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## FALL 2006 MIGRATION BANDING REPORT –our 21st fall season.

We had a nice, but average season with most of the excitement coming early and followed by lengthy periods of inactivity due weather during the prime movement periods. The major differences between a 5,000 plus and a 3,600 season were the weather and lack of our staple – goldfinch.

We banded 3591 new birds of 93 species in 89 days of operation. We also had 1,142 repeats, 118 returns and 262 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The hummingbirds were not banded. The total birds netted was 5,113 making our measure of efficiency 112 birds/100 net-hours for newly banded birds and 160 birds/100 NH overall. Hatching year birds were slightly below the 20-year norm at 86%.

The station banded list grew to 131 species plus five forms banded (136) with the addition of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

We had very few "big days" and only one over 100 birds. That was on 5 October when we banded 113. The reason for that high was amorphous as numbers were fairly well distributed over 22 species. Overall, eleven species were banded in numbers exceeding 100, including a very unusual irruption of Magnolia Warblers. We banded our 2nd Northern Shrike and had our first ever Traill's Flycatcher return.

American Goldfinch was the big disappointment. As we have reported previously, the last several years saw a huge increase in their numbers leading to three successive years around 2,000 individuals banded. That all changed this season with only 425 banded, our lowest total since 1997. Anecdotal feeder reports from the larger geographic area support our result. We believe the migratory flow moved quite a bit westward this year.

During the last iteration of the NYS Breeding Bird Atlas, (2000-2005) we reported very "early" fall Yellow-bellied Flycatchers on two years. In both cases the adult females presented with very active, vascular brood patches. Unfortunately, atlas criteria for confirmation required an egg to be present in the oviduct which was not the case. The species was reported as a "probable" breeding species here. On 8 July 2006, we again captured and banded an After-second year Yellow-bellied Flycatcher that presented with a highly edematous brood patch but we could not feel an egg. Once again we had to assume early southern movement. The closest known breeding area for this species is the Adirondack Mountains to our Northeast. Local records and birding publications show a late spring date of 13 June and an early fall date of 31 July (previous banding here).

Militating for a new breeding record was the recapture of this individual on 5 August 2006. At this time vascularity of the brood patch had receded and molt was beginning. However, the bird may have just liked its surroundings and was in extended stopover. We recaptured this bird two other times between the 5th and the 10th.

The clincher came on 10 August when we banded a hatching year Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in fresh plumage strongly supporting the breeding of this species in the Finger Lakes Highlands!

Despite the weather, most species were captured within normal parameters. A few are significant and worthy of mention: We had our first miss of Eastern Wood Pewee in 21 years; Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were twice the norm; Least Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Red-eyed vireo, Northern Waterthrush and Northern Cardinal were all banded in their highest numbers ever as was Magnolia Warbler which exceeded the norm by five times! Sparrows and other species were down but we believe those to be related to the shut down of the station during extended bad weather in the prime movement dates.

Returns were terrific! Two goldfinch at 10 years of age challenged the species longevity record while our eldest return was an eleven-year-old Black-capped Chickadee. Of the 118 returns, 33 of 14 species were in excess of 4 years of age. They shred out as follows:

- One Downy Woodpecker at 6
- Six Black-capped Chickadees at **11,** and 4+ (5)
- One White-breasted Nuthatch at 4+
- One American Robin at 4
- Four Gray Catbirds at 9 and 4+ (3)
- One Chestnut-sided Warbler at 5
- Three Yellow Warblers at 7, 6+ and 5+
- One Common Yellowthroat at 4+
- One Northern Cardinal at 6
- One American Tree Sparrow at 4
- Four Song Sparrows at 7, 6 (2) and 4
- One Purple Finch at 6
- One House Finch at 4
- Seven American Goldfinch at **10** (2), 5, 4+ (2) and 4 (3).

Overall health reflected the cool, wet weather of the breeding season. We had avian pox in Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Common Yellowthroat and Song Sparrow while many species had abundant Hippoboscid flies, especially early in the season. Two Least Flycatchers had heavy feather mite infestation on their tails and an American Goldfinch was infested in the facial region. Fault bars were prevalent in many species.

Tumors were abundant and the causes unknown. A Common Yellowthroat had a gape tumor, a Cedar Waxwing had a throat tumor, a House Finch had culmen tumor, a Gray Catbird had a large patagial tumor and one poor Brown Thrasher had multiple tumors and a deformed upper mandible. We had one flicker intergrade that displayed red shafts bilaterally on primary six. A very rare Cedar Waxwing presented with wax on all rectrices as well as the secondaries and tertials in addition to the normal wax tips; we banded a similar bird last fall. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet male showed an orange crown. The H5N1 collection effort was very disappointing as funding and therefore supplies, was minimal. We were only able to collect 50 samples to bring the year's effort to 102 birds sampled. We hope those in charge achieve better funding and efficiency of operation next year; as of this writing, UCLA has yet to report on the Spring 2006 samples!

Finally, deer were again a problem and mist nets suffered. A doe gave birth to twins in our yard and the three remain in a very small territory to this date. While they caused some damage, they usually approached a net and nuzzled it up at the base and scooted under in a flash without damaging the net. At nets further removed we had another case of deer taking birds. Last year we resolved the situation by placing pig manure at the net poles. That kept the deer away. This year our source no longer kept pigs so we had to resort to the "nuclear option". Hoping that deer instinctively fear their prime predator of a century or more ago, we visited a wildlife rehabilitator couple that specializes in big cats. We returned from that interesting foray with a sack of Cougar manure (dubbed Panther Poop) and spread it at the nets. It was a smelly but effective deterrent.

Our sixth year of identifying and marking dragonflies incidentally netted resulted in identification of 43 individuals of 15 species. The station total of odonates is now at 72 species.

Kestrel Haven banding and point count data for the last several years were again used in biological site studies for more large wind power projects in our and nearby counties. The Speedtech avian prediction algorithm we reported last fall proved to be a failure and their instruments disappointing in all respects.

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## Fall 2006 Station Operating Statistics:

Start**: 5 July**
Stop: **24 November**
Days of Operation: **89**
Nets Used: **1 to 22**
Net Hours 2005: 4,921
Net Hours 2006: **3,195.5**
Best Day: **113 on 5 October**
Reason: **see text**
Best Diversity: **26 species on 30 August and 15 September**
Banded 2005: **5,102**
Banded 2006: **3,591**
Species 2005: **91**
Species 2005: **93**
Birds/100NH 2005: **153**
Birds/100NH 2005: **112**
%HY 2004: **88**
%HY 2005: **86**

## Most Frequently Banded Species:

| Rank | Species | Number | %HY | Decoded |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | SOSP (2) | **527** | **96** | Song Sparrow |
| 2. | AMGO (1) | **425** | **86** | American Goldfinch |
| 3. | GRCA (5) | **257** | **93** | Gray Catbird |
| 4. | COYE (7) | **244** | **86** | Common Yellowthroat |
| 5. | RCKI (10) | **123** | **94** | Ruby-crowned Kinglet |
| 6. | RBGR | **107** | **79** | Rose-breasted Grosbeak |
| 7. | HOFI (6) | **105** | **96** | House Finch |
| 8. | CEDW | **104** | **35** | Cedar Waxwing |
| 8. | SCJU (9) | **104** | **74** | Slate-colored Junco |
| 9, | MAWA | **103** | **98** | Magnolia Warbler |
| 10. | YWAR | **101** | **86** | Yellow Warbler |

(#) = Ranking last fall

Percent of total banded: **61%**