



Eastern Regional News

Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

Atlantic Flyway Review: (Western Ridge) Region III - Fall 2016

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We always welcome new reporting stations for the Fall AFR reports. If you are interested in contributing your fall banding data, please contact me.

Powdermill Nature Preserve 400-0791
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Chief Assistant(s): Mary Shidel, Katie Barnes,
Nick Glover

In fall 2016 we banded 6,545 new birds, which was on par (6th place) with our capture rates for the last ten years. Recapture rates were fairly consistent as well; we processed 2,689 (4th highest over 10 years) for a total count of 9,234. However, we cannot help but wonder how much higher those totals could have been in better (cooler) weather conditions.

After the warmest month on record to-date (July 2016), the fall season started out and remained a warm one. Our total net hr. (19,594 hr.) came in almost 2,000 hr. lower than our average of the last five years (21,567). Most of that was due to early weather-related closures. On 30 of our 72 banding days we closed early due to high temperatures. The majority of these warm days fell in August, but

early-closure days also included 10 days throughout the month of September and 4 days in October (16, 18-20); on 2 November the temperature hit 80F just before our normal closing time.

No species were below 2 sd, but several were above: Carolina Chickadee (n=13), Cooper's Hawk (n=1), Northern Mockingbird (n=1), Orchard Oriole (n=2), Warbling Vireo (n=4) and Yellow-billed Cuckoo (n=7). Both the Cooper's Hawk and the Northern Mockingbird were especially exciting for us—we had not banded either since 2007! Three species showed up in particularly good numbers: Blue Jays (n=34; fall mean=13), Ovenbirds (n=137, fall mean=60) and Swainson's Thrushes (n=593, fall mean= 222).

We had three foreign recoveries this fall, all of them Northern Saw-whet Owls. On 19 October we encountered an adult female Saw-whet that had been banded in 2013 near Carlisle, PA (106 miles east of our station).

On 1 November, we recaptured another owl from that same location, a hatch-year female banded just five days earlier. Our third recovered Saw-whet, from 25 Oct, was also an adult female, originally banded on 31 Oct 2015, in Friedensburg, PA (162 mi ENE of Powdermill). Additionally, a second-year female Saw-Whet banded *here* on 11/16/15 was re-caught on 10/26/16 in Powhatan, Virginia (almost 200 km SSE).

Table 1. AFR III Fall 2016 Summary

	Powdermill PA	Penn State PA	Allegheny Front WV	Mt. Nebo MD	Ruthven ON
First day/Last day	8/14/16 to 11/15/16	9/8/16 to 10/26/16	8/13/16 to 10/2/16	8/22/16 to 11/08/16	9/1 to 11/7
Days operated	72	48	45	47	68
No. Nets Used or Range	29 to 67	4 to 10	27 to 30	16	21
Total net Hrs.	19,594	446	6135	3,132	6,191
Number of traps in Use	0	0	0	0	0
% Caught in traps	0	0	0	0	0
Lgst Daily Catch	276 on 10/20/16	42	829	45 on 9/13, 45 on 10/7	116 on 10/9
Most Common Best day	31% MYWA	WTSP	35% BLPW	15% COYE, 22% WTSP	MYWA
Most Species Diversity	42 on 9/16/16	11 on 10/15/16	36 on 9/24	21 on 9/26	na
No. Banded 2015	6,024	340	2,924	786	3,441
No. Banded 2016	6,545	335	5,423	1,163	2,328
Total Species 2015	101	40	66	63	88
Total Species 2016	105	35	77	70	85
Birds/100 nh 2015	27.8	92	66	52.6	49.3
Birds/100 nh 2016	33.4	86	88	37	32.6
% HY 2015	65.4	68%	83.06%	77%	86.60%
% HY 2016	76.1	58%	69.8%	72%	79.40%

Table 2. Most Common Species, AFR Region III, Fall 2016

	Powdermill PA	PennState PA	Allegheny Front	Mt. Nebo MID	Ruthven
	%HY	%HY	%HY	%HY	%HY
1.	593 SWTH	105 GRCA	1082 BTBW	100 WTSP	493 AMGO
2.	499 RCKI	62 WTSP	858 BLPW	91 GRCA	213 MYWA
3.	409 MYWA	25 HOFI	565 CMWA	81 COYE	143 SCJU
4.	373 AMGO	23 NOCA	459 BLNW	99 SOSP	123 WTSP
5.	309 MAWA	13 RCKI	443 TEWA	72 RCKI	120 RCKI
6.	299 GRCA	10 SWTH	371 SWTH	57 AMGO	80 NSWO
7.	290 RTHU	9 BCCH	267 BLBW	41 DEJU	75 BLHV
8.	240 REVI	7 TUTI	232 MAWA	39 BCCH	59 REVI
9.	230 COYE	7 WOTH	169 OVEN	35 SWTH	58 BCCH
10.	219 CEWA	7 BLPW	117 COYE	35 CEDW	50 MAWA

We had 312 visitors at the lab during the fall banding season, including classes from four nearby universities, several local schools and many families. In September, seven people participated in our Advanced Bander Training Workshop. Additionally, we hosted a North American Banding Council (NABC) certification session attended by 10 candidates and evaluated by 10 trainers with over 200 years of combined banding experience. One candidate was certified at the trainer level, three candidates at the bander level, and five candidates at the assistant level.

