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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) Fall 2016

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Eastern Regional News

Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) – Fall 2016

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Region II reports on three stations this year. We were thrilled to say hello to Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory, (PEPTBO) a major migration monitoring station located on the north shore of Lake Ontario. Founded in 1995, the station runs a robust owl banding program, monitors Bobolinks as part of its regular protocol, and is a member of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network. PEPTBO fills a crucial reporting gap between McGill Bird Observatory and Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, so we are especially glad to have them on board. Northview is on what we hope is a temporary hiatus. We were sorry to lose Betsy Brooks' rural station, located in her yard near Alfred Station, NY. Betsy spends several weeks banding at Braddock Bay and still bands occasionally in her yard, but after 40 years of intensive bird monitoring, she is giving herself a well-deserved rest.

In light of a recent paper by Alexander Mills (*J. Field Orn.* 87(3):323-336), we have been thinking a lot about the disproportionate number of young birds banded during spring and fall migration. It is interesting to compare % HY at our three high-volume migration stations. BBBO, MBO and PEPTBO have a very similar HY percentage overall (78.1-83.3% in 2016), but often have radically different AHY/HY ratios for individual species.

Three species (Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Magnolia Warbler) made the top ten at all three stations, but the percentage of adults for those species is much higher at MBO than at PEPTBO and BBBO. American Goldfinch made the top ten at two stations, and while BBBO banded roughly one HY for every one AHY, PEPTBO banded roughly one HY for every three AHY. Black-capped Chickadee ratios at BBBO and MBO were similar, with just over nine HY banded for every one AHY. It looks to have been a mildly irruptive chickadee year, and as Bob Yunick revealed recently in NABB not every chickadee irruption is created equal. For these two stations, at least, the young seemed to be the ones on the move.

Region II covers territory stretching from western Quebec and eastern Ontario (including Ottawa and North Bay) through most of New York and part of northern Pennsylvania. Currently, we have only one station in Ontario, one in Quebec, and we lack coverage in the eastern half of New York. New stations are always welcome!

Black-capped
Chickadees
by George West



Table 1. AFR II Summary of Operations – Fall 2016

	Braddock Bay	MBO	PEPTBO
Start	21-Jul	1-Aug	15-Aug
Stop	8-Nov	6-Nov	31-Oct
Total Days	78	98	77
Number Nets	1 to 39	16	19-24 passerine nets
Net Hours	14319	6545	17074
Number Traps Used			7
% caught in Traps			22.1%
Number Best Day	388	136	432
Best Day Date	31-Oct	1-Oct	4-Oct
Reason Best Day	87.6% AMGO	47.1% RCKI	23.4%
Best Diversity	30 species on 15 Sep	28 species on 22 Sep	32 species on 4 Sep
Banded 2015	4609	3151	4587
Banded 2016	5231	3417	5986
Species 2015	87 + 1 hybrid	84	98
Species 2016	83 + 1 hybrid	82	107
b/100nh 2015	26.9	44.4	27.3
b/100nh 2016	36.5	52.2	35.1
% HY 2015	86.5%	82%	82.6%
% HY 2016	83.3%	80%	78.1%

Table 2. AFR II Most Frequently Encountered Species – Fall 2016

Braddock Bay			MBO			PEPTBO		
Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY
1 AMGO (10)	642	52.1%	WTSP (1)	566	81.4	BLJA	785	79.9
2 BLPW (20)	471	80.4%	RCKI (3)	341	66.0	NSWO (1)	755	64.0
3 WTSP (1)	383	91.8%	SCJU (12)	209	83.7	GCKI (4)	604	87.9
4 RCKI (3)	327	89.4%	AMRE (6)	176	86.4	RCKI (7)	485	85.6
5 MAWA (5)	286	89.0%	SWTH (5)	170	77.0	AMGO	318	23.9
6 HETH (16)	254	90.8%	BCCH (17)	145	91.7	SCJU (3)	265	84.9
7 BCCH (15)	249	94.4%	GCKI (15)	138	79.7	BRCR	215	94.9
8 GRCA (2)	215	93.9%	SOSP (7)	136	90.4	BTBW (8)	187	93.6
9 GCKI (4)	204	91.9%	MAWA (4)	133	73.7	BHVI	179	79.9
10 YEWA (6)	203	97.5%	REVI (11)	109	84.4	MAWA (6)	156	91.7
% of Total Banded		61.8%			62%			65.8%

