**Ellenville Station** **414-0742**
Ellenville, Ulster County, NY
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Fall banding at this location produced above-average numbers of birds banded, exceeded only four times in the 38-year history of this station. Net hours were about average, as was the number of species banded.

Weather conditions this fall were favorable for banding, with warm temperatures, and few problems from wind and frost, which can prevent one from opening nets here, first appeared very late (29 Oct). August was slightly above average in both temperature and precipitation. The mild weather allowed a new high in number of days of banding at 44.

Overall, 62% of new birds were HY, a figure just under the average for the past 16 years. Not all species showed average age ratios: almost all juncos were adult and almost all catbirds were HY.

The outstanding feature this fall was the abundance of fruits on the shrubs around the net lanes, in quantities not seen here before. arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*) and silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*) were loaded with fruits, as were honeysuckle (*Lonicera sp.*) early in the season and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) later. Many frugivorous birds were attracted to the bounty, led by Red-eyed Vireos, which were banded in the highest numbers ever (76). (Though insectivorous during the breeding season, these vireos eat both fruit and insects during migration.) My experience suggests that their numbers are related to the availability of arrowwood fruits.

Fall migration of young Red-eyed Vireos is said to occur over a longer period than that of adults. At this station, HY's were banded daily from 1 Aug through 10 Sep, while adults were banded during the period of 3 Aug through 30 Aug.

Other frugivores included catbirds in above-average numbers (63) and the most Hermit Thrushes (38) and Veerys (21) ever banded here. Above-average numbers of Swainson's Thrushes brought the total of thrushes banded to 85, the largest number since fall 1976, when just over 100 were banded, including 62 Swainson's and 19 Wood Thrushes.

The good news was tempered by a continuing decline in the number of warblers here. Only 50 warblers of 12 species were banded, comprising 8% of all birds banded. Over the years, warblers have averaged about 25% of all bird banded at this station and have been as high as 39% of the total catch. Only 18 Common Yellowthroats were banded this fall versus an annual average of 27 for the previous 37 years; and only four each of Ovenbirds and Magnolia Warblers were banded versus an average of 14 each in previous years.

Two exciting predators were caught in my nets: a Cooper's Hawk and a Northern Shrike (the latter next to a dead chickadee in the net!). The accipiter was released unbanded, since I lacked a large enough band; and the shrike, the second one ever captured here, was banded and released.

**McGill Bird Observatory** **454-0739**
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The McGill Bird Observatory (MBO) was established in 2004 at the west end of the island of Montreal, on a 22-ha property adjacent to the Morgan Arboretum, the largest arboretum in Canada. It is the only observatory in Quebec to operate standardized spring and fall migration banding programs and is a provisional member of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network. Following partial spring and fall pilot seasons in 2004, full standardized monitoring began in 2005. MBO is affiliated with McGill University, but operated by the Migration Research Foundation (MRF), a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of wildlife movements, especially as they relate to population monitoring and conservation.

The fall season at MBO begins on 1 Aug and continues for 13 weeks through 30 Oct. During this period, the one-hour census trail is walked daily, and banding is carried out daily for five hours, beginning a half hour before dawn, weather

permitting. This year, bander-in-charge duties were shared by Marie-Anne Hudson and Barbara Frei, with station master permit holder Marcel Gahbauer helping out for a few days in August. Bander apprentices during the season were Gay Gruner and Andre Pelletier; and 83 other volunteers provided essential assistance with extractions, record-keeping, and incidental observations on site.

During the fall 2007 season, five of 91 days were lost to rain, and banding hours were reduced due to weather on an additional nine days. Total effort for the season was 5,365 net hours and 104 hours operating one J-trap, new to the site this fall. Net hours were higher than in previous fall seasons, largely due to fewer rain days this year. Despite that, the number of birds banded was 2,876, down about 11% from the average in our first two full fall seasons. However, the number of species banded was 77, very close to the 78 in 2005 and 75 in 2006. Twelve male, nine female, and 12 undetermined Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were released unbanded between 1 Aug and 10 Sep, but some individuals were likely caught more than once. New birds were captured at a rate of 52.5 b/100nh.

Five species were banded at MBO for the first time this fall, bringing our cumulative total to 103. These were Cooper's Hawk, Marsh Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, and Golden-winged Warbler. Another five species were observed at MBO for the first time this fall, but not banded: Least Sandpiper, Common Moorhen, Barred Owl, Clay-colored Sparrow, and White-winged Crossbill. The total number of species observed at MBO since May 2004 is now 191. The total observed during the 2007 fall season was 144.

Our busiest day of the fall season was 10 Oct, with 138 birds of 18 species banded, of which 53% were Ruby-crowned Kinglets and 12% were American Robins. We banded over 100 individuals on two other days: 28 Sep (112) and 6 Oct (122). Species diversity among birds banded peaked at 24 on 25 Sep, and among birds observed was highest at 57 on 26 Aug.

Though MBO has not kept records of Hippoboscid fly occurrence in past seasons, the bander-in-charge present for the past three years noted a remarkable increase in the number Hippoboscids this fall. Three ticks were collected and sent for analysis as part of a collaborative effort with another researcher.

