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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge)- Fall 2012 Mt Nebo Banding Station

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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
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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

Apr 2013. A hatch-year, unknown sex, Black-capped Chickadee banded by Connie Skipper on 29 Sep 2012, was found dead on 1 Dec 2012, in Marietta, Washington County, OH.

The station had 18 visitors, plus a class of 20 fifth graders and four chaperones from Crellin Elementary School and a brief visit from an Indian Springs WMA work crew.

An interestingly plumaged and stunning Gray Catbird was captured on 23 Sep. It had two white feathers on the right wing and three white feathers on the left wing. This bird had been banded by Skipper on 17 Aug 2009, as a hatch-year bird. It had no such wing coloration at the time of banding. One has to wonder what causes such anomalies and does it happen each year once it appears.

The season seemed rather average until late in the season, when the finch irruption reached us. The 100 Pine Siskins boosted our total birds banded for the year, making this the highest in the twelve years at this station. The season ended abruptly as the Hurricane Sandy snowstorm bore down upon us. Fortunately, the nets were down because the heavy snows broke down trees and branches blocking the road to the station. It would have ruined many nets.

We thank Mike Fazenbaker who helped clear the net lanes and Bill Pope for his help mowing and tending the nets. We appreciate Rick Latshaw and Mike Fazenbaker granting us the privilege of banding at Mt. Nebo WMA.

**Allegheny Front
Migration Observatory**

Grant County, WV

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Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) is located at Dolly Sods, Grant County, West Virginia.

The 250,000th bird banded in the history of AFMO was banded with Ralph K. Bell's band on 27 Sep 2012. Everyone gathered around when the Oct - Dec 2013

beautiful Blackpoll Warbler was banded, and pictures were taken to record the event. It was very fitting that the milestone bird was a Blackpoll Warbler because this species totaled 161 out of the 256 birds banded that day. A total of 31,839 Blackpoll Warblers have been banded at AFMO, since Bell founded the station on 18 Sep 1958. The only species with a higher number banded at AFMO is the Black-throated Blue Warbler, with a grand total banded of 36,243.

This fall, the station was opened on 11 Aug and closed on 5 Oct 2012. This was the 55th consecutive year of bird banding at AFMO. A total of 6,218 birds were banded of 70 species with a station effort of 103 b/100nhs. A total of 251,669 birds have been banded since 1958. The total species for the station are 123, with no new species banded this year. The overall percentage of hatch-year birds (using known-age birds only) was 66.13% compared with 70.37% in 2011 and 60.01% in 2010. There were nine days this fall, when over 100 birds were banded, four days over 200, three days over 300, and three days over 400 birds were banded. The station was open for 50 days and closed for six days due to bad weather, including Hurricane Isaac, which arrived at Dolly Sods, WV, the beginning of September.

Black-throated Blue Warbler was the most numerous species this year with 1,368 birds banded (12.3% over the 10-year average from 2002-2011). Blackpoll Warbler was second highest, with 973 banded (21.9% over the 10-year average). Black-throated Green Warbler was third highest, with 767 banded (13.8% over the 10-year avg.). Tennessee Warbler was the fourth highest, with 746 banded (114% OVER the 10-year average). Magnolia Warbler was the fifth highest, with 306 banded (17.4 under the 10-year average).

The total number of these top five species is 4,160, which is 66.9% of the total birds banded this fall. The next highest numbers of birds banded were Cape May Warbler (263), Swainson's Thrush (250) and Blackburnian Warbler (195).