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Rock Point

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After what I considered a really poor spring and more than I wondering where the birds had gone, we were rewarded by the second best fall that we have had in 11 years.

We had excellent coverage and our number of net hours were up a bit from last year. With 58 b/100nh, the year stands at third from the bottom. For the past few years, with the exception of 2008 (46 b/100nh), this statistic has remained around the low to high 50s. It is certainly nothing like 2001 with 92 b/100nh.

Coverage was provided by my local volunteers plus three volunteers from Canada, Cornelia Harries from Germany, Alan Rutherford from Scotland, Lucy Brooks-Marchant from England, and O'Brian from the U.S.A.

My local volunteers were Roswitha Matuschek, Kim Chritoff, Rick Young, Dora Young, and Jason Lymburner. Other volunteers would drop in and help for a day or so. Rock Point is a purely volunteer banding station.

Our nets remain in the same location as former years, with eight net locations holding two nets and one location holding an extra 6-m net. We band five or six hours a day with some days going a bit later. Where birds are caught is recorded so we know what nets produce and which are only moderate. We tried a little lure trapping this year and managed to encourage Bobolink and Eastern Bluebird to come

down and get a band. A few Rusty Blackbirds were also attracted but later we caught more without the use of a tape. A Great Horned Owl found in my pigeon coop was banded. (My pigeons are not for hawk bait, nor owls either for that matter!) Luckily, after taking some very poor pictures, we caught him in a hand net that I had around. Since he presented with his feet up and out of the net, we had little trouble getting a band on him.

Species represented by only one individual were: Blue-winged Warbler, Northern Parula, Hooded Warbler, Eastern Kingbird, Hairy Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, House Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow and Connecticut Warbler. We had 17 species banded in record numbers for Rock Point.

Recaptures involved 725 captures of which 644 were captured only once. One Black-capped Chickadee was recaptured 25 times in this fall period. We were happy to see our old pair of Blue Jays which were banded in 2000. A Yellow Warbler banded in 2002 returned. A chickadee and House Finch were banded in 2004, and two Yellow Warblers and a Song Sparrow were banded in 2005. The remainder of recaptures were from 2007 with 5; from 2008 were 21; 2009 were 90, and the remainder from 2010.

We had no foreign recaptures.

We had three recoveries of our own birds: European Starling banded 20 Oct 2009 and recovered within 5 km on 30 Sep 2010; American Robin banded 22 Oct 2009 and recovered within 30 km on 15 Jun 2010; Ruby-crowned Kinglet banded 2 May 2008 and found near Toronto (150 km) on 6 May 2010.

We are appreciative of Parks Ontario for continued support in allowing us to remain in Rock Point Provincial Park. Individual donations and corporate monetary support helps us continue; Bird Studies Canada in analyzing long term trends; Niagara Falls Nature Club for monetary support; my individual volunteers who make the slow mornings great and the really busy mornings possible.