

Thunder Cape News

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by John Woodcock

Fall migration monitoring began on August 1 and ran continuously until October 27. Banding totals were the third lowest in TCBO's 18 years of operation. This was only the second time that spring banding totals exceeded fall banding totals, as happened in 1996. The weather was fair through most of August. The month began with average numbers of Nashville, Myrtle, Magnolia, Black-throated Green and Canada warblers that all but disappeared about mid-month. After a 2-week lull, other species trickled in to the end of September; Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird and Mourning Warbler. Four species accounted for 25% of the total catch: Golden-crowned Kinglet 7.4%, Northern Saw-whet Owl 6.4%, Western Palm Warbler 6.1% and Nashville Warbler 5.5%. An average of 28 birds per day were banded in August, capture rates declined during the second half of August. Capture rates returned to an average of 51 per day in September and then declined to 30 per day in October. There were only 3 days when over 100 birds were banded: Sept. 13 and 25 when 211 and 375 birds were



banded respectively and Oct. 15 when 157 were banded. Over 80% of all Slate-colored Junco banded this fall were banded on Sept. 25. The highest estimated total occurred on October 15, attributable in part to over 4,100 Pine Siskin observed that day. The peak species date was September 25 when 68 species were documented.

Seventeen volunteers contributed a total of 288 volunteer days.



Boreal Owl

FALL HIGHLIGHTS

First ever banded at the Cape in the fall:

House Finch (1)

Townsend's Warbler (1)

Wood Thrush (1)

Other Highlights

Red-throated Loon – 45 over the season

Tundra Swan – 13 on Oct. 19

Redhead – 204 on Sept. 16

Harlequin Duck – two on Oct. 22

Great Black-backed Gull – one on Aug. 16

Caspian Tern – two Aug. 2

Semipalmated Sandpiper – one banded Sept. 3

Whimbrel – one Aug. 25

Cooper's Hawk – three on Sept. 13 and 15

Ruby-throated Hummingbird – the last of the season on Sept. 16

Chimney Swift – one Aug. 24

Boreal Owl – 3 banded Oct. 19 and 21

Northern Hawk Owl – Oct. 17

Black-backed Woodpecker – 19 banded down from 44 in 2007

Three-toed Woodpecker – 4 banded between Oct. 16 and 23

Red-bellied Woodpecker – one Oct. 20

Wood Thrush – one banded July 3

Eastern Phoebe – one Aug. 20

White-breasted Nuthatch – three banded Oct. 12, 14 and 22

'Yellow' Palm Warbler – one Oct. 8

Connecticut Warbler – one Aug. 29

Oregon Junco – 3 banded Sept. 25

Fox Sparrow – 5 banded Sept. 25

LeConte's Sparrow – 3 banded Sept. 28 and 29 and Oct. 6

Table 1. Fall totals of individuals and species/forms banded (1994-2008).

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Mean
Individuals	4303	9185	3607	4879	2482	4063	2322	6844	4502	7124	5333	6817	4921	7819	3521	5181
Species	86	101	85	92	89	101	89	93	92	101	92	97	94	112	100	94



White-winged Crossbill

Table 2. The 20 most abundant birds banded in the fall 2008, with comparative totals from previous years.

