hit and miss. If these ideal conditions had continued, it would have been over too quickly. Luckily, more seasonal north winds followed, putting a damper on the eager migrants from the tropics

Every once in a long while, weather conditions develop in precisely the right way and migration at Long Point is phenomenal. On 6 May, a record-breaking 1321 birds of more than 55 species were banded among the three stations. The previous LPBO single-day record of 1291 was set on 27 Apr 1985. The Tip station banded 746 birds on its own on 6 May. (It certainly helped that the Tip was manned with six extractors, one super-scribe, and two LPBO wardens that day!) Volunteers there observed 134 species within the census area, which established a new record as well. About 50% of the diversity was White-throated Sparrows. At one point we could barely close the nets without birds flying into them. Moments like these are encountered rarely. The adrenaline rush, excitement, and sheer awe are difficult to describe.

At least one Kentucky Warbler was banded at each of our three stations this spring, despite the complete absence of the species in 2008. The Tip and Old Cut each banded Worm-eating Warblers, and a female Prothonotary Warbler was banded at Breakwater on 11 May.

Migration seemed to slow down in the latter half of May, with less-than-ideal wind conditions as a contributing factor. An Acadian Flycatcher was banded at Breakwater on 21 May and one was observed at the Tip on the 27th. An unexpected treat at Breakwater involved a European Goldfinch of unknown origin that was caught and banded on 22 May, followed by a second individual on 30 May. In the same category of escaped caged bird, a European Greenfinch visited a feeder on Long Point on 31 May.

A combination of highly skilled volunteers able to safely handle the numbers of birds, combined with conducive weather conditions, made for impressive results this spring.

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This was again a dismal spring. Over 23 springs we have seen an increasingly disturbing pattern of fewer and fewer species and individuals. To make that worse, our daily point counts no longer add all that much to the banding data. Were it not for hundreds of American Goldfinches and Pine Siskins, migration would have been a non-event. There was a very large surge during a warm period in early and mid April when we were not banding.

| <u>No.</u> | <u>Species</u> | <u>% SY</u> | <u>% ASY</u> | <u>% AHY</u> |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 310 | American Goldfinch | 36 | 24 | 40 |
| 159 | Pine Siskin | 54 | 46 | 0 |
| 36 | Slate-colored Junco | 36 | 61 | 3 |
| 27 | White-throated Sparrow | 41 | 59 | 0 |
| 25 | Purple Finch | 72 | 28 | 0 |
| 20 | Chipping Sparrow | 15 | 85 | 0 |
| 19 | E White-crowned Sparrow | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| 18 | Song Sparrow | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| 16 | Blue Jay | 63 | 25 | 0 |
| 14 | Black-capped Chickadee | 0 | 0 | 100 |

We banded 779 individuals of 46 species in 22 days of operation. We also had 103 repeats, 104 returns, and seven hummingbirds not banded. Our measure of efficiency was 145 b/100nh for newly banded birds and 185 b/100nh overall. Our best day was 3 May with 107 banded, and our most species diverse day was also 3 May with 20 species banded. Our efficiency was quite high as we used only 10 nets and often closed because of high winds arising within an hour or so of opening. We banded only eight warbler species; all but one were local breeders.

The story of winter/spring was the amazing invasion of Pine Siskins. Several researchers are attempting to consolidate data on the probable