

IL–Sand Bluff**422-0891****Bird Observatory (SBBO)**

Shirland, Winnebago County, IL

Coordinator/Bander: Mike Eickman

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The North Central Illinois fall banding season at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory started on 15 Aug. This was the fourth fall season of operation under a Station permit. The first 50 years the station (at the same location) was operated under a master permit. Sand Bluff Bird Observatory is located one mile south of the Wisconsin state line, northwest of Rockton, IL. It is situated on Colored Sands Forest Preserve, one of Winnebago County's Forest Preserves, and is an educational facility used by schools and groups in the area. The site is prime for migratory birds because of the habitats associated with the Sugar River.

Again this year the weather was a major factor in total birds banded. Operations at the station were held up by wet weather and lack of cold fronts making migration slow. Many of the species we normally see developed late resulting in lower numbers. For the season we lost eleven days during the peak of migration because of rain. Numbers captured this year were 2964 birds of 97 species. Down more than a 1000 birds from the 2018 season. We did not operate the raptor station due to an illness. This usually counts for almost 100 additional birds per season.

As in years past, the usual species were captured. Gray Catbird topped the list with 231, Tennessee Warblers were second with 191 birds – an apparent recent increase but nothing compared to decades past. American Goldfinches was third with 186. A top-ten surprise was the Black-Capped Chickadees with 93. A few records of note of birds banded in previous years were: a Gray-Catbird from the fall of 2013, an American Goldfinch from 2015 and two Slate-colored Juncos from 2016. We were also notified by a Canadian bander that

they encountered one of our Northern Saw-whet Owls at their station Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac, Québec, located 1650 km northeast at the start of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Sometimes when looking back at retrapped records you find a band number that seems unusual. That occurred in 2018 when we caught an American Redstart. This bird had been banded on 3 Aug 2018 in Mackenzie, BC; it was caught at Sand Bluff on 26 Aug – 23 days later.

Next season, with a little luck, perhaps better weather will come our way. Thanks to all the volunteers and visitors who make Sand Bluff what we are.

IL–Lincoln Land**394-0893****Community College Bird Banding Station****(LLCC BBS)****Springfield, Sangamon County, IL****Coordinators/Banders: Vernon Kleen, Anthony Rothering**

Assistants: Paul Biggers, Lee Boblett, Mel Breyer, Joe Gardner, Tim Hargrove, Wayne Huckabee, Nicole Kinney, Betty Kleen, Jim Mordacq, Carla Potts, Nancy Redman, Sam Reif, Susan Shaw, Trevor Slovick and Holly Thompson., August Wells and Sue Ellen Weitekamp.

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This was the eighth fall season for the station. It was in operation for 69 days and there were no days (in contrast to other years) when 100 or more birds were banded; there were only two days with 50 or more (the high was 90). The highest one day total prior to 24 Oct was just 36. The 1289 birds banded was the poorest of the eight seasons (the previous low was 1902), and the 74 species banded was well below the annual range of 78 to 80. The number of birds captured as returns was also very low. However, new seasonal highs were set for the American Robin, Hermit Thrush and House Wren. In contrast to the most common birds, there were 12 species represented by a single individual and another five by just two birds. Some of the more interesting captures were two Sharp-shinned