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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2010 Patuxent Powerline Right-of-Way

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Eden Mill**394-0762**

Pylesville, Harford Co., MD

Mark S. Johnson*Mark.Steven.Johnson@comcast.net*

Improved summer and fall weather conditions brought a greater diversity of species with a larger proportion of hatching-year birds, suggesting conditions were favorable for reproduction. Weather, however, did not adversely affect banding activities and we were open four more days than last year, which may have helped reduce the number of birds captured per net-hour. The number of species captured increased 16%, with some species replacing and shifting in our top ten positions. Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers (MYWA) for the first time made it within the top five species captured and Indigo Buntings were back on the top ten list this year, as were Swamp Sparrows. HY Northern Cardinals were greatly increased over previous years, reflecting favorable local breeding conditions. Numbers of White-throated Sparrows are down, which is a general trend reflected in local mid-winter and Christmas Count data.

This year brought several new species for our station, which is noteworthy since this is our 11th year of banding at Eden Mill. Nearly coincident with other nearby stations, we captured a Black-capped Chickadee on 5 Nov. Other individuals were also seen during local bird counts and, as such, represented an invasion not typically observed in our region. Other new species included our first Philadelphia Vireo. Lincoln's Sparrows again were captured, as were relatively uncommon species such as Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and Nashville Warblers. An early Winter Wren was captured in October.

We continue to host youth groups and those interested in learning more on bird census techniques. Data collected were posted and are being used to help make sound land management decisions regarding the value of this habitat to migratory birds in the immediate region. Interestingly enough, it seems that the fruit of invasive exotic plants is very useful to the birds as

an energy source and provides a quandary on what to do regarding habitat management. Currently, a compromise was found where a section of land will be managed for native plants and a portion will be left alone. With sufficient resources, we hope to monitor both tracts to see how habitat use differs among species.

Many thanks go out to our regular volunteers: Suzanne Procell, Jerry Strickroth, Les Eastman, Jay Rubinoff, Bob Werlein and the staff at Eden Mill Nature Center.

Robbins Nest**390-0765**

Laurel, Prince George's Co., MD

Chandler S. Robbins, Jane Robbins*crobbs@usgs.gov*

Operation of this backyard station had to be delayed until 11 Oct, but proceeded as normal on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule from then through the end of November. We had a new high for Hermit Thrush this year, which tied for first place in spite of the decline in October-November net-hours. Song Sparrows used to be at our feeders year-round, but I did not see or hear a single one this year or last year. This was my 74th year of banding, but only the 49th at this location.

We thank Joe Hanfman, Derek Richardson, and Jeff Culler for assisting with retrieval of birds from the nets.

Patuxent Powerline Right-of-Way 390-0764

Patuxent Research Refuge

Laurel, Prince George's Co., MD

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This station is in a powerline right-of-way that bisects an upland deciduous forest. It has operated since 1980, except for 2004-2006. In the 28 years of operation, more than 83,400 birds and over 120 species 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. Since 2007, we

have 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 1,876 birds of 79 species were banded, exceeding our previous three-year average of 1,796 birds of 76 species. Families that showed a slight (2-3%) increase over their 2007-2009 average included: warblers 25%, kinglets 17%, and vireos 7%; whereas, those showing a slight decline were sparrows 25% and mimids 9%, with no change for thrushes. Several warblers showed significant increases over their previous 2007-2009 high: Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Northern Parula, Blackburnian, and Tennessee. Concomitantly, American Redstart, and Myrtle and Connecticut warblers showed a noticeable decline from their previous 2007-2009 low. Other species having a particularly strong showing compared to their previous 2007-2009 highs were Golden-crowned Kinglets, Slate-colored Juncos and a near record-breaking eight Philadelphia Vireos, the most since 1983.

Other highlights included our 2nd Black-capped Chickadee, 4th American Woodcock, 8th Great Crested Flycatcher, 13th White-crowned Sparrow, 16th and 17th Orange-crowned Warbler and 17th Warbling Vireo since 1980. In addition, we banded an HY male Eastern Towhee with a split lower bill that was crossed, a Yellow Palm Warbler with four alula feathers (instead of three) on both wings, and an HY Swainson's Thrush whose outer primary and outer three primary coverts on both wings were white.

In 2010 with 1,876 bandings we had 332 recaptures of 196 individual birds of 27 species. We had eight individual birds originally banded in 2007, nine from 2008, and twelve from 2009. While we had a similar banding rate (1,902 bandings) in 2009, we had a much more robust recapture rate in 2009: 465 recaptures of 306 individual birds of 34 species. Of those 306 birds, 60 were banded in either 2007 or 2008. One contributor to this decline may have been

the record-setting snowfall (aka snowmageddon) of the 2009-2010 winter season (at least 72.3" at nearby BWI Airport). This may have had a negative impact on the survivability of some of the year-round species (e.g., Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee) and other species that winter here (e.g., White-throated Sparrow, Hermit Thrush). Of that sub-set, in the 2009 recapture season we had 41 birds of seven species banded in 2008 or 2007; whereas, in the 2010 recapture season, we had only six birds of three species banded in 2008 or 2009. 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 to the many others who lent occasional assistance.

**Foreman's Branch
Bird Observatory**

391-0760

Chestertown, Queen Anne's County, MD

J. G. Gruber*, P. Gruber, M. E. Gimpel, D. M. Small, W. Snyder, and A. C. Spears, Banders

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Foreman's Branch completed its 13th fall banding season this year. Productivity was slightly above the ten-year average. Species diversity was our highest ever for a fall, with two new species, Mallard and Rusty Blackbird. Weather was more nearly normal with regular cold fronts passing through almost on a weekly timetable. Banding highlights included the following fall record-breaking species totals: 277 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, 89 Bobolinks, 980 Indigo Buntings, 93 Northern Saw-whet Owls, 194 Purple Finches, 43 Pine Siskins, and 231 Eastern White-crowned Sparrows with one Gambel's race on 1 Nov. Other highlights included two Semipalmated Sandpipers, Red-tailed Hawk, Barn Owl, Whip-poor-will, three Orange-crowned Warblers, Golden-winged Warbler, and Summer Tanager.

For the third fall in a row under Maren's direction we collected hundreds of tick samples for a researcher at Yale University for a Lyme disease