Notes: (#) indicates ranking last fall

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The 31st consecutive year of fall migration monitoring at the Kaiser-Manitou Beach Banding Station was carried out for 78 days beginning 21 Jul and ending on 8 Nov 2016. Two days in August and five days in October were entirely lost to inclement weather. Three days in August and one day in September were lost due to lack of a bander-in-charge.

5,231 birds of 83 species and one additional hybrid form were banded (Table 1), exceeding Fall 2015's total by 622 birds. Four Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are included in the total of banded birds, and an additional 7 males, 7 females, and 2 unknown sex Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were captured and released unbanded. There were no new species for the fall records; the fall cumulative total remains at 125 species (with 126 identified subspecies), with two additional hybrid forms and one intergrade form.

A total of 14,319 net hours of banding resulted in a capture rate of 36.5 birds per 100 net hours, compared with 26.9 birds per 100 net hours in Fall 2015 and 28.9 birds per 100 net hours in Fall 2014.

Our blog and daily banding tallies from the Fall 2016 season may be found on our website at <http://braddockbaybirdobservatory.wordpress.com>.

The busiest day was 31 Oct when 388 birds of six species were banded in 180 net hours (215.5 birds per 100nh). On that day, 87.6% of the birds banded were American Goldfinches. The second busiest day was 5 Nov when 243 birds of five species were banded. The predominant species on that day was American Goldfinch at 238 bands, representing 97.9% of the birds banded. There were a total of 14 days on which 100+ birds were banded. The greatest species diversity occurred on 15 Sep when 30 species were banded. Of the newly banded birds,

96.7% were able to be aged; of those, 83.3% were hatch-year birds.

Up to 37 twelve-meter nets and four six-meter nets were used, in the same locations as in previous years. Included in the 37 twelve-meter nets were six double-high net assemblies. Nets were numbered and identified as to their habitat site and the capture time (hour after sunrise to the nearest 0.5 hour) and net number was recorded for each bird handled.

There were record-high numbers banded of seven species which included Red-bellied Woodpecker (4), Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (49), Warbling Vireo (39), Tennessee Warbler (22), Pine Warbler (3), Baltimore Oriole (37), and American Goldfinch (642).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was missing after being banded in 18 of the past 30 seasons. European Starling and Eastern Towhee were both missing for the second year in a row, after being banded in 19 of the past 30 seasons. Blue-winged Warbler was missing for the first time since 1992, after being banded in 25 of the last 30 seasons. Connecticut Warbler and Western Palm Warbler were both missing after being banded in 21 of the past 30 seasons. House Finch was missing for the second year in a row after being banded in 23 of the past 30 seasons.

1016 individual birds were recaptured a total of 1800 times during Fall 2016. These birds were all measured and weighed as part of ongoing studies in stopover ecology.

There were 59 recaptures of birds from a previous season (90 days or more from same season banding date). Noteworthy among these were a Gray Catbird in its 9th year, an American Redstart and a Gray Catbird each in their 6th year, and two Gray Catbirds, one Northern Cardinal, and one Yellow Warbler all in their 5th year.

We had one foreign recapture: an American Goldfinch originally banded by David Okines at Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory, near St. Williams, Ontario, on 6 May 2016 as an ASY-M was recaptured by us on 31 Oct 2017.

Avian Pox lesions were found on 24 birds of seven species, the most being found on Hermit Thrush

(12) and Northern Cardinal (4). Hippoboscids were observed on three birds, mites on one bird, and scaly leg on six birds. Five birds had bill deformities, four had evidence of healed broken bones, three had missing toes, two had missing claws, one had an everted ear, and three had missing eyes. Five Cedar Waxwings showed orange tail feathers, one Yellow-shafted Flicker had at least some flight feathers with orange shafts, four birds exhibited leucism, and two Ruby-crowned Kinglets had orange crowns.

