

2011

Atlantic Flyway Review: Spring 2010 Ruthven Park

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Jacobs, Tiara Jandebeur, John Lehr, Rosemary Lillis, Steve Maley, Dottie Mason, Chita McKinney, Shirley Meston, Ann Nash, Bill, Lisa and Sandy Podulka, Debbie Reed, Jesse Roberts, Linda Rossi, Lee Schofield, Jeanne Skelly, Leslie Stoltz, Ruth Stork, Alice VanDeMoere, and Tom Verhulst.

Special appreciation is extended to Bill Kaiser and the Board of the Genesee Land Trust for use of their land.

Ruthven Park

425-0795

Cayuga, Haldimand County, ON

Bander: *Rick Ludkin*

rludkin@hotmail.com

Chief Assistants: Loretta Mousseau, Brian Pomfret

This marks the 15th spring banding season at Ruthven Park. We started on 1 Apr and banded/monitored almost continuously for the next 60 days – finishing on 31 May. Although we did not open nets on days of seriously inclement weather, and opened fewer nets in poor conditions (e.g., high winds), we would do a census and try to get a sense of the types and numbers of birds moving through the site. We missed only 1 day – 26 May. This excellent coverage – all volunteer – was due to the sharing of the load by seven “resident” and “guest” banders: myself, Loretta Mousseau, Nancy Furber, Christine Madliger, Audrey Heagy, David Brewer, and Cindy Cartwright. We also had a LOT of help (see volunteer help below). We ended up banding 1,214 birds of 87 species.

No.	Species	%SY	%ASY	%AHY
160	American Goldfinch	66.2	24.2	9.6
97	Yellow Warbler	72.5	17.4	10.2
81	Chipping Sparrow	33.7	4.8	61.5
80	Gray Catbird	72	15.9	12.2
57	Brown-headed Cowbird	30.9	16.4	52.7
52	Song Sparrow			100
49	Slate-colored Junco	60.4	15.9	12.2
41	Red-winged Blackbird	45.2	23.8	31
37	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	48.6	29.7	21.6
34	White-throated Sparrow	51.5	6.1	24.4

Ruthven Park National Historic Site is located on the banks of the Grand River about 2 km north of the town of Cayuga (Lat-Long: 425-0795). The area is a mosaic of agricultural lands, old fields, and forest tracts (associated with numerous ponds or ‘sloughs’). The banding area surrounds the spacious lawns/grounds of the historic Mansion. The net lanes are cut into the successional scrub which provides a buffer between the open meadows and lawns and the surrounding forest.

We had “odd” weather throughout the banding period. April started off unseasonably hot for the first five days and then we got five days of rain. The second half of the month was punctuated with precipitation and a number of days back-to-back of overnight frosts – the last week of April was much colder than the first one. We got a lot of rain in the first two weeks of May and a cold snap that played havoc with birds in nest boxes and significantly reduced the insect biomass in the forest (necessary food for migrants). The latter part of May was quite hot and dry. One would have expected the unsettled conditions, especially in early May, to have resulted in “fallouts” of migrants at Ruthven (a pattern we have seen in many other years) but this was not the case this year.

Ten (10) net lanes contain 16 12-mm nets (5 singles and 5 “chains” containing 2-3 nets each). We also used up to four ground traps and five Potter traps; these were moved throughout the season in response to movements of birds on the property. Birds were “processed” in the recently refurbished banding lab located in one of the small outbuildings of the historic site.

This was one of the poorest years, in terms of overall numbers banded, since we started spring banding in 1996. Although our net-hours (i.e., the number of hours our nets were open), at 4,385, were 619 above the 10-year average, the number banded, 1,214, was 208 below the 10-year average. This is emphasized by the rates of capture in April and May [this is calculated as birds caught per 100 net hours]: the 10-year average is 24.0 and 35.1 respectively. Our results this spring were 12.9 in April (a record low) and 26.3 in May. It was actually quite frustrating as we had such great

coverage and help. Each day we opened with great expectations – which were never realized! On our “biggest day” (15 May) we banded only 70 birds. We were expecting to get large numbers (“fallout”) on the days of inclement weather but this did not happen.

On a positive note, the number of species banded, 87, was the second highest on record. We banded record high numbers of the following: 33 Mourning Doves (due to the increased use of Potter traps); two Northern Rough-winged Swallows (they breed along the river but are rarely encountered by the nets); 20 Blue-winged Warblers (we had no Golden-wings or Brewster’s/Lawrence’s – the Golden-wing gene pool has been swamped); 10 Black-and-white Warblers.

As well as banding, we keep a daily total of the number of birds of each species seen/encountered that day. Overall, we encountered 139 species/hybrids.

The station was very busy this year not only with banding but also with the incorporation of the banding program into the educational efforts of the historic site. We hosted classes of school children on 18 mornings! Thank goodness we had so many helping hands/eyes. Thanks to everyone who helped out!!

>7 weeks: Rick Ludkin

4-5 weeks: Nancy Furber

2-3 weeks: Loretta Mousseau,

Christine Madliger, Chris Harris

1-2 weeks: Gord Armstrong, Dale Stockton

4-6 days: Faye Socholotiuk, Peter Thoem,

Audrey Heagy, David Brewer,

Maggie Ker, Oliver Love,

Christie Macdonald

1-3 days: Elaine Serena, Shirley Klement, Louise Unitt, Jeff MacLeod, Elisabeth Van Stam, Carol Jones, Tim Furber, Cindy Cartwright, Liz Vanderwoude, Rhiannon Leshyk, Brianne Guisso, Christina Kovacs, Chris McIntosh, Joyce Litster, Margaret and Dianne.

Jeff MacLeod has continued to do a lot of work “behind the scenes”—overseeing our blog: <http://ruthvenpark.ca/natureblog>

Oct - Dec 2011

I thank the Lower Grand River Land Trust and especially the staff of Ruthven Park for their wonderful support. This project was supported financially by the Land Trust and by Bird Studies Canada with funds raised through the annual Baillie Birdathon.

Rock Point Banding Station 420-0793

Dunnville, Haldimand/Norfolk County, ON

James A. Smith, Bander

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Web page: <http://www.rockpointbirdbanding.com>

Chief Assistant(s): Roswitha Matuschek, Gavin Bennett, Sashi Schott.

This season is best characterized by high-effort coverage and low banding results. We never did realize what we hoped for in really good days. We did, however, pick up three new species for this site: a Yellow-throated Vireo, Worm-eating Warbler and Prairie Warbler. Two White-eyed Vireos were also banded and, although not new, they are not common. It is those occasional jewels that make up for the lack of White-throated Sparrows and other more common species.

No.	Species	%SY	%ASY	%AHY
106	White-throated Sparrow	81	15	4
98	Gray Catbird	95	13	2
89	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	62	37	1
71	Yellow Warbler	86	13	1
59	Red-winged Blackbird	53	47	0
58	Slate-colored Junco	74	24	2
46	Magnolia Warbler	65	33	2
38	Common Grackle	63	32	5
36	Common Yellowthroat	56	38	6
34	Trail's Flycatcher	62	24	14

Weather in this region was not a detrimental feature, although storms in the south central states were speculated to have sent the birds on a more westerly migration pattern missing the Great Lakes. I am not sure of this and hope that nothing more sinister moved the birds west. I am very curious to see what the migration of fall 2010 will show.