

2013

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2012 Patuxent Powerline Right-of-Way

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Recommended Citation

Bystrak, Danny (2013) "Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV Piedmont-Coastal Plain, Fall 2012 Patuxent Powerline Right-of-Way," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 38 : Iss. 2 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol38/iss2/8>

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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 five-year period of 2007-2011.

We had a record-setting season banding 2,193 birds of 82 species compared to our average of 1,819 birds of 75 species. The most significant surprise this season was banding 165 Tennessee Warblers. Our average is fewer than eight per season! These numbers have not been seen at this station since the early 1980s. This increase is probably due to an outbreak of spruce budworms in southwest Quebec that started in 2006 and by 2010 had encompassed about 2,320 square miles.

We set new end-of-season high records for 25 of the 82 species banded. Eleven of those 25 were warbler species. Other warbler species with high numbers included Black-throated Green and Magnolia warblers. Warblers accounted for 33% of all bandings compared to an average of 23%. We set new end-of-season low records for seven of the 82 species banded. Four of the seven were sparrow species. Despite a robust sparrow season in 2011 (led by white-throats), we had a very poor sparrow (particularly white-throats) season this year. On average, sparrows account for 27% of our bandings; this season they accounted for only 17%. We surmise that Hurricane Sandy, which came through our area on 29 Oct, may have negatively impacted our sparrow numbers to some degree.

Other notable bandings included: (1) two Gray Catbirds with small white throat patches; (2) a Least Flycatcher banded on 1 Nov which is very late for any empid. The previously latest Least Flycatcher banding was 1 Oct; (3) we banded five Yellow-billed Cuckoos this year, our average being fewer than one per season; and (4) we banded 65 Ruby-crowned Kinglets on 15 Oct, our best single day since 2007 but only the seventh best since 1980. In 2012 we had 358 recaptures of 254 individual birds of 34 species. Three of those recaptures were banded by us in 2007 – one White-throated Sparrow and two Hermit Thrushes.

The station continues to be a focal point for visitors from foreign banding programs, as well as serve as a frequent training and educational site for interested staff. We also have two experienced volunteers as well as employees to help with setup, data entry, bird extraction, etc. Because the station is located in an area of the refuge that is closed to the general public, we cannot encourage outside participation. Researchers, however, wishing to visit the site are encouraged to contact Danny Bystrak at *dbystrak@usgs.gov*. Interested banders wishing to follow our Fall and Spring banding effort may go to http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/homepage/BBL_Banding/BBLBanding.cfm. We post our banding results and pictorial highlights on a fairly timely basis.

Greatly assisting in this effort were: Sandy Teliak (who also wrote this report), Mike Quinlan, Jo Anna Lutmerding and Bruce Peterjohn. Our thanks also to the other Patuxent staff who lent assistance.

Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory

391-0760

Chestertown, Queen Anne's Co., MD

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

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This was the 15th fall banding season for Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory. Productivity was slightly higher than our 10-year average. Species diversity was above average. The weather was warmer than