

2017

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) Fall 2016- Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory

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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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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

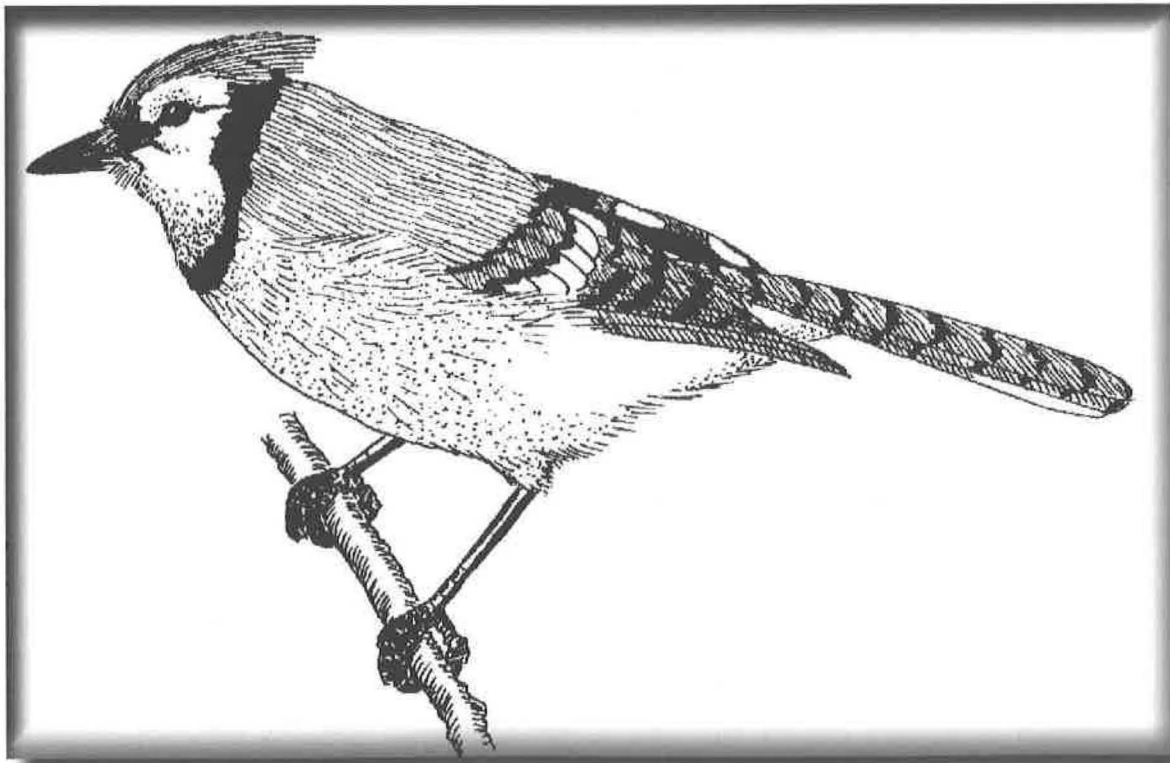
Finally, a Blue-headed Vireo banded this past fall was recovered in Georgia this November when it struck a stationary object.

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