**2009 Migration Monitoring Program at CHRS**

**- Dr. Stéphane Menu**

**Spring Migration Monitoring Program**

The defining characteristic of spring 2009 was its cold weather throughout the season, with rain on many occasions, interspersed with a few warmers days associated with very strong south wind. There was no ice left on Wingfield Basin when the monitoring started, but a trench had to be dug through a huge snow bank on the Bay shoreline to set up a net! Bets were taken on when the snow bank would completely melt, and, with May 3, it is the Station Scientist who won, showing his profound knowledge of the area or… simply his plain luck! As a consequence of the mixed weather, there were 7 days without any banding (due to rain and windstorms) but 38 days with very good coverage (more than 84 mist net hours for a potential of 90). The banding total is the second highest ever since 2002. Two species, Golden-crowned Kinglet and American Redstart, represent 36% of the banding total, with 431 and 273 individuals banded, respectively! For several other species, banding totals were at or slightly above average compared to previous springs (see Table). There were 5 days with banding total over100 birds, with 165 and 162 birds banded on April 21 and 22, respectively. In May 13 and 15, 70 species – the highest season total - were detected, including 18 and 17 species of warblers, respectively. No new species were added to BPBO checklist.

There were a few recaptures this spring of birds banded in previous years, mostly local migratory breeders, such as American Redstarts (15 in total, banded in various years from spring 2001 to fall 2008), Magnolia Warblers (2 from spring 2008), and Red-eyed Vireos (2 from different seasons). Some residents were also recaptured: a male Hairy Woodpecker banded as a hatch-year bird in fall 2003 (and thus 6 years old now) and several Black-capped Chickadees originally banded in spring or fall of 2008. In all, 26 birds of 5 species previously banded at Cabot Head were recaptured, the majority of them (65%) banded the previous fall. The most impressive recapture is of a female American Redstart, banded as an after-second-year in spring 2001. It was recaptured every spring between 2003 and 2006, usually multiple times within a season (6 times, for example, in 2006, between May 26 and June 4) indicating a potential breeder. However, it was recaptured only once this spring, on May 31. As an after-second-year in the spring 2001, it was born in 1999 or before, making her at least 10 years old! It is thus as old as the oldest Restart known on record, which is 10 years and one month old (see <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bBL/homepage/longvlst.htm>).

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Despite the cold, it was yet another exciting year at Cabot Head. It is a privilege to experience nature daily in such a beautiful setting, but also to be able to share with visitors, school kids, students, and, of course, volunteers. A small but very dedicated team of long-term volunteers made for an extremely agreeable season. A warm thanks to them! Several short-term volunteers helped as well, and a big thanks to them! Some, like the Station Scientist, have been coming and helping at the station for a long time now, and are considered more as friends than volunteers.

**Fall Migration Monitoring Program**

Fall fieldwork began on August 16 and ended on October 31 for a total of 77 consecutive days of coverage. In total, 1,442 birds of 63 species were banded and 162 birds of 33 species were recaptured.

The defining characteristic of fall migration in 2009 was a good to excellent coverage. Most species were caught at average or below average numbers this fall. As a consequence, the banding total is well below average. A Yellow-breasted Chat was banded for the first time at Cabot Head: a new species for the area!A total of 130 species of birds were detected in the standard count area over the course of the field season. The highest one-day species total was 43, recorded on September 6. In addition to the Chat, new species banded in the fall season were American Woodcock and Eastern Wood Peewee.

The fall 2009 migration monitoring season was a success thanks to the efforts of the 9volunteer field biologists who contributed their time to this project.