

2014

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge)- Fall 2013 Long Point Bird Observatory

Stu Mackenzie

Dayna LeClair

Janice Chard

Avery Bartels

Matt Timpf

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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.

Long Point Bird Observatory **423-0800**
Port Rowan, Norfolk County, ON **423-0801**
Bander(s): **Stu Mackenzie,** **423-0802**
Dayna LeClair, Janice Chard, Avery Bartels,
Matt Timpf
email address: lpbo@birdscanada.org

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

Gull was observed at the Tip on 29 Oct. A Brown Booby, that was originally observed at the mouth of the Niagara River, did a leisurely fly-by at Tip on 31 Oct and was later observed on the north-east shores of Lake Erie. This was the 396th species on the Long Point Area checklist. A Cave Swallow, the only record for Ontario for 2013, was also observed flying west across the lake and proceeding down the north beach on 8 Nov. The season went out with a bang as LPBO's third Snowy Owl was banded at the Tip on 13 Nov. A complete summary of the 2013 fall season is available in the winter 2014 edition of the *LPBO E-news*.

Presque Isle State Park 420-0800

Erie, PA

Bander: **Sarah Sargent**
ssargent@audubon.org

With regret, because of lack of funding, the Presque Isle State Park banding stations were unable to open.

The Arboretum at Penn State 404-0775

State College, Centre County, PA

Bander: **Nick T. Kerlin**

bluebird6771@verizon.net

Margaret Brittingham, Chief Assistant and
Nate Fronk (graduate assistant)

The banding program is part of the Avian Education Program of The Arboretum at Penn State (main campus at University Park). Banding was first conducted on a trial basis at this location in the fall of 2010.

The "five best birds" (based upon past presence and existing habitat) were all single captures of warblers this season (Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Mourning Warbler). There were a total of 42 local recaptures this season, but no foreign recaptures.

The banding site was open for public visitation during all hours of operation with organized group tours through prior arrangement. A total of 216 people visited during the period.

Four community volunteers and 25 Penn State students (most from the Wildlife and Fisheries major) contributed 667 hours of time to banding operations and public outreach activities during the season. Major assistance was provided by Margaret Brittingham.

Powdermill Nature Reserve 400-0791

Rector, Westmoreland County, PA

Bander(s)/Compiler: **Luke DeGroot**

degrootel@carnegiemnh.org

Chief Assistants: Mary Shidel, Blain Carnes,
Heather Kraus, Brandon Miller

Despite an effort level consistent with past years and relatively few cancellations due to weather, this season resulted in our second-lowest capture rate (25.1 b/100nh), well below our long-term average of 41.5 b/100nh. (Our lowest capture rate, 24.7 b/100nh, was in 1967.) Radar images of the nocturnal movement of birds showed more often than not the birds were steered away from our banding station in southwestern Pennsylvania by winds from the north and evening/overnight storms moving through the region.

Over the summer, our habitat management included a major make-over of two small ponds on property that were losing water and filling in with vegetation. Both were restored to shallow water-filled ponds with graded banks and low vegetation at the water's edge. Within days of the ponds refilling we were observing wading Green Herons and perched Belted Kingfishers in that area. Although we did not manage to catch any Green Herons this fall, the pond restoration did have an impact on our numbers of Belted Kingfishers. Throughout the fall, we banded a total of eight kingfishers, more than double our long-term average. Notably, in the five previous fall seasons *combined*, we banded just *one* kingfisher.

We banded seven woodcocks this year, all of them during the month of October. This was a new fall high total over the course of our 52 years banding here at Powdermill. The increased capture rate likely resulted from two things: 1) better habitat surrounding the area of the pond restoration