Rank	Species (overall fall ranking 1991 –2007)	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
1	Golden-crowned Kinglet (10)	260	92	587	213	485	117	383	198	87
2	Northern Saw-whet Owl (3)	227	481	422	360	137	573	413	285	350
3	Western Palm Warbler (4)	215	388	218	304	133	380	195	168	36
4	Nashville Warbler (8)	194	592	195	792	189	171	96	75	40
5	Myrtle Warbler (5)	181	371	258	466	184	343	161	81	38
6	Brown Creeper (15)	176	134	192	156	119	129	144	126	90
7	Chipping Sparrow (14)	149	245	266	190	86	74	127	60	13
8	Slate-colored Junco (2)	139	403	47	515	886	487	138	762	100
9	American Redstart (6)	138	261	181	149	91	253	217	245	140
10a	Savannah Sparrow (12)	127	268	208	269	102	204	192	187	59
10b	Sharp-shinned Hawk (7)	127	119	60	126	94	203	119	150	120
11	Black-capped Chickadee (1)	116	483	203	70	545	1143	106	2602	148
12	Red-breasted Nuthatch (13)	84	137	182	47	170	143	13	44	30
13	Magnolia Warbler (17)	79	123	92	103	64	82	68	94	56
14	Swainson's Thrush (11)	73	363	97	153	116	273	60	61	54
15	Black and White Warbler (24)	64	140	76	84	45	78	69	35	21
16	Blue Jay (26)	58	202	72	157	83	90	41	32	17
17	Blackpoll Warbler (21)	57	206	30	244	85	104	36	35	14
18	Traill's Flycatcher (25)	53	159	52	109	45	48	27	85	17
19	Tennessee Warbler (9)	51	215	164	625	148	397	199	52	114



Townsend's Warbler

Fall Recaptures

There were 7 foreign recoveries:

Band No.	Species	Date Banded	Location Banded
0724-13447	Saw-whet Owl	?	near Dora Lake, MN
0894-64823	Saw-whet Owl	?	near Dora Lake, MN
0894-33850	Saw-whet Owl	Oct. 8 2004	near Arnold, MN
0844-76225	Saw-whet Owl	Nov. 22 2004	near Tofte, MN as AHY
0904-02627	Saw-whet Owl	?	?
0924-05474	Saw-whet Owl	Nov. 5 2007	near Cape May, NJ as HY
1116-46589	Herring Gull	June 3 2008	near Marquette, MI as a nestling
1583-74157	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Oct. 6 2006	near Arnold, MN as SY

There were 5 recaptures of birds banded in previous seasons at Thunder Cape:

Band No.	Species	Recaptured	Banded
0924-46903	Saw-whet Owl	09 28 2008	10 22 2007
2330-26916	American Redstart	08 18 2008	08 01 2005
2460-14219	Black-capped Chickadee	09 30 2008	10 02 2006
2460-14369	Black-capped Chickadee	09 30 2008	10 17 2006
2460-06716	Black-throated Green Warbler	08 07 2008	08 22 2007



Sharon Gilbert with Scarlet Tanager

Table 3. Recent recoveries of birds banded at Thunder Cape Bird Observatory.

