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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III (Western Ridge) Fall 2015- Long Point Bird Observatory

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We changed things a little bit this year with a later start in Jul and not a full start until 1 Aug. This meant that we missed most of the Yellow Warblers. It also meant I could go to Scotland and band Great Skua. Net locations remained the same as in the spring with predictable catch rates for most of the nets. We did not use ground traps this year since I dislike having to get the birds out and what they do to themselves trying to get out.

We had 31 volunteers varying from 1 day to 62 days. Distance volunteers were from Quebec, British Columbia, and Ontario. One family from the U.S. volunteered for about a week. Total volunteer hours were 1,417. A dedicated core of local volunteers enabled me to keep the station running.

Weather through Aug varied at start up from 8 to 18 ° Celsius. As is common in Aug we experienced high humidity. As in the past we only band from before sun up until around 10 because of the sun on the nets and the damage this can do to trapped birds. Sep was good with lows on startup of 6 ° Celsius and high of 22 °. Oct had some days with high winds. Startup temperatures were low of minus 1 and high of 12° C. Sep and Oct were standard banding from before sun up until six hours later.

We ran 20 nets of the standard 3 m by 12 m passerine nets. Most were Chinese-made nets. Nets have remained in the same locations except for a couple of moves of one net. The aerial net has proven to be minimally effective producing only 3.5% of our catch. Two other nets contributed only 7.9 % are up for consideration for next year.

Nothing was tremendously unusual in the species that we banded. A higher than normal number of Dark-eyed Junco (220) were banded in Oct. Some normal species like Field Sparrow and Chipping Sparrow were missed. The last two very cold winters seems to have eliminated Carolina Wren and Tufted Titmouse from the Oct - Dec 2016

park. In fact all wren species were in lower numbers. Two Brewster's Warblers were new for the station. We banded 26 of the normal 31 species of warblers that we have banded in the past. Connecticut and Hooded Warblers are not common for us so it was good to get one of each.

We had 347 birds recaptured and processed during this season. As is normal, most (332) were birds originally banded at Rock Point during this year. Seventeen were first banded in 2014, 14 in 2013, four in 2012, and five in 2011. A Song Sparrow from 2010, an American Goldfinch from 2009 and a Common Grackle from 2004 all were returns. No birds were recovered by us from any other location during the fall season.

Five birds were recovered from some other location: Black-capped Chickadee, banded 26 Oct 2014 recovered 9 Apr 2015 at Ruthven by Nancy Furber; Swainson's Thrush 28 Sep 2012 recovered 12 Oct 2015 in Danese, Fayette County, WV by Curtis Sheets; House Sparrow 13 Dec 2014 recovered 4 Oct 2015 in Dunnville, ON , by Keith Sheppard; Tree Swallow 13 Apr 2013 recovered 10 Jun 2015 east of Long Point Ontario by Bill Read.

A daily web site reports birds banded each day and usually includes pictures of birds from that day. www.rockpointbirdbanding.com This site is also on Facebook.

Thanks to Ontario Parks, T.D. Friends of the Environment, Ontario Power Generation, Niagara Falls Nature Club, Bird Studies Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, and individual donations.

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In 2015, LPBO banded 26,313 birds of 139 species and forms, bringing the grand total to 972,216 birds banded of 279 species and forms since 1960. The

56th fall season ran from 15 Aug to 15 Nov at Old Cut, Aug 10 to Sept 15 at Breakwater, and Aug 15 to Nov 11 at the Tip. Thirty volunteers, representing five countries, logged over 13,000 hours collecting migration data on over 250 species and banded 10,967 birds of 124 species. Twenty-four volunteer 'Friends' of LPBO helped to serve over 900 visitors and an additional 400 students of all ages who enjoyed banding demonstrations.

Birding Highlights: The fall season was slower than average, with very few big days. Nonetheless, there were some interesting highlights: Long Point's second ever Neotropic Cormorant was photographed off the Tip on 26 Aug. Two Eared Grebes were seen in the Outer Bay on 2 Nov. A Northern Gannet flew past the Tip 16 Oct. There were two Cattle Egrets seen 17 Oct; one flew over Old Cut, and another was seen from Concession Road 1. An American Avocet was seen briefly at the Tip 20 Aug. A Franklin's Gull, part of large irruption into eastern North America, was seen flying off Hastings Drive 14 Nov. Three Sabine's Gulls were seen from the Tip 29 Sep, 12 and 13 Oct. A White-winged Dove was seen by multiple observers at the Tip on 22-23 Oct. A Western Kingbird was at Breakwater 6 Sep. Single Common Ravens were seen at the Tip on 21-28 Sep and 14 Oct. One Loggerhead Shrike was detected in the area by the Motus Wildlife Tracking System at the BSC Headquarters 10 Sep. A Townsend's Solitaire was seen at the Tip 23 Oct. A flock of 10 Bohemian Waxwings flew over Old Cut 14 Nov. A Dickcissel was at the Tip 5 Oct. A Nelson's Sparrow was found at the Tip 18-19 Oct. A Yellow-headed Blackbird flew over Old Cut 5 Sep, while another flew over the Tip 26 Oct.

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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.

Weather conditions were generally favorable with just one day cancelled due to rain. There were a total of 39

local recaptures this season, but no foreign recaptures. The five "best captures" (based upon past presence and existing habitat) were Sharp-shinned Hawk, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Mourning Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, and Worm-eating Warbler.

The banding site was open for public visitation during all hours of operation, with organized group tours through prior arrangement. A total of 103 people visited during the period.

A "Bander-in-Training" class was conducted on 10 Sep to acquire new volunteers to help with banding operations. Fourteen people attended, most of whom volunteered time on additional days with hands-on training and assistance to the banding operations.

"Bird Banding at the Arboretum at Penn State – Volunteer Guide," a 33-page guide (prepared by Jill Koren, Elora Grahame, Jackson Martini, Nick Kerlin and Margaret Brittingham) was published by Penn State Extension and made available to banding volunteers. The booklet covers banding program objectives, protocol and procedures.

Seven community volunteers and 21 Penn State students (most from the Wildlife and Fisheries major) contributed 454 hours of time to banding operations and public outreach activities during the season. Major assistance was provided by Dr. Margaret Brittingham (Arboretum Avian Education Program coordinator, Professor of Wildlife Resources), Shari Edelson (Director of Horticulture/Curator of The Arboretum at Penn State), Penn State Operation and Physical Plant employees (trail maintenance/support).

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This Fall we banded 6,024 new birds, which turned out to be the second-lowest capture rate in the last ten years. The pace at the lab did not seem that much slower though, as we made up for it in recaptured birds. Our total of 2,949 recaps made it the *best* season for recaps in those same ten years, bringing the total number of birds caught in our nets to just under 9,000. Although the