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## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central)- Fall 2012 McGill Bird Observatory

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McGill Bird Observatory (MBO) in Montreal is a full member of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, and the only station in Quebec to conduct standardized spring and fall migration banding programs. MBO is operated by the Migration Research Foundation (MRF), a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of wildlife movements, especially as they relate to population monitoring and conservation.

In 2012, MBO operated its eighth full Fall Migration Monitoring Program, covering the usual 13-week period from 1 Aug through 30 Oct. A one-hour census trail was walked daily, and nets were open for five hours beginning at sunrise except when limited by inclement weather; only 13 days of banding were partly shortened due to rain, and the record total of 6,804 net hours reflected the generally good weather throughout the season. Typically, all 16 nets were operated daily this fall. Most nets are 12-m Manomet passerine nets, on standard 3-m poles. This fall, bander-in-charge duties were handled primarily by Simon Duval and Gay Gruner.

This year's total of 4,064 birds banded was above average; but due to the higher degree of effort, the rate of 60 b/100nh was slightly below average. Repeats (1,089) and returns (87) were both at record-high levels, as was the number of species banded (87), while the number observed during the season (149) was just short of the record of 151.

While last fall was excellent for warblers, with seven species setting new records, they were in more modest numbers this fall, with Common Yellowthroat the only warbler among 23 species with a high count (124). Instead, the dominant trend this fall was the unprecedented abundance of *Catharus* thrushes, with all five species banded (and observed) in record numbers: Veery (23), Gray-cheeked Thrush (17), Bicknell's Thrush (2), Swainson's Thrush (176), and Hermit Thrush (94).

Swainson's Thrush was the biggest surprise, jumping from a previous record high of just 36, and a seven-year average of 19. Also this fall we banded our first ever Red-bellied Woodpecker and Bohemian Waxwing (bringing the MBO total to 110 species), and our first Mourning Dove, Northern Saw-whet Owls (5), and Common Redpolls (3) as part of our standard fall program (although we have banded 700 Northern Saw-whet Owls in total, all others have been through a dedicated owl banding effort in fall). The other species in record numbers this fall were Pileated Woodpecker (2), Willow Flycatcher (2), Blue Jay (49), Brown Creeper (21), White-breasted Nuthatch (5), Golden-crowned Kinglet (91), Gray Catbird (64), Lincoln's Sparrow (22), White-throated Sparrow (506), Northern Cardinal (21), Rusty Blackbird (2), and Purple Finch (44).

Overall, our top ten species banded for fall 2012 included just three warblers (Yellow-rumped, Magnolia, and American Redstart), compared to six last year. Yellow-rumped and Magnolia warbler have been in the top ten every year, along with the remainder of this year's top five (White-throated Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Song Sparrow), and American Robin. Black-capped Chickadee and Slate-colored Junco have also been in the top ten frequently, but it was the first time ever for Swainson's Thrush. A cumulative list of all species banded at MBO is updated after every season at:

<http://www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/banded.html>

As usual, our peak period extended roughly from mid-September to mid-October, and our tenth week (3-9 Oct) was by far the busiest, with 852 individuals banded, including our peak day of 241 on 4 Oct, which was our third highest single day count ever. At least 30 species were observed daily, and the peak count of 60 species was recorded on three dates (14 and 15 Aug, and 24 Sep). No new species were observed, leaving the site total at 207 after the addition of Black-bellied Plover, Fish Crow, and Tufted Titmouse in spring.

Although not included in our Fall Migration Monitoring Program totals, we also operated our Northern Saw-whet Owl program for the fifth time, with a record count of 249 banded, plus two foreign

recoveries, and small numbers of four other species (3 Eastern Screech-Owls, 1 Barred Owl, 2 Long-eared Owls, and 4 Boreal Owls). Bob Barnhurst was the main bander for this program, with assistance from Simon Duval.

As always, other research activities and education programs were integrated with the banding program. We provided ongoing training to more than 70 volunteers this fall, and collected a few hundred more photos to augment the evergrowing

MBO Photo ID Library:

[www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/idlibrary.html](http://www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/idlibrary.html). We also launched a color-banding project of American Goldfinches and House Finches; although, to date, most reports have been from nearby. We encourage all banders to keep an eye out for any birds with white alphanumeric codes on black bands, and to report these to us through our form at: [http:// www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/feederbirds.html](http://www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/feederbirds.html)



## *Inland Regional News*

### ***Inland Bird Banding Association***

***Founded 1922***

#### **President's Message**

By the time you are reading this note, the 2013 Annual Meeting in Tennessee will be over. I am sure we all had a great time, as this was a joint meeting with Eastern Bird Banding Association. This was also the first time we sent out meeting notices via the internet. I hope this worked well but we will only know if you, as a member, let us know. It saved the organization over \$100 by sending out meeting announcements via email. If you did not receive notification, then the email address we have for you may not be active and needs to be updated. Please contact me with your current email address, so that we can do this. Of the 190 emails we sent out, only 12 bounced as not up-to-date email addresses. If you received your meeting announcement by regular mail, then we do not have an email address for you. Please consider sharing it with the organization. We do not share email addresses with other organizations or businesses. This will save us money in the future. We are working on setting up a method where you could do this on our web page.

Speaking of our web page, make sure you check it out. Board member, Erika Dittmar, has taken over webmaster duties and made some major changes. She has done an outstanding job and is open to doing more. If you have an idea, feel free to run it by

her. The web page address is <http://ibbainfo.org/>. One of the ideas is to put up a page with the yearly banding totals by our members. Brent Ortego has been doing this for the annual banding report in *NABB* but is now stepping down from this duty. If you would like to help with this project, contact me. The more individual members volunteering, the better the organization can serve the membership.

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#### **Summer Banding in Sunny Texas**

Where I live in central Texas, the summers are hot and dry. It is not necessary to consult a forecast to know that tomorrow the sky will be blue, the wind will be from the southwest, the temperature will be in the 90s (or worse), and the chance of rain will be near zero. The grass and herbaceous plants typically start to turn brown in May. By June, they are dry and crunch underfoot. Many of the woody plants start to lose their leaves before the first official day of summer and cicadas constantly sing the anthem