The MARS trailer was in operation this fall, and collected data for Dr. Sara Morris' research into night flight calls. We collected blood samples from thrushes for Dr. Susan Smith Pagano of Rochester Institute Technology for her study using plasma indicators of fattening rates and diet to study the migration physiology and stopover site use of these birds. We collected feather samples for Dr. Kristen Covino from Canisius College, who will use hydrogen isotope analysis to determine the breeding origins of individual migratory songbirds that pass through BBBO.

During the fall season, we welcomed students from Canisius College, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Ithaca College, SUNY Geneseo, and the University of Rochester for tours of the banding station, and we gave an educational program for a local homeschool group. Visiting the station this fall, included 212 guests and visitors from 10 states and Canada.

Four students completed our Summer 2016 Advanced Workshop, six students completed our Fall 2016 Bander Training Class, and thirteen students from Cornell University spent their annual weekend with us running the station.

Banding was done by licenced banders David Bonter, Elizabeth Brooks, Mark Deutchlander, Jenna Holzschuh, Erin Karnatz, Ryan Kayhart, Peggy Keller, Marian Klik, Cindy Marino, Sara Morris, Sue Smith Pagano, Andrea Patterson, and Doug Smith. Banding assistants were Michelle Gianvecchio, Julie Kleinhans, Greg Lawrence, Katie Lowenguth, Gayle Lazoration, Pat Lovallo, Maggie MacNeil, Ann Nash, Jon Podoliak, Alison VanKeuren, Barb Wagner, and Chelsea Wisner. Ryan Kayhart was our Research Assistant.

Oct - Dec 2017

Many thanks to Stephen Zicari and his Boy Scout troop who visited the station in early November to implement the first phase of their outdoor classroom, and to the Merton Williams Middle School for choosing to spend their Day of Service with us. Thanks to Steve Maley for mowing and home maintenance; to Jim Gillette for removing a fallen tree; to Lyn Jacobs and Doug Smith for their help with habitat maintenance; to Allen Nash for spreading wood chips on our trails; and to Jeanne Verhulst for helping with data entry.

Much appreciation goes to all our faithful volunteers who scribe and tend the nets: John Boettcher, Jane Capellupo, Delaney Ford, Barb French, Marilyn Guenther, Kathy Habgood, Ann Hauser, Gary Herbert, Debi Holt, Carolyn Maruggi, Chita McKinney, Nancy Murty, Jim Saller, Lee Schofield, Judy Snell, Sue Sosik, Tammy Swarthout, Alice VanDeMoere, and Tom Verhulst. Thanks also to guests Emily Fellows, Rowan Ford, and Esther Ninos who stepped in to scribe on one or more days.

A special thank you goes to Bill Kaiser, Nancy Britton and The Genesee Land Trust for permission to band on their land.

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McGill Bird Observatory (MBO) in Montreal is a full member of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network and the only station in Quebec to conduct standardized spring and fall migration banding programs. MBO is operated by the Migration Research Foundation (MRF), a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of wildlife movements, especially as they relate to population monitoring and conservation.

In 2016, MBO operated its twelfth full Fall Migration Monitoring Program, covering the 14-week period from 1 August through 6 November. A one-hour census trail was walked daily, and nets were open for five hours beginning at sunrise except

when limited by inclement weather; 10 days were lost and 18 days of banding were partly shortened due to rain and/or high winds. As a result of the generally favourable conditions, the banding effort of 6,545 net hours was above average. Typically all 16 nets were operated daily this fall. All nets are 12-m Manomet passerine nets, on standard 3-m poles. This fall, bander-in-charge duties were primarily handled by Simon Duval and Gay Gruner.

The total of 3,417 individuals banded during FMMP 2016 was below the long-term average of 3,804 for the season but slightly above the average of 3,326 when excluding the two years with totals inflated by exceptional counts of Yellow-rumped Warblers. Both repeats (771) and returns (78) were above average. The 82 species banded and the 150 species observed were both also above their respective average of 79 and 145.

