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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge)- Fall 2013 Rock Point

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species late September through October. September was a good month in terms of weather so it is hard to understand. And, if there was a problem up north in the breeding area, one would think that warblers and sparrows would be affected similarly. Again, it is hard to understand.

Another factor in regard to the consideration of the warblers caught is that our net hours this season (9110) were the highest ever. (Since I retired two years ago I have been ratcheting up our net hours – we will go forward now with the present array of nets....but there has been a period of adjustment while we worked out what is manageable.) More net hours, one would think, should translate into more birds caught. But the number of birds caught per 100 net hours in September (23.89) was our lowest and this was reflected in our warbler numbers.

We continue to draw a large number of interested visitors and school groups. This fall we had 1,313 people visit the banding lab to discover what birds we are seeing and what we are doing.

A banding station, in order to run effectively and efficiently, must have good volunteers. This season 48 individuals contributed 1,524 hours of their time to help us do the job. We owe them a great deal of thanks.

We would also like to thank the Lower Grand River Land Trust and the staff of Ruthven Park National Historic Site for their ongoing support as well as the support of the Haldimand Bird Observatory. Also, funds raised through the Baillie Birdathon (Bird Studies Canada) are used to maintain/replace our equipment.

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We had three licensed banders, five distance volunteers from Italy, England, U.S.A., British Columbia and Toronto, Ontario, 22 local
Oct. - Dec. 2014

volunteers and four from the park. The distance volunteers used the trailer that is there to accommodate them. The local volunteers drove in and helped out for various amounts of time. The park volunteers were usually young people who enjoyed what they were seeing and came out on a number of days to help us out. All the volunteers make what we do an easier job and teaching them how to band is always a good experience.

As in previous years, totals are kept for each net location. This enables us to know which nets are producing and which are not. Nets, except for our lowest catching net, have remained in the same location for the past 13 years. Our lowest net catch was 127 from a net location that we still have not had good success. The highest net total was 686 from a long-standing net which crosses a bit of marsh requiring a board walk plus the ends go out into a meadow. It is a three-net configuration which probably accounts for the high total. We used an aerial net this season resulting in 187 birds caught or 5.4% of our total catch. The ground traps were designed for Mourning Doves and anything smaller than a cowbird was able to escape.

We recaptured 537 birds in this season, a number being recaptured more than once. Again this year we caught the Blue Jay first banded in 2000. An American Goldfinch and two Gray Catbirds first banded in 2007, 10 chickadees and a Song Sparrow banded in 2009, 11 birds from 2010, 26 from 2011 and the remaining from 2012 and 2013.

We had a Yellow Warbler first banded at Long Point on 18 May and recovered by us on 19 Aug. Again this year we seemed to have problems with poorly read bands and so we have initiated a "read the number backwards to the bander" policy to try and eliminate this error.

We had no bands reported from other locations.

This year does not stand out in relation to totals, yet we had some of the best catches with several species: Mourning Doves, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Common Grackle, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow and Gray Catbird. Hairy Woodpecker, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Great-

crested Flycatcher, Rusty Blackbird, Scarlet Tanager, Pine Warbler, and Marsh Wren showed only one banded of each.

As in the past number of years, we had a saw-whet banding program. This year, as with other stations, was poor in that very few hatch-year birds were being banded. We banded 21 owls in comparison to 56 in 2012. Jason Lymburner headed up the owl banding program with the help of Jenna McDermot, Kittie Yang, and Kate Channel.

As in previous years, we gave banding demonstrations to any group coming into the station. A power-point demonstration is given to the campers at least once in the summer. A daily web site reports birds banded each day and usually includes pictures of birds from that day. (www.rockpointbirdbanding.com). This site is also on Facebook.

Thanks to Ontario Parks., T.D. Friends of the Environment, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Niagara Falls Nature Club, Bird Studies Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, and individual donations.

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LPBO's 54th fall season officially started at Old Cut, the Tip and Breakwater on 10, 14 and 16 Aug and ran until 15, 16 Nov, 16 and 18 Sep, respectively. Forty volunteers, representing seven countries, logged over 13,108 hours collecting migration data on over 250 species and banded 13,271 birds of 127 species. There were 103 days of coverage, yielding 13,108 net hours, with a catch rate of 101 birds/100 net hours. Twelve ground traps, three J-Traps and two Heligoland traps contributed 10.6% of the catch. Twenty-four volunteer 'Friends' of LPBO helped to serve over 1,000 visitors, and an addition 1,500 students of all ages enjoyed banding demonstrations among other marvels of the fall migration through Long Point.

Sporadic migration monitoring coverage began with the Young Ornithologist Workshop in early August. Fall migration picked up quickly with numbers of swallows reaching upwards of 100,000 around the middle of August at Breakwater and Old Cut. There were impressive numbers of Purple Martins in this foray with between six and 10 thousand observed at Breakwater between 16 and 20 Aug. The first wave of Neotropical migrants came toward the end of August and along for the ride was a probable first-basic Western Wood-Pewee. If accepted by the Ontario Birds Record Committee, this individual will be LPBO's second record and first one banded. September visitors included 11 Connecticut Warblers, highest yearly record since 2005. An Upland Sandpiper observed in a tree on census at Old Cut. A Dicksissel was banded at the Tip 12 Sep, the first since 2007. Temperate migrants trickled into the stations starting mid-September, and by early October it was kinglets, creepers and myrtles, oh-my! It was a spectacular fall for Yellow-rumped Warblers, with an estimated 2,150 observed at the Tip on 3 Oct alone. An explosion of kinglets occurred shortly thereafter when 650 Golden-crowned Kinglets, 300 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and 300 Brown Creepers were estimated to be at the Tip on 15 Oct. Numbers of kinglet built to 3,000 observed on 19 Oct and declined to mere hundreds the following day.

Raptor activity picked up mid-October with decent movements observed on most days. However, the passive raptor nets were slower than normal with only 66 individuals of five species banded. The highlight was a first-basic male Northern Harrier banded at the Tip 15 Oct, the fourth individual banded at LPBO since 1992. Northern Saw-whet Owl migration commenced 15 Sep and was dreadfully slow. By the end of November, Long Point banded 203 individuals, a quarter of what was banded in 2012, and the slowest year since owl monitoring began in 1998.

Late October was spectacular. An Ash-throated Flycatcher was observed on census at the Tip on 27 Oct, the first fall record for the Long Point area and the third record overall. A first-basic California