

2012

Atlantic Flyway Review: Spring 2011 Ruthven Park

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Here are some of the highlights of the 2011 season: The total number banded – 2,034 – exceeds the old record (1,888, set in 2007) by 146 birds. This is due to increased net hours; i.e., we had the nets open more than in any other year (5,173 “net hours”).

The 1,375 birds banded in May exceeds the old May record of 1,183, set in 2007. Our single day banding of 144 (on 12 May) greatly exceeds the old 112 bird mark. We had new spring high banding numbers for 18 species and added two new species to our banding list: Purple Martin and Clay-colored Sparrow.

1. American Goldfinch	324
2. Gray Catbird	112
3. White-throated Sparrow	111
4. Yellow Warbler	103
5. Slate-colored Junco	92
6. Brown-headed Cowbird	85
7. Chipping Sparrow	75
8. Song Sparrow	67
9. Rose-breasted Grosbeak	60
10. Common Yellowthroat	56

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The first part of April was cold with one day where nets could not be opened because they were frozen solid. We had, in general, wet weather making the banding area very muddy. Without the boardwalks we would have been in trouble. In spite of the amount of rain, we missed only a few days in April with May being quite consistent. Threatened showers kept us guessing.

	Species	#	%SY	%ASY	%AHY
1.	White-throated Sparrow	160	86	14	0
2.	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	107	61	38	1
3.	Yellow Warbler	79	59	41	0
4.	Gray Catbird	75	91	7	2
5.	Magnolia Warbler	57	60	39	1
6.	Myrtle Warbler	52	69	27	4
7.	American Redstart	46	70	30	0
8.	Common Yellowthroat	46	48	50	2
9.	Red-winged Blackbird	41	54	44	2
10.	American Tree Sparrow	41	39	44	17

On the whole, this spring was fairly consistent with the past five years. I did, however, notice a drop of about 200 birds from the 2007 to 2009 period. Last year was really quite low. This drop can be attributed to many variables– from fewer birds, to change in habitat, to fewer banding days. On the whole, our effort has been reasonably consistent, with this year showing a loss of about a week from previous years.

Species wise, we are about normal with 74. Last year showed an all-time high with 87. We had no really special birds show up this year and missed a number of species that might have been expected.