White-throated Sparrow took first place again this fall with a record 566 individuals banded, while Ruby-crowned Kinglets came in second with 341 individuals banded and Slate-colored Junco closed out the top 3 with 209 individuals banded. Two new species were banded this fall; a single Yellow-throated Vireo on 16 Aug and two Connecticut Warblers on 27 Aug and 12 Sep. The MBO total now stands at 121 species. A cumulative list of all species banded at MBO is updated after every season at <http://www.oommbo.org/results/banding-totals/>

As usual, our peak period extended roughly from mid-September to mid-October, and our ninth week (26 Sep - 2 Oct) was the busiest, with 568 individuals banded including 187 Ruby-crowned Kinglets and 100 White-throated Sparrows. The highlight this fall was again species diversity; on 40 days the daily estimated total was at least 50 species, including 8 days with more than 60 and two days with 70 species observed. One new species was added to the all-time checklist for MBO, the Yellow-throated Vireo that was banded on August 16. The site list now stands at 213 species.

Although not included in our Fall Migration Monitoring Program totals, we also operated our Northern Saw-whet Owl program, during which we banded 194 Northern Saw-whet Owls, plus one foreign recapture. Two other owl species were banded: an Eastern Screech-Owl on 27 Sep and a Barred Owl on 14 Oct. Nicolas Bernier was the bander-in-charge for this program once again.

As always, other research activities and education programs were integrated with the banding program. We provided ongoing training to more than 50 volunteers this fall, and collected a few hundred more photos to augment the ever-growing Piranga online photo library (<http://www.natureinstruct.org/piranga/>).

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G. Holmes and J. Turner-Moss, Chief Assistants

Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory (PEPTBO) operates in Ontario, and is located at the extreme south-eastern corner of Prince Edward County at the eastern end of Lake Ontario and is located within the Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area where we have a small cottage for housing the banders and a small banding lab. The Observatory first started its operation in 1995 and celebrated its 22nd year of operation in 2016. For the first six years we only operated in the spring, getting a Trillium Grant in 2000, which allowed us in 2001 to start operating the station for both the spring and fall seasons. Since our inception, we have banded over 206,000 birds of 178 species, with a range of between 8,500 and 17,000 a year and with fall totals varying between 4,500 and 12,500 birds banded.

The habitat at PEPTBO is an alvar peninsular with thin soil that is surrounded by Lake Ontario and with the immediate habitat near the nets being mostly cedar scrub in an overgrown field with small areas of woodlots of mixed deciduous trees with scattered cedars, about half of the wood we band in has an understory of the invasive European Buckthorn. The observatory operates a Naturehood program whereby we bring school groups to the observatory for an introduction to nature. The species trends from PEPTBO up to 2014 can be found on the Bird Studies Canada website at <http://www.birdscanada.org/birdmon/default/popindices.jsp>, select PETBO from the list of stations and then the individual species you wish to look at, or, you can choose all species. More details of the Observatory can be found on our website: www.peptbo.ca The weather this fall consisted of long periods of easterly or southerly winds with very warm conditions in August to mid-October with several

nights in early October having temperatures of up to 20°C at dawn with a return to more normal conditions by mid-October. The 43 Sharp-shinned Hawks banded this fall were well down from last years total of 121 banded; other hawks appeared to be up in numbers with notable bandings of two Red-shouldered Hawks, a Northern Goshawk, five Cooper's Hawks and two Red-tailed Hawks, all from the static hawk nets located in the woods. The 23rd saw 145 Red-shouldered Hawks fly over but the two that were banded were on the days immediately either side of that. On the 22nd, while we were showing some visiting owl banders from NY our owl setup, we flushed and then quickly caught an Eastern Whip-poor-will, the only one of the fall. A Common Nighthawk was banded on the 30 Aug while a Belted Kingfisher flew into a hawk net on the Sept. 13 Sep Single Pileated Woodpeckers were trapped in Aug and Sept, and are only the sixth and seventh ever in the fall season.