Band #	When banded	Species	When recovered	Where recovered
0972-38379	Sep. 29 2007	Blue Jay	Oct. 22 2007	Two Harbours, Minnesota
2330-28363	Apr. 25 2007	Brown Creeper	Apr. 20 2007	McHenry, Illinois
0967-13403	Oct. 2 2007	Cackling Goose	Dec. 2007	Katy, Texas
0748-05495	Sept. 28 2008	Canada Goose	Oct. 18 2008	Horicon, Wisconsin
8051-98299	June 10 2006	Green-tailed Towhee	Jan. 2 2007	Mountain Lake, Minnesota
2530-24302	Sept. 8 2007	Myrtle Warbler	April 30 2008	Blacksburg, South Carolina
0924-46595	Oct. 4 2007	Saw-whet Owl	Jan. 3 2009	Metamora, Illinois
0924-46016	Sept. 18 2006	Saw-whet Owl	Sept. 28 2006	Arnold, Minnesota
0924-46174	Oct. 4 2006	Saw-whet Owl	Oct. 24 2006	Arnold, Minnesota
0924-46238	Oct. 10 2006	Saw-whet Owl	Oct. 24 2006	Arnold, Minnesota
0924-12905	Oct. 9 2005	Saw-whet Owl	Mar. 16 2007	Whitefish Point, Michigan
0924-12756	Sept. 29 2005	Saw-whet Owl	Mar. 23 2007	Whitefish Point, Michigan
1343-69064	Oct. 17 2002	Saw-whet Owl	Mar. 24 2007	Whitefish Point, Michigan
0924-46171	Oct. 4 2006	Saw-whet Owl	May 19 2007	Whitefish Point, Michigan
0924-46006	Sept. 15 2006	Saw-whet Owl	Oct. 4 2007	Duluth, Minnesota
0924-46663	Oct. 5 2007	Saw-whet Owl	Oct. 13 2007	Hawk Ridge, Duluth, Minnesota
0924-46716	Oct. 5 2007	Saw-whet Owl	Oct. 13 2007	Stevens Point, Wisconsin
0924-46483	Sept. 28 2007	Saw-whet Owl	Oct. 20 2007	Babcock, Wisconsin
0924-12879	Oct. 8 2005	Saw-whet Owl	Nov. 7 2007	Duluth, Minnesota
1343-67079	Sept. 28 1999	Saw-whet Owl	Nov. 8 2007	Duluth, Minnesota
0924-46521	Oct. 1 2007	Saw-whet Owl	April 19 2008	Whitefish Point, Michigan
0924-46648	Oct. 5 2007	Saw-whet Owl	April 27 2008	Cedar Falls, Iowa
1343-69757	Sept. 2 2005	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Sept. 25 2006	Arnold, Minnesota
1373-15953	Sept. 8 2003	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Apr. 24 2007	Whitefish Point, Michigan
1343-69755	Aug. 19 2005	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Apr. 29 2007	Whitefish Point, Michigan
1493-23488	Aug. 28 2007	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Sept. 1 2007	Hawk Ridge, Duluth, Minnesota
1493-23517	Sept. 19 2007	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Sept. 24 2007	Hawk Ridge, Duluth, Minnesota
2420-36099	Sept. 12 2005	Tennessee Warbler	Oct. 28 2006	Chiriqui, Panama
2350-66035	Aug. 6 2004	Yellow Warbler	Jun.27 2007	Current River, Ontario

Raptor Migration

Peak numbers of **Turkey Vulture** were observed during the third week of September and the last of the season was seen on Oct. 17. Small numbers of **Osprey** were observed migrating during the last week of September with the last of the season observed on October 5. **Bald Eagle** were observed most days, with peak numbers (28) seen on Sept. 20. Only 16 **Northern Harrier** were seen this season, the first on Aug. 17 and the last on Oct.

20. Peak numbers of **Sharp-shinned Hawk** were observed between Sept. 3 and Sept. 27. The first of the season was observed and banded on Aug. 8. The last of the season was observed on October 20. The numbers of 'sharpies' banded (127) was up slightly over last year but well below the previous 17 year average of around 200. **Northern Goshawk** were observed migrating between Aug. 26 and Oct. 21; 2 were banded. **Broad-winged Hawk** were observed migrating from mid-to late-Sept. with peak numbers (222)

observed on Sept. 15 ; the last of the season was observed on October 1. Small numbers of **Red-tailed Hawk** were observed migrating in mid-September.

Only 3 **Rough-legged Hawk** were observed this season (Oct. 1 and 20).

Three **Golden Eagle** were observed Oct. 19 to 23. The first **American Kestrel** of the season was observed on Aug. 18 and last was seen on Oct. 19, with peak numbers (41) seen on Sept. 18. The last of the season was seen on October 19. Small numbers of **Merlin** were observed most days from Aug. 1 to the last on Oct. 15.

Peregrine Falcon were also observed most days from August 1 through October 15 when the last of the season was observed.