The Arboretum at Penn State **404-0775**
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Chief Assistant Dr. Margaret Brittingham

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. Overall it was a mediocre season in numbers and species. Weather conditions had no effect on banding totals, as there was no presence of any major weather influence. One and a half days were rescheduled due to rain and another day was shortened by two hours for the same reason.

For the first time in seven seasons of fall banding, no Song Sparrows were caught. Noteworthy, since in three of the previous years they were in the top five banded birds. Result of a natural population down trend? Missed because of "wrong" day for banding when they moved through the area? Did other stations find this species in lower numbers? The "five best birds" (based upon past presence and volunteers' preference) were Connecticut Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow and Purple Finch.

There were no foreign (outside of local area) recaptures. Forty-seven birds were recaptured on one or more days after being banded at the Arboretum. Noteworthy local recaptures included a Blue Jay — banded 8 Oct 2010 as a HY bird and a Northern Cardinal - banded 15 Apr 2011 as AHY (after hatch year) bird.

Apr - Sep 2018

The banding site was open for public visitation during all hours of operation with organized group programs through prior arrangement. A total of 149 people visited during the period. Daily summaries were posted on the local State College Bird Club listserv.

Eight community volunteers and 26 Penn State students (most from the Wildlife and Fisheries major) contributed 476 hours of time to banding operations and public outreach activities during the season. The annual "Bander-in-Training" program had 12 participants with three continuing to assist beyond the minimum required three days. Special thanks to Dr. Margaret Brittingham (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).

Allegheny Front **390-0791**
Dolly Sods, Grantco CO, WV
Migration Observatory Banding Station
Project Leaders:
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Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) is located at Dolly Sods, Grant County, West Virginia. AFMO is 10 km southeast of Davis, WV, high on top of the Allegheny Front in the Monongahela National Forest. This fall, AFMO opened on 13 Aug and closed on 2 Oct 2016. AFMO is the oldest, continuous bird banding station in North America. This was our 59th consecutive year of bird banding at AFMO. A total of 5,423 birds were banded representing 77 species with a Station effort of 88 birds per 100 net hours.

A total of 266,759 birds have been banded since Ralph K. Bell founded AFMO and banded his first bird on 8 Sep 1958. A total of 125 species have been banded since 1958.

The overall percentage of hatch-year birds (using known age birds only) was 69.8% compared with 83.06% in 2015 and 75.84% in 2014. There were

8 days this fall when over 100 birds were banded, 5 days over 200 were banded, 1 day 395 were banded, one day 406 were banded, 1 day 522 were banded, and one day (on the 24 Sep) 829 were banded. The station was open for 45 days and closed for six days due to rain and/or fog and mist.

1. Black-throated Blue Warbler was the most numerous species this year with 1082 birds banded (14.7% under the 10-year average from 2006 to 2015, although we banded more of this species than we did on each of the past 3 years).
2. Blackpoll Warbler was second with 858 birds banded (13.3% over the 10-year average).
3. Cape May Warbler was third with 565 birds banded (186.1% over the 10-year average). Note: The last time we banded over 500 Cape May Warblers was in 1991.
4. Black-throated Green was 4th with 457 birds banded (33.9% under the 10-year average).
5. Tennessee Warbler was 5th with 443 birds banded (23.5% over the 10-year average).

The total number of these top five species is 3405, which is 63% of the birds banded this fall. The next highest number of birds banded were Swainson's Thrush (371)-100% over the 10-year average; Blackburnian Warbler (267)-33.5% over the 10-year average, Magnolia Warbler (232), Ovenbird (169), Common Yellowthroat (117), Bay-breasted Warbler (109).

