

2011

## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) Fall 2010 Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory

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The annual banding demonstration at Foster Lake did not take place this year, but a banding demonstration was held for Alfred University Environmental Science students on 4 Nov at the home of their professor, Dr. Fred Beaudry. This location proved to be excellent and the 1.5-hr demo using no more than one or two nets at a time, resulted in my best day of the fall!

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Prattsburgh, Steuben County, NY

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After a lapse of too many years, I finally got back to AFR banding at our Spring Hill Wildlife Sanctuary in the Town of Prattsburgh, Steuben County, NY. Unfortunately, the banding was on a much reduced scale because of so much rain during the summer and my reduced ability to operate mist nets due to nerve damage in both legs. Because of all the rain, several trips to our sanctuary were aborted. We just turned around and went back home. We did manage to band on a total of six dates in July, August and September using six mist nets. We did have one nice highlight. As Chita was making a round of the nets on 1 Sep, she came across one net with four Hooded Warblers (HOWA) in it at one time, three males and a female. This was in addition to another male in a nearby net on 26 Jul. I also banded one HOWA at Braddock Bay Bird Observatory this summer. I do not band a HOWA every year and I certainly never banded four in one year. Looking forward to a better 2011.

**Kestrel Haven Avian** 422-0764  
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This was our 25th fall AFR season and the most dismal. For the last four seasons we have been the victims of climate change in that we have had to deal with winds too unsafe for netting on most days. We are unable to make any meaningful comparisons or engage in statistical analysis as the

data are simply not there. This despite our daily point counts that were also degraded by wind and rain. We were a far cry from the days of 6,000 banded!

Our highlights are usually with our returns. This year that number was also greatly decreased. One fantastic recovery bears relating. We heard from a birder living on an island off the coast of British Columbia. While birding, he discovered a wing and a single leg of what appeared to have been a Pine Siskin. The leg had a band attached! We had banded that siskin during last year's invasion and just about one year prior to its recovery some 2,900 miles away. That is our longest distance return in almost 40 years of banding.

Injuries and parasites were unremarkable. We operated with fewer nets this year and weather caused us to depart from our years of constant-effort protocol.

We banded 1,622 new birds of 83 species in 67 days of operation. We also had 347 repeats, 70 returns, and 70 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The hummingbirds were not banded. The total birds netted was 2,153 making our measure of efficiency 135 b/100nh for newly banded birds and 179 b/100nh overall. Hatching-year birds were way above the norm at 96%.

The station banded list grew to 133 species plus seven forms banded (140) with the inclusion of Northern Saw-whet Owl this year. Saw-whets were our salvation. On many of the non-banding passerine days, winds subsided to safe levels with darkness. We set for and lured saw-whets throughout October and November. We had never attempted this before as conventional wisdom hereabouts said that the species did not migrate through the Finger Lakes in meaningful numbers. By December, we had banded 77, had three birds banded this year and last in Ontario at Prince Edward Point, and had one of our saw-whets recaptured in southeastern Pennsylvania. That was certainly meaningful to us! None of the saw-whet data are included in the AFR totals, as we used an

audio lure for all captures. These data were reported to Project OwlNet.

Our eldest return was an American Goldfinch that was eight years old. Of the 70 returns, 18 of nine species were in excess of four years of age. They shred out as follows:

One Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at 4.  
Six Black-capped Chickadees at 4, 4, 5, and 6.  
Two Eastern Tufted Titmouse at 4.  
One Gray Catbird at 4.  
One American Robin at 4.  
Two Red-eyed Vireo at 5 and 6+.  
One Yellow Warbler at 4.  
One Slate-colored Junco at 4, and  
Three American Goldfinch at 4, 5, and 8.

We thank Doris Cohrs, Bob and Judy Cosgriff, A.L. Donahue, David Guaspari, Tony Cacciapouti, Tim Brady, Kazu and Tomoku Ito, Bill Martin, Bill Opfer and Susann Argetsinger for their generous support, Victoria Bond Kelly for her talent and time in maintaining and constantly improving our website, Rick Smith and ATC, Ithaca, for a very special equipment assist, Acorn Designs for the beautiful cards we use as thank you notes for recoveries, and several others who contributed advice and assistance, including Stillman's Greenhouse and Barlow Rhodes.

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This fall season's banding efforts started on 20 Jul and ended on 20 Nov, for a total of 41 banding days/sessions. I used one to six mist nets for a total of 273 hours and banded 404 birds. My species count was very low, as I tallied only 28 species, a drop of eight species from my previous year. However, on the bright side, I banded just over twice the number I banded in the previous year because of increased effort.

This station had a total of 24 repeats/returns this fall of ten species. Of note were three Black-capped Chickadee returns: one four years old, one three years old, and one two years old; additional returns were one Gray Catbird three years old, one Northern Cardinal three years old, and one Song Sparrow three years old.

Banding was slow through the middle of October, and I thought that the season was comparable to the very slow season last year. Things improved considerably from 16 Oct on, as I had a very good flight of Slate-colored Juncos, banding 93 from 16 Oct until the end of banding in November. This flight of juncos was responsible for almost one quarter of all the birds banded at this station. In addition, Pine Siskins showed up about the same date and I managed to band 21 of them from 20 Oct to 20 Nov.

A nice surprise at the feeders on the 2 Nov, was a small flock (5) Evening Grosbeaks showed up. As these birds only stayed for about three days at the feeder, none were banded. We have resided at our current address for just over half a century, and 1991 was the last recorded time Evening Grosbeaks were present at our feeders. A paper was given a few years ago at the New York State Federation of Bird Clubs' annual meeting in Owego, NY, using the data that I had accumulated on banding Evening Grosbeaks. After 1991, Evening Grosbeaks seem to have vanished or at least were not present at many central New York state feeders and in the Northeast, from that point on. It was a treat to have these colorful finches at our feeders even for a few days.

Along with the presence of the Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins as highlights of the season, I had one other interesting capture. To some, it may seem mundane, but I assure you that capturing and banding an American Crow is an experience. Only the second crow I have ever banded.