

2019

Inland Flyway Review- Fall 2018 Report, Sand Bluff Bird Observatory

Mike Eickman

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This was the 35th year of fall banding at the marsh. Contact the Bander/Coordinator for a full report of the 2018 banding results. Highlights of the season were a Grasshopper Sparrow on 14 Oct (a first for the station) and an Orange-crowned Warbler on 7 Oct (which was our 41,000th individual banded).

**PALATIAL WOODLAND 391-0821
ESTATE (PWE)**

Albany, Vinton County, OH

Coordinator/Bander: Robert Scott Placier

Assistants: Jake Goldman, Mike Wren

Address: 32840 Jourden Road

Albany, OH 45710

Email: placierr@hocking.edu

This was the fourth Fall season of banding at the PWE station in eastern Vinton County, one of the most heavily forested and least populated counties of Ohio, in the Appalachian foothills. As described in previous seasonal reports, the banding area is maintained along a ¼ mile driveway with a stable shrubland and encouragement to grow shrubs and small tree species such as Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), sumacs (*Rhus* spp.), and dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.) that bear fruit attractive to migrants such as thrushes, in the fall.

Weather was somewhat detrimental for banding this season. September had much more rain than usual. It was one of the wettest years on record for southern Ohio. That was followed by unseasonable hot weather during the first half of October, with high temperatures reaching the (80° F/26.6C) level or above, on many days, and only falling to (70° F/21.1C) by time to open nets each morning. Mosquitoes were abundant and voracious. Despite that, or perhaps because of it, the season was better than that of 2017.

A number of migrant species set new highs for the season, especially warblers. Notable were Magnolia Warbler at 70 with previous high 39; Hooded Warbler 47, previously 31; Bay-breasted Warbler 31, previously only 5; and Red-eyed Vireo at 24, previously 10. On the other hand, despite what appeared to be a decent soft mast season, especially of spicebush berries, thrush numbers fell for the second consecutive year. The percentage of hatching year Swainson's Thrushes (36%) was notably low.

Several species were new for the fall season, including the first three Western Palm Warblers ever, an American Woodcock (second for the station), and a Yellow-shafted Flicker. I have banded far more Pileated Woodpeckers than flickers here over the years. Also, the first season with multiple (2) Yellow-billed Cuckoos.

Many thanks to my assistants for the season, including Jake Goldman, a graduate student at nearby Ohio University, and Mike Wren, for their assistance. The operation was also visited by several families with children, always welcome.

**SAND BLUFF 422-0891
BIRD OBSERVATORY**

Shirland, Winnebago County, IL

Coordinator/Bander: Mike Eickman

Chief Assistants: Lee Johnson, John Longhenry, Steve Gent, Steve Torre, Justin Keller, Nora Longcar, Steve Reichel, Ivy Otto, Dave Seal, Lynda Johnson, Sharon McCoy.

Address: 11114 Harrison Road,
Rockton, IL 61072

The 2018's fall report is the second since starting operation under a station permit. Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, located in northern Winnebago County just a mile south of the Illinois-Wisconsin state line, has been in operation since 1967. The site is located on Colored Sands Forest Preserves, a part of the forest preserves of Winnebago County. The unique feature of this area is its dry sand prairie, sand forest, and wet flood plain forest. The Sugar River flows gently through the preserve and offers a diverse habitat for all types of flora and fauna. It is especially attractive to migratory birds as a stop-over for food and shelter.

This fall was different than 2017 in that we had fewer rain outs on banding days and weekends. However, we did lose the use of six nets located in the flood plain for several weeks. The number of birds banded in 2018 increased to 4011, up from the 3295 birds in 2017. However, the number of species banded, 104, was down from last year. Swainson's Thrush continued to be the most common species banded with 481 and the Gray Catbird was second with 321 banded. This year there was a notable increase in Tennessee Warblers after a low for several years.

With additional efforts from a couple of sub-permittees and volunteers, the number of banded owls increased to 37 Northern Saw-whet Owls and 10 Long-eared Owls. Two saw-whet Owls were of special interest – both were ASY foreign recaptures: one from Minnesota and the other from northeastern Wisconsin. Another bird of interest was a Slate-colored Junco captured in November that had originally been banded at Sand Bluff as HY in 2016. Finally, many thanks to all the volunteers and visitors who make Sand Bluff a destination.

LINCOLN LAND **394-0893**
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BIRD BANDING STATION (LLCC BBS)
Springfield, Sangamon County, IL

Coordinator: Vernon Kleen

Banders: Vernon Kleen and Anthony Rothering
Chief Assistants: Paul Biggers, Chad Cremer, Joe Gardner, Tim Hargrove, Wayne Huckabee, Betty Kleen, Jim Mordacq, Nic Morgan, Jim, Anastasia Rahlin, Nancy Redman, Andrew Sharp, Susan Shaw, Trevor Slovick and Holly Thompson.

Address: 1825 Clearview Dr.

Springfield, IL 62704 or P.O. Box 13442

Springfield, IL 62791

Email: vkleen@comcast.net

The LLCC BBS, initiated in the fall of 2012, was in its 7th Fall season of operation. The station's habitats and general description were provided in **NABB's** 2015 IFR Fall report. The seasonal "cold fronts", which often trigger birds to head south in mass numbers, were few and far between. Of the four or five that appeared on the radar screen as potentially good migration nights, only two turned out well; however, there were still three days in which 100 or more birds were banded. The 2,076 birds banded ranked 4th in the seven years of banding. The 79 species banded this year was a typical year and could easily have exceeded the record of 80. Based on the net evidence, some large birds (possibly hawks or a Great Blue Heron) may have flown into the nets but escaped. The lower number of birds this fall can be attributed to the markedly reduced number of (a) American Goldfinches (even though it was the most common bird banded); (b) grassland (prairie)

species (the typical sparrows and some warblers); and (c) several edge and woodland species such as the Ruby-crowned Kinglet (only four banded all season compared to 68 last fall), and White-throated and White-crowned sparrows. Despite the "low" numbers for many species, there were several 2018 highlights including the station's first Summer Tanager - bringing the station total to 123. It was also a banner year for the Palm Warbler with 84 banded (previous high was 29).

The average of 31.9 birds per day this fall was 1.3 birds below the six-year average and 9.8 birds per day below the 41.7 record of 2014. However, this year's average (along with those of 2015 and 2016) included "shortened" days (both by fewer nets in operation and/or early shut-down of operation). because of rain or excessive wind.). In contrast to the most common birds, 16 species were represented by a single individual this fall and another 4 by just two birds. Other interesting fall captures included two Sharp-shinned Hawks, two Marsh Wrens (in the same net at the same time), single Black-throated Blue and Blackburnian warblers, and a Savannah Sparrow. This fall, 64 birds of 16 species were captured as "returns" [birds banded 90 or more days earlier]; the oldest: a chickadee banded in the spring of 2014 and a Blue Jay in the fall of 2014. Another 387 birds were captured as "repeats" [birds caught within 90 days of banding or a recapture date]-several of these were caught multiple times (some as many as eight times during that season).

November started off fine, but two inches of snow fell on 9 Nov. Temperatures then dropped into the teens between 11 and 13 Nov and another five inches of snow fell on 14 and 15 Nov (breaking a 1951 record for accumulated snow for the first half of the month). As a result of these inoperable conditions, banding operations were cancelled for five days. The return of a day of "favorable" weather on the 17 Nov, allowed the station to be closed as the final day of fall operations.

The five issues that traditionally affect the banding operations each fall (and in some cases the number of nets used each day) were the wind, rain, leaves, people and deer. (The deer in the banding area are so tame, they do not even flee when you actively