Vireos were well represented this fall with highs of 179 Blue-headed and 115 Red-eyed banded. Although not the best fall flight, Blue Jays moved in good numbers and enjoyed the cracked corn in the traps this year and so were banded in record numbers, 786; the previous best year was 576 back in 2001. The Purple Martin house had three pairs nesting, up from two last year and 13 nestlings were banded, an increase on the nine of last year. Both Red and White-breasted Nuthatches moved this fall with some days having up to 20 Red-breasted and 55 White-breasted flying over. Red-breasted and White-breasted had 47 and 57 banded up from the 3 and 11 respectively in 2015. Kinglet numbers were slightly down, although they were up from 2015 which was a particularly bad year for them. Grey Catbirds were non-existent this fall with just eight banded (ave 30). The warbler passage was also light this fall with just 1007 of 24 species banded, the major players in this family were well down and Nashville's numbered 37 (ave. 86), Magnolia 161 (ave 224), Myrtle 146 (ave. 250) and Blackpoll 83 (ave 120). Most of the other warblers were in average or near average numbers for this location. For the sparrows, only Slate-coloured Junco was at an average capture rate with 265 banded, all the others were down with White-throated (66 v 152 ave) and White-crowned (23 v 55 ave) being notably down. Common Grackles were banded in record numbers (21) mostly due to one or two flocks landing near the nets. The winter finches failed to arrive this year.

PEPTBO bands Bobolinks using a tape lure as part of a standardized protocol and we normally band 3-400 a year, the numbers this fall were a lot lower than expected and we only banded 92. In addition to the banding at the observatory we initiated banding Bobolinks about 16 km away and to the west of PEPTBO and used the same protocol as used at the Observatory, a much better passage was recorded there with 543 being banded so we are not sure why we had such low numbers down at the Observatory. Also trapped at this second site were two birds originally banded at PEPTBO in 2014 and one that was banded at PEPTBO in 2015. We caught two Bobolink down at PEPTBO that had been banded at the new site just 9 and 6 days earlier.

755 Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded in October with peak nights of 167 on the 10th/11th, 94 on the 8th/9th and 74 on the 23rd/24th. In addition to the NSWO's, we also banded 5 Long-eared Owls and 25 Barred Owls. On the 25th October a surprise in the owl nets at dawn was an American Woodcock, only the second one ever caught here in the fall; 21 Saw-whets that were banded elsewhere were caught this fall. Several Saw-whet Owls originally banded at PEPTBO in 2015 were recovered by banders elsewhere this fall as follows. PEP Oct 2015 → Ville-Marie, QC, Sep 2016, 430 km NNW
PEP Oct 2015 → Long Point Bird Obs., ON, Oct 2016, 325 km SW
PEP Oct 2015 → Burdett, NY, Nov 2016, 175 km S
PEP Oct 2015 → Hedgesville, WV, Nov 2016, 500 km SSW
PEP Oct 2015 → Williamstown, WV, Nov 2016, 330 km SE
PEP Oct 2015 → Holiday Beach, ON, Nov 2016, 550 km SW
PEP Oct 2015 → New Paltz, ON, Nov 2016, 345 km SE

Other Saw-whets that were banded this fall have also been recovered in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Virginia, West Virginia, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey already, but the exact details are still awaited. A Blue Jay was also recovered elsewhere;