Typically, all 15 nets were operated daily, but one set of four is more exposed to wind and was, therefore, left closed on some days. All nets are 12-m Spidertech passerine nets (30-mm mesh), set on standard ten-foot poles. Each net is numbered and location is noted for all birds captured. Photos are taken of each net annually to monitor any potential changes in habitat over time.

There were 562 repeats of 43 species during the season, subdivided into local residents captured repeatedly, and migrants that lingered for as long as 49 days (in the case of one hatching-year Nashville Warbler). We also had 46 returns (not handled in at least three months) of 12 species. Over half of these individuals were Black-capped Chickadees or Song Sparrows, seven of which (five chickadees and two sparrows) were banded during the first fall pilot season in 2004. Four birds were recaptured for the first time in at least two years: a Veery, a Gray Catbird, a Baltimore Oriole, and an American Goldfinch. All recaptures are fully processed in the same manner as new captures, unless they are caught for the second time in one day.

The five most frequently banded species this fall were Ruby-crowned Kinglet (375), American Robin (318), White-throated Sparrow (318), Song Sparrow (198), and Black-capped Chickadee (172). Except for American Robin, which was the ninth most common in 2005, the first four species have dominated the top five each fall since 2004. The Black-capped Chickadee appears to follow a two-year cycle at MBO, with a high number of migrants also in 2005, but mostly local residents and their offspring in 2004 and 2006. Other noteworthy highs this year included Hairy Woodpecker (8, compared to a previous high of 3), House Wren (36, previous high 16), Purple Finch (11, previous high 3), and White-crowned Sparrow (80, previous high 50). The species most notable for its scarcity this fall was Myrtle Warbler (68 banded compared to 522 in 2006). Other record lows included Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (1, previous low 10), Nashville Warbler (50, previous

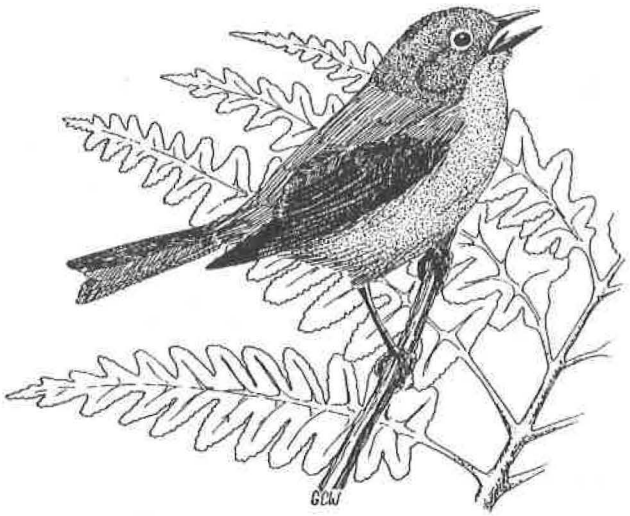
low 98), Tennessee Warbler (18, previous low 46), Magnolia Warbler (74, previous low 157), and Ovenbird (13, previous low 34). A cumulative list of all species banded at MBO is maintained at www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/banded.html.

Research and education continued on various fronts this fall. Weekly updates on the migration monitoring program are provided on the MRF website throughout the season and are archived at www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/log.html. For the past couple of years, MBO has been developing an online photo library to assist local trainees and banders elsewhere with ageing and sexing. Many new photos were taken this fall to expand this resource, which already includes over 50 species, and will be fully updated in early 2008 with several new species and expanded coverage of many of those already on the site (www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/id/idlibrary.html).

In August, Marcel Gahbauer led a weekend workshop on ageing by molt limits in fall. Fifteen participants spent Saturday afternoon at an indoor seminar based on images from the MBO photo library, and then put their knowledge to the test Sunday morning, when nearly 70 birds of 20 species were banded at MBO. Site tours with a more basic introduction to banding research were given to several other groups, including the Club d'ornithologie d'Ahuntsic. Later in the season, undergraduate students from McGill University's ornithology class each made at least four trips to MBO as part of their course work, and many students in the natural history of vertebrates class also volunteered to help with the banding program.

Some students have become more heavily involved, undertaking term projects on such topics as quantifying net avoidance, testing ecological hypotheses by looking at differential migration in certain species, looking at the effect of weather patterns on banding, and exploring alternate features for ageing and sexing Black-capped Chickadees. MBO banders are also collecting extra data on a variety of species including Downy Woodpecker, Song Sparrow, and American Goldfinch, all in an effort to further improve accuracy in ageing. Additional research projects are currently in development.

In addition to the directors and banders, many other people play an important role in the operation of MBO. Fifteen core volunteers each came out at least seven times during the fall season to help as extractors, censusers, observers, and/or scribes: Jean Beaudreault, Sophie Cauchon, Shawn Craik, Jean Demers, Gay Gruner, Barbara and Don MacDuff, Sarah Marteinson, Chris Murphy, Andre Pelletier, Greg Rand, Katleen Robert, Anna Solecki, Clemence Soulard, and Rodger Titman. Many of them also put in additional time assisting with site maintenance, as well as helping with fundraising or other organizational issues. An additional 65 people came out for at least one morning this fall, and collectively the over 2400 hours volunteered this fall were instrumental to the success of the season. Special thanks to McGill University for providing access to the land on which MBO operates.




**Nashville Warbler**
**by George West**