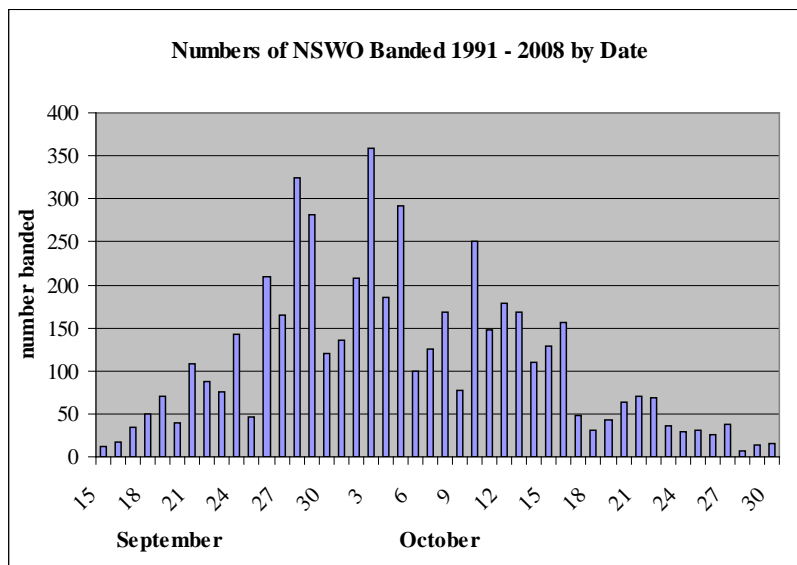
The first **Northern Saw-whet Owl** of the season was banded on September 17; peak numbers were captured on the night of Sept. 21 when 56 were banded. The last of the season was banded on Oct. 23. Below average numbers were banded this season

(225), attributable in part to poor trapping weather. We recovered 4 birds that were banded in Minnesota and one that was banded in New Jersey.

Table 6 presents a summary of the first dates, last dates and peak numbers and dates of commonly encountered species.

Northern Saw-whet Owl Monitoring

Since TCBO's first season in 1991 a total of 5,096 Saw-whet Owls have been banded. The three top years were 2003, 2007 and 2006 when 564, 477 and 422 were banded respectively. Perhaps of more interest to the visitor are the dates when peak numbers are captured which is late-September to early-October as the following chart illustrates. The night of October 2/3 was the date when the greatest number of Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded on average. The night of October 4 and 5 2007 was the busiest night ever with 165 owls banded.



FACILITIES UPDATE AND MISCELLANEOUS WORK

Back steps to the deck were replaced. All steps leading up to the deck around the main cabin were treated with a non-slip finish to prevent further falls. Two new windows were installed on the tower to replace those that were blown out last winter. Two windows that can be opened were installed on the main cabin to provide cross-ventilation. A new window was installed on the banding lab replacing one that had a broken seal and was constantly fogging-up.

The solar panels on the roof of the main cabin were re-aligned to face south to enable them to work more efficiently. They were previously facing south-west. An additional solar panel and a larger capacity controller was installed. Three new fire extinguishers were purchased and installed, one per building. “*Enter At Your Own Risk*” signs were purchased and installed on the tower and beside the trail into TCBO. Three blowdowns beside the tower were removed. A fire pit and all woody debris were removed from the vicinity of the tower. A safe fire pit and campsite were prepared near the lake west of the tower, well away from the tower. Numerous blowdowns over net lanes and trails were cleaned-up and turned into firewood for heating the sauna and cabins. The outhouse was moved over a new hole. Vegetation was trimmed as appropriate to maintain early succession ‘appearing’ habitat.

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volunteers Manuel Ballesteros, Jeremy Bryan, Mike Bryan, Sue Bryan, Erica Dunn, Ray Gribble, Allan Hale, David Hussell, Nick Escott, Marion Grant, Michael Grant, Darroch Whittaker, and Joe Youngman.



Sue and Mike Bryan arrive at the Cape

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Fall 2008 crew: Ray Gribble, Derek Whitaker, Manuel Ballesteros, Allan Hale, Maureen and John Woodcock.

ABOUT THE CAPE



Thunder Cape Bird Observatory (<http://www.tbfn.org/tcbotbfn.htm>) is a joint project of the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources – Wildlife Assessment Program (OMNR - WAP), and Bird Studies Canada working in partnership with Sleeping Giant Provincial Park, and then Canadian Coast Guard. Core funding for the migration monitoring at Thunder Cape is provided by OMNR – WAP, to contribute to its assessment of bird population trends in Ontario.

Thunder Cape News is published twice yearly by the Thunder Cape Bird Observatory Committee (a subcommittee of the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists).

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