

2016

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV (Piedmont)- Fall 2015- Patuxent Powerline Right-of-Way

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Recommended Citation

Bystrak, Danny (2016) "Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV (Piedmont)- Fall 2015- Patuxent Powerline Right-of-Way," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 41 : Iss. 3 , Article 11.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol41/iss3/11>

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Harford Glen
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392-0762

Although I had mentioned that the constant and dramatic changes in the environment and encroachment in and surrounding Harford Glen should have eased sufficiently to provide some consistency in data, the fall of 2014 managed to deny that happening. A combination of more classes of students and good weather allowed us to increase effort by 46% with some fascinating results. On the other hand, 2015, with plenty of rain, resulted in a 34% decrease in effort and a 42% decline in birds banded.

The number of birds per 100 net-hour, which had been close to our recent average of 67.8 and prior ten-year average of 67.7, dropped to a low of 26.6 which we attribute mainly to weather. Whether it is an indication of the effects of climate change is left to wiser analysis.

We were also accompanied on several days this year by two different students who have shown an intense interest in the birds. Hunter Anderson, a seventh grader, has demonstrated skill in bird identification and is learning to attend nets. Natalie Jacobs, a freshman in the Natural Resource / Agricultural Studies program, is using her experience at Harford Glen as part of her high school project to observe, participate and report on the banding process.

Ken and I are indebted to Amanda Koss, our assisting teacher who is learning to band, and our volunteers: Eileen Frey, Jane Scocca, Jean Wheeler, Dennis Kirkwood, Dave Larkin, Al Conrad and our stalwart Phil Powers, without whom we would not be able to keep the banding station operational.

This report includes Ken's apologies to Jean Wheeler for not properly listing her as a volunteer in 2013 and 2014 and confusing her name with that of a retired volunteer, also a Jean.

Patuxent Powerline Right-of-Way 390-0764
Patuxent Research Refuge
Laurel, Prince George's C., MD
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This station is in a power line right-of-way that bisects an upland deciduous forest. It has operated since 1980, except for 2004-2006. 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. Twenty-six nets are arrayed along a one-half mile east-west axis. Nets were opened by dawn and closed about 3.5 hours later. From 2007-2015, we have operated fairly consistently seven days in August and November and 14 days in September and October for a total of 42 days, generally on a M/W/F schedule. In 2013 however, due to the government shutdown, we banded only 35 days. Any comparisons to previous levels of activity refer to the years 2007-2012 and 2014 since our 2013 season was truncated.

This – our 33rd year – was our worst by far since 2007 with 1,426 bandings and only 73 species, our second lowest species total. Unlike last year, which had a slow start but a strong finish, this year was dramatically down the whole season.

Highlights included a Black-billed Cuckoo and a Pine Warbler. We had NO 100+ banding days, a first for this station. Despite the poor season, we had a few high counts. Acadian Flycatcher (10), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (18), Eastern Wood Pewee (12), Northern Waterthrush (8) and Rose-breasted Grosbeak (4). Low counts were too numerous to mention.

The station continues to be a focal point for visitors from foreign banding programs as well as serving as a training and educational site for interested staff. 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 Danny Bystrak at *dbystrak@usgs.gov*.

Greatly assisting in this effort were: Jo Anna Lutmerding, Matt Rogosky and Bruce Peterjohn. Thanks to banders-in-training Jasmine Rajbhandary and Jennifer McKay and to other staff who lent assistance.

Foreman's Branch 391-0760
Bird Observatory
Banders: J.G. Gruber, M.E. Gimpel, D.M. Small, A.C. Spears

It was the 18th fall banding season for Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory. Productivity was down 30% and the total catch down 11% despite an increase of nearly 5700 net hours and 20% more days than in 2014. We continued to operate the nets as we have in the past two years by closing early afternoon and avoiding less productive mid-to-late fronts that did not