

2014

## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge)- Fall 2013 Powdermill Nature Reserve

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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 396<sup>th</sup> 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

mentioned above and 2) targeted effort on several mornings in October, banding assistants arrived early and opened a few sets of nets near where the woodcocks had been sighted.

Our most uncommon capture of the season was a Clay-colored Sparrow, caught and banded on 1 Oct, the fifth ever banded at Powdermill in the 52-year history of the banding program. Another highlight for the fall was a hatch-year Sora which we banded on 3 Sep and recaptured once, on 27 Sep; our long-term average for this species is less than one per year.

Species above two SD included AMWO (n=7) and YTVI (n=8), both of which were new high totals for the fall, as well as CCSP (n=1), OVEN (n=112), REVI (n=290), and SPSA (n=2). No species fell below 2 SD, although we had three species that reached record-low totals for the fall: CMWA (n=5), LISP (n=20) and WCSP (n=1). Not record-setting, but conspicuously absent in numbers were the Yellow-rumped Warblers. Our long-term average for this species is 332.8; this year we banded just 64.

We had two foreign recaptures reported, both banded at Powdermill during the first week of October: an Indigo Bunting banded on 3 Oct 2013 and recaptured in Hamilton, Ontario on 9 May 2014; a Chipping Sparrow banded on 7 Oct 2013 and recaptured in Wooster, Ohio on 16 Jun 2014.

As usual, the banding station was visited by many school groups, university classes and bird/ecology clubs. An Advanced Bander Training Workshop was offered in the second week of September.

**Mt Nebo Banding Station**                      **392-0792**  
Oakland, Garrett County, MD  
**Fran Pope, Connie Skipper**, Banders  
connieskipper@hohnet.com

This was the thirteenth season of banding at Mt. Nebo WMA. The station was open 45 days from 24 Aug 2013 through 30 Oct 2013. A total of 1,467 birds were banded of 73 species, with a station effort of 3,885 net hours. The capture rate was 38

birds/100 nh. Bicknell's Thrush was added to the station list this year, bringing the station total to 95 species.

A good food supply is one of the reasons why we chose to band in Mt. Nebo WMA. There was a good apple, thorn berry and black cherry crop. Some autumn olive berries and rose hips were scattered throughout but not present in their usual abundance. Several adjacent plots were planted with oats and barley.

The top-ten list had no surprises this year. The top three species banded were Song Sparrow (12% of the total), Cedar Waxwing (9%), and Gray Catbird (8%). The remaining top ten species in descending order were White-throated Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Common Yellowthroat, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler and Eastern Towhee.

Ten species hit a station high this fall. Most notable were nine Yellow-bellied Flycatchers (average three), 92 Ruby-crowned Kinglets (average 47), 135 Cedar Waxwings (average 32), 177 Song Sparrows (average 74), and 40 American Goldfinches (average 11).

The largest daily catch was 109 birds on 28 Oct with 13 species. Cedar Waxwings comprised 50% of the catch. The second largest daily catch was 72 birds on 29 Oct with 16 species.

The station had 294 recaptures of 211 birds of 21 species. Forty birds banded in prior years were recaptured in 2013. The Eastern Towhee banded by Fran Pope on 11 Sep 2004, as an after-hatch-year female and recaptured on 29 Sep 2013 was nine years old. This equals the longevity record of the oldest known Eastern Towhee given on North American birds on the USGS website.

We had one foreign recapture to report: a Song Sparrow, band #1511-07973, banded by Skipper on 9 Sep 2006, was found dead near Troutville, VA, on 5 Mar 2014. Incredibly, this is the same Song Sparrow that was recaptured at our banding station