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Atlantic Flyway Review: Spring 2012 Patuxent Powerline Right-of-way

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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. Twenty-six nets are arrayed along a one-half mile east-west axis. The habitat is dominated by a dense six-to-eight-foot-high canopy of shrubs and is an excellent source of shelter and food for breeding and migrating birds. Nets were opened by dawn and closed about 3.5 hours later. We have operated as a spring banding station since 2010 (and a fall banding station since 1980).

	Banded	% SY	% ASY	% AHY
Myrtle Warbler	156	76	6	18
White-throated Sparrow	68	6	1	93
Common Yellowthroat	60	15	0	85
Gray Catbird	60	57	32	11
Black-throated Blue Warbler	30	60	33	7
Magnolia Warbler	28	36	43	21
Swamp Sparrow	28	4	0	96
American Redstart	25	44	36	20
Indigo Bunting	25	44	24	32

In spring 2012, we operated for 21 days starting on a M/W/F schedule in mid-April. In May, we banded anywhere between three-to-five days within a M-F schedule. This being only our third spring season, any comparisons will be to spring 2010-2011 averages.

Twenty-two warbler species accounted for 57% of all our bandings, up from an average of 44%. A large part of this warbler increase is due to a fall out of Myrtle Warblers especially during the three banding sessions of 3-7 May, when we banded 110 of the 156 we banded all season long. The previous two-year average was only twelve per season. This station has not seen these numbers of Myrtle Warblers since the fall 1984 season when we banded 399!! Other warblers that did well, setting

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new spring end-of-season highs, were: Black-and-white, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Northern Waterthrush and Blackpoll. Warblers setting new spring end-of-season lows were: Canada and Common Yellowthroat.

Our best warbler day was 3 May with 95 warblers/14 species of which we banded 45 Myrtles. The remaining bandings were comparable to their previous two-year average except where noted: sparrows at 15%, down from 22%; mimids at 8%, down from 13%; thrushes at 4%; kinglets at 3%; vireos at 3%; flycatchers at <1% and all others at 9%. The decline in mimids and sparrows is due to Gray Catbirds and White-throated Sparrows, setting new spring end-of-season lows.

Species fairly uncommon to this station regardless of season that were banded included (one each) Lincoln's Sparrow and Mourning, Worm-eating, and Cape May warblers. Other species present but rarely banded included three Mourning Doves (one of which performed a "broken wing" display trying to lure us away from its nearby nest) and a Blue Grosbeak, only the 36th since 1980.

We had 128 recaptures of 98 unique birds. Forty-seven were banded in previous years/seasons. The earliest being a Red-eyed Vireo banded on 14 Sep 2007 with no subsequent recaptures until this season. The other was a Northern Cardinal banded on 17 Aug 2007 with six recaptures.

This station continues to be a focal point for visitors from foreign banding programs, as well as serving as a frequent training and educational site for interested staff. We also have two experienced volunteers as well as employees to help with set-up, data entry, bird extractions, 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 Jo Lutmerding (jlutmerding@usgs.gov).

Greatly assisting in this effort were volunteers Mike Quinlan and Sandy Teliak (who wrote this report) and BBL staff Bruce Peterjohn and Danny Bystrak. Extra thanks to bander-in-training Matt Rogosky and to other staff who lent assistance.