

Apr 2013. A hatch-year, unknown sex, Black-capped Chickadee banded by Connie Skipper on 29 Sep 2012, was found dead on 1 Dec 2012, in Marietta, Washington County, OH.

The station had 18 visitors, plus a class of 20 fifth graders and four chaperones from Crellin Elementary School and a brief visit from an Indian Springs WMA work crew.

An interestingly plumaged and stunning Gray Catbird was captured on 23 Sep. It had two white feathers on the right wing and three white feathers on the left wing. This bird had been banded by Skipper on 17 Aug 2009, as a hatch-year bird. It had no such wing coloration at the time of banding. One has to wonder what causes such anomalies and does it happen each year once it appears.

The season seemed rather average until late in the season, when the finch irruption reached us. The 100 Pine Siskins boosted our total birds banded for the year, making this the highest in the twelve years at this station. The season ended abruptly as the Hurricane Sandy snowstorm bore down upon us. Fortunately, the nets were down because the heavy snows broke down trees and branches blocking the road to the station. It would have ruined many nets.

We thank Mike Fazenbaker who helped clear the net lanes and Bill Pope for his help mowing and tending the nets. We appreciate Rick Latshaw and Mike Fazenbaker granting us the privilege of banding at Mt. Nebo WMA.

**Allegheny Front  
Migration Observatory**

**390-0791**

Grant County, WV

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Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) is located at Dolly Sods, Grant County, West Virginia.

The 250,000th bird banded in the history of AFMO was banded with Ralph K. Bell's band on 27 Sep 2012. Everyone gathered around when the Oct - Dec 2013

beautiful Blackpoll Warbler was banded, and pictures were taken to record the event. It was very fitting that the milestone bird was a Blackpoll Warbler because this species totaled 161 out of the 256 birds banded that day. A total of 31,839 Blackpoll Warblers have been banded at AFMO, since Bell founded the station on 18 Sep 1958. The only species with a higher number banded at AFMO is the Black-throated Blue Warbler, with a grand total banded of 36,243.

This fall, the station was opened on 11 Aug and closed on 5 Oct 2012. This was the 55<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of bird banding at AFMO. A total of 6,218 birds were banded of 70 species with a station effort of 103 b/100nhs. A total of 251,669 birds have been banded since 1958. The total species for the station are 123, with no new species banded this year. The overall percentage of hatch-year birds (using known-age birds only) was 66.13% compared with 70.37% in 2011 and 60.01% in 2010. There were nine days this fall, when over 100 birds were banded, four days over 200, three days over 300, and three days over 400 birds were banded. The station was open for 50 days and closed for six days due to bad weather, including Hurricane Isaac, which arrived at Dolly Sods, WV, the beginning of September.

Black-throated Blue Warbler was the most numerous species this year with 1,368 birds banded (12.3% over the 10-year average from 2002-2011). Blackpoll Warbler was second highest, with 973 banded (21.9% over the 10-year average). Black-throated Green Warbler was third highest, with 767 banded (13.8% over the 10-year avg.). Tennessee Warbler was the fourth highest, with 746 banded (114% OVER the 10-year average). Magnolia Warbler was the fifth highest, with 306 banded (17.4 under the 10-year average).

The total number of these top five species is 4,160, which is 66.9% of the total birds banded this fall. The next highest numbers of birds banded were Cape May Warbler (263), Swainson's Thrush (250) and Blackburnian Warbler (195).

One recovery was reported this year. A HY Blue Jay at AFMO on 2 Oct 2010 which was found dead after hitting a stationary object on 7 May 2012 at West Monroe, NY.

The Flyover Count was started by Ralph K. Bell in 1990 and is coordinated by Don Pattison. Results from the fall 2012 count of selected species, which make up the majority of the count are:

- 270 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds
- 7,716 Blue Jays (the greatest number since 2001, when 13,312 were recorded)
- 2,157 American Goldfinches
- 474 Monarch Butterflies
- 17 Dragonflies (lowest number recorded since the Count began).

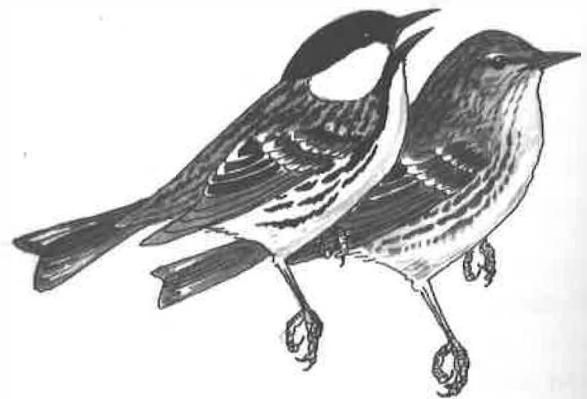
Two other Flyover species of note were 167 Red-breasted Nuthatches in comparison with three recorded in 2011 and 6,727 Tree Swallows in comparison to 354 recorded in 2011.

This fall, 932 people signed our Visitor's Book. Visitors came from 22 states, Canada, England, Puerto Rico and Australia. Several groups visited AFMO to learn about birds and nature, including the Highland Adventist School, Glenville State College Ecology Class, WV Wesleyan College Plant Systematics Class, the Ralph K. Bell Bird Club, Waynesburg, PA, Georgetown University Freshman Group, the Audubon Naturalist Society, Bethesda, MD, and the Canaan Valley Weekend Tour.

Thanks to the personnel of Monongahela National Forest: Supervisor, Clyde Thompson; Special Use Manager, Laura Hise; Develop Recreation Manager, Ed Sherman; Forestry Technician, John Waggy and all others for their cooperation and help. Thanks to the clubs, groups, visitors and volunteers for their financial support, which is our only means of replacing the 30 mist nets we use for the banding operation.

The banders who participated this year were Randy and Beth Ritter (also Campground Hosts), Bob Dean, LeJay Graffious, Todd Schnopp, Charles Zigenfus and Station Leader, Joan Pattison.

The scheduled volunteers who tended nets, kept records, assisted with the visitors, and helped in many ways were: Jeff and Sheila Berry, Don Pattison, Jackie Burns, Tom and Dawn Fox, Maggi Perl, Tom and Debbie Long, Fred and Carol McCullough, Marjorie Howard, Tim Newlin, Rich Bailey and Joe Schreiber. Thanks to LeJay Graffious, Todd Schnopp and their helpers, who erected the bird banding shed in August and took it down at the end of the banding season, and the WVDNR for the use of their building for storage of this shed. Thanks to Tom Fox and his crew for clearing the net lanes so we could begin banding, and Tom's continuous trimming throughout the fall season. Thanks to Luke Pattison for contributing his computer time and expertise to his grandfather's AFMO Research Project this year and in past years. We appreciate all of the dedicated volunteers who gave their time and expertise in many ways to help continue the research Ralph K. Bell envisioned for AFMO.



Blackpoll Warblers  
Pen and ink by George West