

2013

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge)- Fall 2012 Powdermill Nature Reserve

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Tip. Like many other species, Northern Saw-whet Owls irrupted this year making it the second busiest fall since consistent owl monitoring began in 1998. LPBO banded 937 owls, compared to the last major irruption in 2007 when 1,088 were banded. Our slowest year was 2011, with only 190 banded. Five Eastern Screech-Owls, LPBO's second Boreal Owl, and a record 14 Long-eared Owls were also banded.

Presque Isle State Park 420-0800
Erie, PA 429-0805
Sarah Sargent, Bander 421-0822
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Walter Wehtje, Chief Assistant

We only banded for a single day this fall, due to lack of funding. It was a productive day with a high capture rate and the usual concentration of Myrtle Warblers at this location.

The Arboretum at Penn State 404-0775
State College, Centre County, PA
Nick T. Kerlin, Bander
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Dr. Margaret Brittingham, Chief 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.

Notable captures, based upon past species sightings and habitat included: Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Gray-checked Thrush, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Mourning Warbler. Fifty-five American Goldfinches banded on 23 Sep fed on a large thistle patch adjacent to the banding nets. They were part of a flock of over 100 observed there the previous day.

A female AHY Northern Cardinal banded 20 Sep 2012 was recovered (apparent window strike) three miles southwest of the banding station on 9 Jan 2013. A female HY Eastern Towhee banded 27 Sep 2012 was found near Statesboro, GA on 26 Jan 2013.

Thirty-three birds of ten species were repeat visitors, with three species (Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren and Ovenbird) all banded in Sep 2010 and recaptured in Sep 2012.

The banding site was open for public visitation during all hours of operation with organized group tours through prior arrangement. A total of 220 people visited during the period, including two Boy Scout Webelos dens, State College High School biology class and three Penn State Wildlife & Fisheries classes.

Thirty volunteers (Penn State students and others) provided 497 hours of volunteer time.

A "Banders-in-Training" program was initiated to attract additional volunteers for the banding program. The program, developed by Dr. Margaret Brittingham and assisted by other volunteers, included in-class and field training on difficult bird identification, banding procedures, equipment use and record keeping. Twenty-one volunteers attended the training and individually assisted on three or more of the banding days this fall.

The *Centre Daily Times* and PSU *Penn Stater* magazine staff blog published full length articles with photos on the banding program. A summary of each day's banding was posted online to the State College Bird Club listserv and Facebook page as well as selected entries into The Arboretum at Penn State Facebook page.

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Rector, Westmoreland County, PA
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Mary Shidel, Blain Carnes, Heather Kraus,
Brandon Miller, Chief Assistants

Wind and climate had a significant effect on our capture rates at Powdermill this fall. There were many nights where (southerly) wind was not favorable for migration in our area and October was comparatively slow with only 2501 new birds (most years 3000 to 3500 are banded). Watching

the radar, we noticed that there were large numbers of birds taking off to the west or east of us but often not where we were. On the other hand, with all the strange weather patterns, fronts, winds, and hurricane (enter Sandy) we did get to see and catch some amazing birds, including the second Nelson's Sparrow ever banded at Powdermill (banded 29 Sep) in our 51 years of banding. We also captured our fifth ever Sedge Wren (4 Oct), the first to be banded here in 36 years (the last one having been banded on 29 Sep 1976. Other species above 2 SD included GRHE (n=3), RBNU (n=4), and PISI (n=311).

If it were not for the large movement of AMGO and PISI and other irruptive species at the beginning of November, our capture rates would have been below 1 SD (27.4 b/100nh) and the second lowest ever at Powdermill (24.7 b/100nh in 1967). While weather and climate certainly influenced our capture rates this year with well above-average capture rates for PISI, our below-average capture rates appear to follow an alarming decline in overall capture rates. Since 1974, the fall capture rates at Powdermill have declined at a rate of 0.28 b/100nh per year. Continual monitoring here at Powdermill, regionally, and nationally is necessary to determine if these declines represent shifts in migratory pathways or long-term population declines.

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

This was the twelfth season of banding at Mt. Nebo WMA. The station was open 50 days from 20 Aug through 27 Oct. In total, 1404 birds were banded of 73 species, with a station effort of 4125 net hours. The capture rate was 34 b/100nh. Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Savannah Sparrow were added to the station list this year, bringing the station total to 93 species. A good food supply is one of the reasons why we chose to band in Mt. Nebo WMA. The usual soft mass, particularly honeysuckle, autumn olive, ornamental crab apples, and apple trees had little-to-no fruit this

fall. Black cherries were abundant. Several plots planted with oats and barley were scattered throughout the site.

The top-ten list has a new species this year—Pine Siskins. The top three species banded were Gray Catbird (13% of the total), Song Sparrow (8%), and Pine Siskin (7%). The remaining top ten species in descending order were White-throated Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Common Yellowthroat, Indigo Bunting, Magnolia Warbler, Eastern Towhee and Black-capped Chickadee.

Seventeen species hit a station high this fall. Most notable were the seven Red-breasted Nuthatches (a new species at our station) and the 100 Pine Siskins (seen only twice in prior years). Blue-headed Vireo, Black-capped Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Towhee, and American Goldfinch were all banded in numbers well above average.

The largest daily catch was 62 birds on 25 Oct with 14 species. The second largest daily catch was 59 birds on 23 Oct with 15 species. This was due to Pine Siskins—32 siskins banded on the 25th and 23 banded on the 23rd.

The station had 324 recaptures of 208 birds of 21 species. Gray Catbirds accounted for 47% of the recaptures. One catbird was recaptured seven times.

A Song Sparrow, banded by Fran Pope on 3 Oct 2005, was an AHY bird, making it at least eight years old. Likewise, a Common Yellowthroat banded in 2007 was an AHY M, making that bird at least six years old.

We have four foreign returns to report. A hatch-year, unknown sex, Indigo Bunting banded by Fran Pope on 21 Sep 2008, was found dead in May 2011, in Vandergrift, Westmoreland County, PA. A hatch-year male Common Yellowthroat banded by Pope on 13 Sep 2011, was found dead in Oct 2012 at Stock Island, Monroe County, FL. A hatch-year female American Goldfinch banded by Pope on 16 Oct 2012, was found dead in Cedartown, GA, on 22