

2012

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2011 Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory

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day even though the winter white-throats and juncos had not arrived.

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. Twenty-six nets are arrayed along a one-half mile east-west axis. Dense six- to eight-foot high shrubs dominate the habitat. Since 2007 we have consistently operated seven days 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. All references to averages refer to the 2007 to 2010 period.

Despite record-setting rainfall in August and September from Tropical Storms Irene and Lee and two lingering low-pressure systems, we banded 1,831 birds of 71 species compared to our average of 1,816 birds/76 species. Families within 1-2% of their previous averages were warblers (24%), vireos (4%), thrushes (9%) and mimids (12%). We saw a substantial increase in sparrows from an average of 26% of total birds banded to 32%. This was the result of a record number of White-throated Sparrows (297, previous high 254 in 2009) and Eastern Towhees (69, previous high 55 in 2009). Kinglets saw a substantial decline to 11% of all birds banded from an average of 16%. This decline was the result of record low numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets (21) which is surprising given that we had a record high (102) in 2010.

Species showing marked declines from their averages and setting new seasonal lows included: Black-throated Green (following a record high in 2010) and Chestnut-sided warblers; Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Blue Jay, and the aforementioned Golden-crowned Kinglet. Species well above average and setting new seasonal highs were: Tennessee, Canada, Blackpoll, Mourning, and

Myrtle Warblers; Gray-checked and Hermit thrushes; White-crowned Sparrow, and the aforementioned White-throated Sparrow and Eastern Towhee. Of particular note, from 2007-2009 we averaged only two Tennessees per season, yet in 2010 we banded 12 and in 2011 banded 19. This year's two Mourning Warblers were the first since 2003. The three White-crowned Sparrows banded this season bring our station's total to 16—out of 85,320 bandings since 1980!

In 2011, with 1,831 bandings, we had 348 recaptures of 220 individual birds of 29 species. We did have some notable banding days. On 26 Oct, we banded 162 birds of which 61 were White-throated Sparrows. Our previous single day high since 2007 was 139 on 30 Sep 2011 (our best ever was 203 on 14 Oct 2001). Our previous single best White-throated Sparrow day ever since 1980 was 55 on 16 Oct 2000. Likewise, on 30 Sep we banded 80 Gray Catbirds. Our previous highest single day since 1980 was 27 Gray Catbirds on 11 Oct 1987. Kiptopeke and Robbins Nest also experienced relatively high Gray Catbird numbers on or about 30 Sep as well.

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

Foreman's Branch

391-0760

Bird Observatory

Chestertown, Queen Anne's County, MD

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

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Foreman's Branch completed its 14th fall banding season this year. Productivity was back near the ten-year average. Species diversity was also near average. Weather was very wet with extremely heavy rains at times after the second week of August. Tropical systems aside, we experienced numerous one-day rainfalls of more than 3" and two one-day rainfalls in excess of 12". This led to some flooding of

the streams and waterways in the banding area and consequently flooded net lanes. Despite this bad weather, we were down only one banding day over 2010 with near normal species and species totals.

Banding highlights included the following fall record-breaking species totals: Acadian Flycatcher 23, "Traill's" Flycatcher 141, Blue Grosbeak 336, Swamp Sparrow 304, Bicknell's Thrush 5 (25, 27, and 29 Sep and 4 and 17 Oct), and Hermit Thrush 279. Other notable highlights included a Lawrence's Warbler (our second but first fall bird) on 17 Aug, our third Red-shouldered Hawk, and our fourth Pileated Woodpecker. Our most notable species was the only new species for the fall, Ash-throated Flycatcher. We banded not one but two, the first on 9 Nov and the second on 30 Nov. Pictures were taken of both birds and the Maryland records committee has officially accepted both records. Hundreds of ticks were collected for the fourth fall for a Lyme disease study.

FBBO became a part of Washington College's Center for Environment and Society in early March of 2011. We look forward to a long association with them. We also welcomed a new bander to our staff this fall, Rachel Field, who both interned and volunteered with us while studying at Washington College for her bachelor's degree. In addition to the banders already listed, the following people volunteered many hours helping at the station: Harry Sears, Henry Davis, Doug Gill, Victoria Cadby, Hanson Robbins, Jeannine Fleegle, Bernie Lohr, Lisa Spears, Bill and Chris Gimpel, and Anne and Brennan O'Connor.

Kiptopeke Songbird Banding Station 371-0755

Cape Charles, Northampton Co., VA

Calvin Brennan, Head Bander, and Bob Reilly,
Station Master

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Kiptopeke Banding Station, established in the fall of 1963 and operated by the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory since 1997, reached a milestone this season, banding over ten thousand birds for the first time in the modern era of operation. The one hundred

species tagged is slightly above a typical season average. Six more nets were added to the array, bringing the total in the scrub-shrub habitat to 12 and the overall total to 32 nets. The total net-hours of 15,992 established a new record for the station also.

The capture rate for the 12 nets in the scrub-shrub habitat was 59 birds/100 net-hours, which was slightly below the overall average of 63. Having said that, these nets are still highly productive, particularly in the early and middle portions of the season as well as early in the morning. The twelve nets accounted for 36% of all birds caught during the season.

It was a banner year for many birds this fall, with 27 species either exceeding or matching their highest totals ever (Table 1). These included most of the warblers (17 of 29) with the most impressive of these being Northern Parula, posting a total that was off the chart. Non-warblers setting new highs were Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Traill's Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, House Wren, Marsh Wren, Bicknell's Thrush, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, and Indigo Bunting. Several unexpected birds were caught, including the station's first Western Wood-Pewee as well as only the second Lawrence's Warbler ever. Also, the Virginia Rail trapped was only the third such occurrence in recent times. A peculiarity to the season was the lag in the timing for a number of the warblers with many still migrating through in numbers well into October. Particularly if we look at a species like Black-throated Blue, we see the peak flight was on 16 Oct, a week or ten days later than expected. Several species were even recorded into November, namely American Redstart, Northern Parula, and Blackpoll Warbler. Also, a Wood Thrush was caught on 12 Nov, perhaps a state record late departure date for that species.

Fall 2012 will be Kiptopeke's 50th season of operation; a remarkable achievement to which many banders and dedicated volunteers have contributed so much. We invite you to come visit the station and help us celebrate our golden anniversary!