The "Fall Flyover Count" at AFMO was started by Ralph K. Bell in 1990. Some of the results from the 2016 Count are as follows: 197 Ruby-throated Hummingbird (158 in 2015), 27-year average: 364, 347 Blue Jay (159 in 2015), 27-year average: 4,623, 353 American Goldfinch (294 in 2015); 27-year average 2,358 Monarch Butterflies (145 in 2015), 27-year average 893; 211 Broad-winged Hawks (1650 in 2015)

This fall, 748 people signed our AFMO Visitor's Book. These visitors came from 14 different states and Washington, DC. Groups that visited AFMO learned about birds and nature from our experienced volunteers. Some groups that visited were the Ralph K. Bell Bird Club, Waynesburg, PA; Canaan Valley Resort Nature Trip; Highland Adventist School, Elkins, WV; Cameron HS Science Classes, Cameron, WV; Allegheny/Garrett Counties Bird Club, MD; and John Marshall High School, Glendale, WV. Thanks to the personnel of the Monongahela National Forest: Forest Supervisor Clyde Thompson; Realty Specialist/Special Use Manager, Todd Hess; District Manager, M. Troy Waskey; Develop Recreation Manager, Zach Adkins; Forest Technician, John Waggy and all others that gave their cooperation and help. Thanks to the West Virginia DNR for the use of their building for storage of the bird banding shed. Thanks to the Ralph K. Bell Bird Club and other groups, visitors and volunteers for their financial support, which is our only means of replacing the 30 mist nets we use at AFMO.

The banders who participated this fall were Beth Ritter (Campground Host with Randy Ritter), Todd Schmopp (AFMO Co-Leader), Fred and Carol McCullough, Charles Ziegenfus, Bob Dean, LeJay Graffious, Jeff and Sheila Berry (AFMO Resident Managers). The scheduled volunteers who tended nets, kept records, and helped in many ways were Tom and Dawn Fox, Jose Martins, Tom and Debbie Long, Bill Beatty, Jan Runyan, Maggi Per, Jackie Burns, Stephen Sushinski and Tim Newlin. Thanks to Tom Fox and his crew for the big job of clearing the net lanes so we could begin banding; LeJay Graffious, Todd Schnopp and their helpers for erecting the banding shed in August and taking it down in October; and Luke Pattison for contributing his computer expertise to his grandfather's AFMO Research Project. Thanks to all of the dedicated volunteers who gave their time and expertise in many ways and in most cases for many years to help continue the research Ralph K. Bell envisioned for AFMO at Dolly Sods, West Virginia.

Mt. Nebo WMA. Banding Station 392-0792
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This was the sixteenth season of banding at Mt. Nebo WMA. The station was open 47 days from 22 Aug through 8 Nov. A total of 1,163 birds were banded of 70 species. The station effort was 3,132 net hours with a capture rate of 37 birds/100 NH. No new species were added to the station list this year.

The top-ten list had no surprises. White-throated Sparrows were number one. The top three species banded were White-throated Sparrow (9% of the total), Gray Catbird (8%), and Common Yellowthroat (7%). The remaining top ten species in descending order were Song Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, Swainson's Thrush, and Cedar Waxwing.

Warblers are my favorite species to band. Last year was quite disappointing in that only 10% of the new bandings were warblers. This year was much better with 258 warblers, 22% of new bandings. Common Yellowthroats comprised 31% of the total warblers.

The largest daily catch occurred on two days: 45 birds (19 species) on 13 Sep and 45 birds on 7 Oct (17 species). Common Yellowthroats were 16% of the total catch on 13 Sep. White-throated Sparrows were 22% of the total catch on 7 Oct. 26 Sep had the highest species diversity with 21 species banded (42 birds).

There was one foreign recovery of a Gray Catbird that Skipper banded on 28 Aug 2015, as an ATY. On 23 Jun 2016, the bird was found dead by a nonbander or by members of their family or acquaintance seven miles north of Rochester, NY. This is approximately 200 miles from Mt. Nebo WMA.

The station had 189 recaptures of 112 individuals of 25 species. Twenty-two birds banded in prior years were recaptured in 2016. Song Sparrow, #1201-75900, was banded as an after-hatch year

by Fran Pope on 5 Oct 2009, is near the limits of a Song Sparrow life span. It had also been recaptured at Mt. Nebo in 2012 and 2013.

Ruthven Park
Haldimand County, ON
Banders: Rick Ludkin, Loretta Mousseau and
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This was one of the poorest fall banding seasons we have had. Our September total of 793 was well below the 15-year average of 969 and October's 1,277 fell well short of the 15-year level of 1,972 banded. And our overall total of 2,328 was almost a thousand birds short of the 15-yr average of 3,297.

We had only one day in which we banded more than 100 birds (which we use to define a "big day").

Some of our "key" species were well down: CEDW: we banded only 44 against a 5-year average of 539, despite having a prolific grape crop. MYWA: we banded 213 against a 5-yr. Average of 452 WTSP: banded 123 vs 276.

I think the main reason was that the weather this fall was unseasonably warm with little precipitation. Birds just flew over on their way south. We are situated about halfway between Lakes Ontario (in the north) and Erie (south of us). In good conditions, I think that migrants north of Toronto fly over both lakes in a night, not making landfall until they reach Ohio/Pennsylvania. One thing for sure we were not getting them. We do best in "unsettled conditions".

