

2010

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2009 Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory

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Thrushes led the list by families, 20% of the total, followed by warblers with 16% (compared to 29% in 2008), sparrows 15%, cardinals 13%, and tits 12%, with mimids far behind at 8% (12% in 2008).

Our oldest returns from prior years were a five-year-old cardinal and a five-year-old catbird. A Cooper's Hawk, expertly retrieved by Jane, was the 121st species banded at our station.

Patuxent Powerline

390-0764

Right-of-Way

Patuxent Research Refuge

Laurel, Prince George's Co., MD

Danny Bystrak

dbystrak@usgs.gov

This station is in a powerline right-of-way that bisects an upland deciduous forest. It has operated since 1980, except in 2004-2006. In the 27 years of operation, more than 81,600 birds have been banded. Twenty-six nets are arrayed along approximately one-half mile that runs in an east-west orientation. Dense four- to six-foot high shrubs dominate the habitat. As in 2007 and 2008, we operated seven days each 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 dawn and closed about 3.5 hours later.

A total of 1,902 birds of 75 species were banded, up from 1,787 birds of 75 species in 2008. Of the 1,730 birds that were aged, 73% were HY. In 2008, 74% were HY and in 2007, 58% were HY. Families were represented as follows: sparrows 26%, warblers 22%, kinglets 15%, mimids 13%, thrushes 8%, and vireos 7%. The relative percentage of bandings by family did not fluctuate much compared to the past two years. Our Top Ten species accounted for 66% of all bandings compared to 64% for both 2007 and 2008. Some warblers showed respectable increases over their 2007-2008 average: Black-and-white, Bay-breasted, Black-throated Green, Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, and Ovenbird. Notable warbler species banded included four Bay-breasted

and one each of Orange-crowned, Tennessee, and Worm-eating.

Other highlights included: American Woodcock, Warbling Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. In September we banded the 80,000th bird of this fall migration monitoring effort.

An HY Gray Catbird that we banded on 25 Sep was recaptured on 10 Oct at the North Folly Island Lighthouse in Charleston Harbor, SC. We had 465 recaptures of 306 individual birds of 34 species. The earliest banded recapture was of a resident Blue Jay originally banded at Patuxent in 2002. In addition, we recaptured a Ruby-crowned Kinglet that we banded as an AHY on 27 Oct 2008. This may be the first instance of this station's recapture of a kinglet banded in a previous season.

Greatly assisting in this effort were: Sandy Teliak (who wrote this report), Mike Quinlan, Jo Anna Lutmerding, Woody Martin, and Bruce Peterjohn. Special thanks to Deanna Dawson who filled in as bander-in-charge on occasion. Our thanks also go to the many others who lent occasional assistance.

Foreman's Branch

391-0755

Bird Observatory

Chestertown, Queen Anne's Co., MD

J. G. Gruber*, P. Gruber, M. Gimpel, D. Small, and W. Snyder, Banders

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Foreman's Branch completed its twelfth fall banding season this year. While productivity was up slightly this year it was still the fourth lowest. Species diversity was down for the second year in a row and no new species was added to the banding list. Strong weather systems from the northwest were mostly absent while strong systems out of the southwest predominated, foreshadowing the snowy weather that was to come in the winter.

Banding highlights include a record-breaking seven Green Herons, 14 Northern Saw-whet Owls, a record-high five Philadelphia Vireos from 6 Sep

through 5 Oct, a Marsh Wren on 16 Sep, and a Bicknell's Thrush on 28 Sep.

Maren again diligently collected hundreds of tick samples for a researcher at Yale University for a Lyme disease study. In addition to the banders listed above, the following people volunteered many hours helping at the station: Harry Sears, Henry Davis, Doug Gill, Victoria Cadby, Hanson Robbins, Jeannine Fleegle, Bernie Lohr, Amanda Spears, Amanda Lindsey, Rachel Field, Bill Tracket, and Anne and Brennan O'Connor.

Chincoteague 375 – 0752
National Wildlife Refuge
Assateague Island, Accomack Co., VA
Richard N. Roberts, Bander
bandbird@verizon.net

At least two factors caused the major decrease in birds for 2009: loss of one major banding habitat, and a large number of days of rain preventing banding. In addition, the general lack of warbler species was pronounced, a fact that was also recorded during the nesting season when this station is also operated. This is the first autumn of operation that the numbers of Myrtle Warblers have dropped below 100 individuals.

Eastern Shore of Virginia 370-0755
National Wildlife Refuge
Songbird Banding Station
Cape Charles, Northampton Co., VA
Jethro Runco, Head Bander
jethrorunco@aol.com

The 2009 fall season marked the start of a large research project on the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge. The overall scope of this project is to sample and assess the shrub/scrub habitat which comprises a large part of the refuge. Included in the project were vegetation assessment, fruit counts, bird surveys (area searches), foraging observations (activity budgets), and mobbing. This all followed an already set NWR protocol. Included in this project was the opening and operation of a passerine banding station. The goal of the banding

station is to see if the surveying techniques (area searches) compare to what the banding station is catching, along with bird abundances and the overall condition of migrant birds.

Because this was the first year of operation, kinks had to be worked out. Because of other time-dependent projects, the banding station was opened on 15 Sep (a bit late for the early Neotropical migrants). Also, this was not meant to run as a constant-effort station. On average, this station ran five days a week, with days off mainly falling on bad weather days (which, as it turned out, were quite frequent over the Delmarva Peninsula this fall). It is not clear at this point how long this banding station will run, but it will at least run again in the 2010 fall season. It may last just two years, or maybe 20.

The banding station was in operation on 57 days between 15 Sep and 30 Nov. Because of the large number of expected captures, and a very limited number of staff (usually no more than two people running the station per day), this station was set up extremely tight and employed only 15 nets (five lines of three tandem 12-m nets). It took only two minutes to go from the banding station to the farthest net. By the end of the season, the station had banded 7,860 individuals with only 4,503 net hours (1.75 birds per net hour). In total, 83 species were banded, which is not bad considering a very large portion of the Neotropical migrants had passed through the area by the time the station opened on 15 Sep; 91.5% of the birds aged this season were in their Hatching Year, which is about normal for passerines passing down the Delmarva Peninsula.

Since this was the first year of operation, it is hard to determine what was expected and what was not. But a few species do stand out. The 122 Northern Parulas was extremely high and the 40 Northern Waterthrushes, 161 American Redstarts, and the 218 Common Yellowthroats were high considering the late start date. Gray Catbirds (625) were high, but expected, given the habitat. Thrush numbers were low, as expected, because forest was not part