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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central)- Fall 2013 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 2013, MBO operated its ninth full Fall Migration Monitoring Program (FMMP), 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; four days were lost and 13 days of banding were partly shortened due to rain. As a result of the generally favourable conditions, the banding effort of 6489 net hours was above average, although below last year's record high. Typically, all 16 nets were operated daily this fall. All nets are 12-m Manomet passerine nets, on standard 3-m poles. This fall, bander-in-charge duties were primarily handled by Simon Duval and Gay Gruner.

The total of 3341 individuals banded during FMMP 2013 was below the long-term average of 3995 for the season, but very close to the average of 3321 when excluding the two years with totals inflated by exceptional counts of Yellow-rumped Warblers. Repeats (759) and returns (87) were both slightly above average but well below last year's high counts. The 77 species banded is within our average range, while the number of species observed (147) is above the eight-year fall mean of 144.

While last fall was excellent for *Catharus* thrushes, with all five species observed and banded in record numbers, this year they were all back to average numbers. Warblers were again the dominant group this fall, comprising 38% of individuals banded, and 30% of species. Record numbers of Tennessee and Magnolia warblers were banded, while American Redstart was within four of matching its previous high. Although not nearly abundant enough to make the top ten for the season, the biggest surprise of all was Cape May Warbler, with more banded this fall than in all previous years combined. The record numbers of Tennessee, Cape May, and Bay-breasted warblers are almost certainly in response to population increases stimulated by spruce budworm outbreaks. Also noteworthy were record numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets and Cedar Waxwings. This fall we banded our first ever Carolina Wren, bringing our MBO total to 113 species. A cumulative list of all species banded at MBO is updated after every seasonat at:

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 483 individuals banded, including our peak day of 150 on 3 Oct. On 23 days the daily estimated total was at least 50 species, including two days with more than 60. A new single day record was achieved on 25 Sep with 65 species observed. A lone Greater White-fronted Goose observed flying back and forth with a flock of Canada Geese on 21 Sep was the first new species observed at MBO since Ross's Goose in May 2013, and increased the all-time checklist for MBO to 209 species.

Although not included in our Fall Migration Monitoring Program totals, we also operated our Northern Saw-whet Owl program for the sixth time, during which we banded 174 Northern Saw-whet Owls, plus a record 17 foreign recoveries. Two other owl species were banded: Eastern Screech-Owl (1) and Long-eared Owl (1). Nicolas Bernier 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 ever-growing MBO Photo ID Library (www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/idlibrary.html). We are also in the second year of 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

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(The Coordinator apologizes for inadvertently omitting the narrative of this report from the AFR Spring 2012 Review.)

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Windy! That was the one word to describe most days of operation. Constant and often gusty winds caused net movement visible to birds and required more frequent net checks to insure bird safety. Some nets were not opened as a result. Two scheduled days during the period were cancelled and operations closed early on one day due to inclement weather conditions (rain/snow, high winds).

Species	Number	%SY	% ASY	%AHY
GRCA	60	67%	17%	16%
WTSP	42	14	0	86
AMRO	23	43	14	43
AMGO	17	65	18	17
SOSP	16	13	12	75
NOCA	11	18	0	82
HETH	6	83	0	17
BLJA	4	50	25	25
WOTH	4	0	0	100
EATO	4	0	0	10

Two new mist nets were added for a total of ten and banding headquarters was moved from an open area to the pavilion at the Air Quality Learning and Demonstration Center. The pavilion provided a more favorable location for banding operations (table work space, protection from precipitation for equipment and volunteers) as well as a more easily recognizable gathering point for visitors.

Twenty-eight volunteers (Penn State students and others) provided 292 hours of volunteer time.

A total of 76 visitors, including students from the State College Area School District Delta Program, Altoona High School and Penn State Wildlife & Fisheries Science 406 ornithology class visited the site.

There were no foreign recaptures; however, a Hermit Thrush originally banded at the site on 22 Apr 2011 was recaptured 4 Apr 2012. This raised speculation as to whether it was a wintering individual or caught during a migration stopover in both years. Additionally, where did it breed in the interim? Area habitat and elevation is not typical of this species for breeding.

The oldest bird recaptured was an American Goldfinch originally banded 27 Aug 2010 as a SY bird and recaptured 9 May 2012.

A Research Summary from a 2013 EBBA Memorial Grant Recipient

Boldness in Response to Predatory Threat and its Correlation with Reproductive Success in Carolina Chickadees *(Poecile carolinensis)*

Personalities in non-human animals, defined as individual consistencies in behaviors over time and context, represent an emerging topic in animal behavior and evolutionary ecology. Because of expected associations with survival and fitness, risk-taking behavior (boldness) is often studied from a personality perspective. My study addressed boldness in response to predatory threat in Carolina Chickadees *(Poecile carolinensis),* tested through field experiments. Chickadees are good model species because they react to threats with behavior that can be quantified easily: both alarm-call rate and the number of *dees* in the *chick-a-dee* call increases linearly with degree of threat. In spring 2012 and 2013, I presented breeding pairs with three stimulus models