PEP May 2015 → Holiday Beach, ON, Nov 2016, 110 km NWW

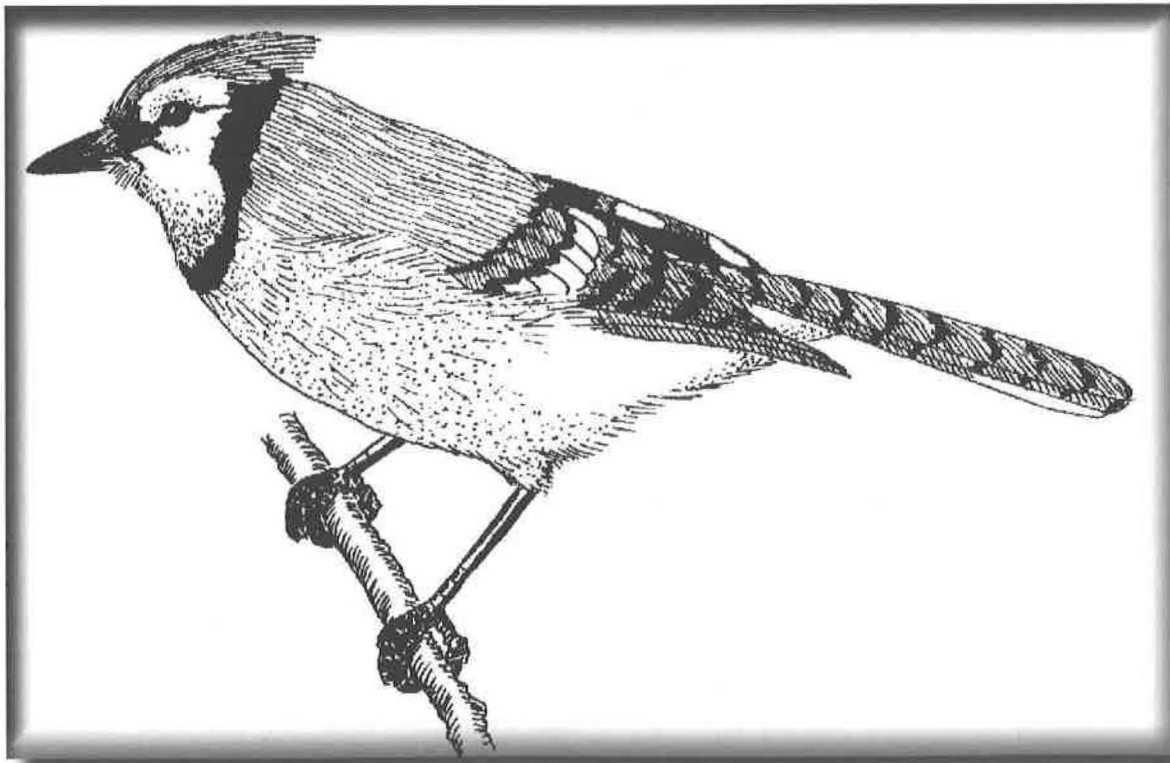
Finally, a Blue-headed Vireo banded this past fall was recovered in Georgia this November when it struck a stationary object.

We are extremely grateful for the many regular and local day volunteers who come down to extract and scribe for us during the season. Their help and camaraderie certainly makes the season go better. I would also like to thank my two long-term volunteers, Gillian Holmes from Courtice, Ontario, who was with me not only for the fall season but for the spring as well; and Jacques Turner Moss who came over from Britain to help for the owling season and helped enormously during that time in the fall when sleep deprivation hits us all. Without the great help from all these volunteers the observatory would find it hard to operate. We are also grateful to the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada, who continue to allow us to operate within the National Wildlife Area.



EBBA Memorial Grant Update

In 2017, EBBA awarded a memorial grant to Brian Palestis of Wagner College, to further his work on Common Terns in Barnegat Bay. 2017 was a poor year for tern productivity at Dr. Palestis' main site on Pettit Island, due to flooding in June and July. Nevertheless, 19 adults and 70 chicks were captured and banded, and 10 previously banded adults were recaptured on five islands in Barnegat Bay. After examining more than a decade's worth of data, he found very poor recruitment of chicks from the Pettit Island colony into the adult population, and determined it was unlikely to be due to natal dispersal within the bay. Dr. Palestis presented his results at meetings of the Waterbird Society and the Greater NY/NJ Harbor Colonial Waterbirds Working Group. He has submitted a manuscript to *Seabird*, and an abstract to the 2018 IOC; and supervised a senior thesis on movements of Common Tern chicks from the nest.



Bluejay
by GeorgeWest