

2020

Inland Flyway Review- Fall 2019 Report- Palatial Woodland Estate

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quite exceptional. For the second fall in a row, Prothonotary Warbler set a new high record with 36 banded (shattering last fall's 26 and skyrocketing past the average of eight); Prothonotary Warblers also showed a good return rate to the area, with at least three returns from 2018 and one from 2014. Wrens were well above average (including the seldom caught Marsh Wren) with Carolina Wrens showing some recovery following last winter's harsh conditions and a low 2019 spring season. And – while not a highly captured family in fall – flycatchers were well represented, including Eastern Wood-Pewee and Olive-sided Flycatcher setting new high records (26 and 2, respectively).

The bulk of our returns consisted of primarily breeding species, however, we did have one return Blackpoll Warbler originally banded 30 Aug 2017. Even more exceptional though, a Blackpoll Warbler banded at the station (26 Sep 2018) was recovered in Riverbend, AB, on 29 Aug 2019 – an 11 month and over 3,000 km indirect-recovery distance from the original banding site.

While this fall may have been somewhat lackluster, it is at least a reminder of the importance of consistent long-term monitoring and region-wide collaborations such as through the Midwest Migration Network, to begin to truly understand and analyze broader population dynamics.

We would like to thank our dedicated corps of volunteers, interns, and techs whose service makes this project possible and successful. We would also like to thank Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge for its continued support of this research and management of habitat throughout the region; and FirstEnergy for its preservation of the incredible Navarre Marsh and their cooperation in allowing access to the area by numerous researchers.

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This was the fifth fall season of banding at the PWE station in eastern Vinton County (in the Appalachian foothills), one of the most heavily forested and least populated counties of Ohio. As described in previous seasonal reports, the banding area is maintained along a 0.40225km gravel lane, with net lanes paralleled by a stable shrubland and deciduous forest. Invasive non-native species are controlled in both shrubland and forest, while shrub and small tree species such as Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), sumacs (*Rhus* spp.), and dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.) that bear fruit attractive to migrants in the fall are encouraged. It is difficult to say what effect weather had on banding efforts for the season. It was an exceptionally dry September, almost a drought, so almost no sessions were rained out, or even curtailed. But the drought did cause woody plants to lose leaves earlier than usual, and fruit to wither prematurely on some species. Then the first week of October saw record temperatures, climbing beyond 90° F (32° C) each day. Continued unseasonably hot weather resulted in closing nets earlier on multiple days, especially some that received direct sunlight by late morning. At least the dry conditions meant that mosquitoes were essentially absent, even in the woods.

Overall numbers of species and individuals were decidedly average, with the total number of birds banded being the third most of the five seasons. But, remarkably, six of the top ten species banded set new highs for the season: Wood Thrush at 121, previous high 101; Hooded Warbler 48, previous 47; Tennessee Warbler 47, previous 31; Scarlet Tanager 19, previous 7; Hermit Thrush 19, previous 17; and White-eyed Vireo 16, previous 10. Especially notable were the 9 Scarlet Tanagers banded on 21 Sep, 7 together in a net. It appeared they had flown out of a patch of Smooth Sumac (*Rhus glabra*) with ripe berries. There were no species recorded in unusually low numbers.

Many thanks to my friend Mike Wren for his assistance, company, and hot coffee deliveries. Visitors are always welcome, and I put a few to work carrying bagged birds on one of my busiest mornings of the season. And my friend Dr. Don Altoff brought his wildlife students from the University of Rio Grande (yes, it's in SE Ohio!) out to observe.