

PIBO MIGRATION SUMMARY

OCTOBER 21st - 31st, 2010



American Tree Sparrow

It was an interesting and somewhat unusual eleven days at Fish Point from October 21st - 31st and, as so often the case with migratory birds, it was largely due to the weather. Powerful gale force winds from the southwest persisted throughout the early part of the summary period and migration practically ground to a halt, with just twenty-one species recorded on October 25th and 26th, for instance. And with the exception of **Red-breasted Merganser** and **Rough-legged Hawk**, no Fall 'firsts' were recorded at the station from the 21st - 28th. As suggested in last week's summary, this month has proven to be one of the least active Octobers at Fish Point to date, and some of the final totals for the month appear to confirm this.

At the same time, however, and once conditions finally improved, PIBO staff and volunteers were treated to some very active mornings towards the end of the month, including one of the busiest 'sparrow' days at the station since operations began in 2003. The winds finally shifted back to the north on the 28th and this prompted a large influx of birds the next morning, with 53 species recorded during the official count period along with 62 birds banded of fifteen species. A variety of species were noted in significant numbers including 12 **Common Loons**, 85 **American Crows**, 56 **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, 70 **White-throated Sparrows**, a mix of more than 2000 **Red-wings** and **Common Grackles**, and hundreds of **Rusty Blackbirds**. Other noteworthy sightings on the day included the first **Tundra Swans** and **Snow Buntings** of the Fall.

The wind shifted back to the south on October 30th and songbird numbers trailed off again, but then the temperature dropped, the winds returned to the north, and these conditions produced a major fallout on the final day of the month. In all, 52 species were recorded on October 31st (88 birds of sixteen species were banded) including more than 700 **American Crows** observed flying off the point during the census, large numbers of **Hermit Thrushes** (39 counted), a somewhat late **Nashville Warbler**, and ones-and-twos of a nice variety of other October migrants. An unprecedented diversity and abundance of sparrows was noted on the day as well, with the following ten species recorded at Fish Point during a 30-minute walk up the west beach: **American Tree**, **Field**, **Vesper**, **Savanna**, **White-throated**, **Eastern White-crowned**, **Fox**, **Song**, **Swamp**, and **Northern Junco**. An additional two species were noted later in the day including a few **Chipping Sparrows** and a surprisingly high-profile **Le Conte's Sparrow** discovered just up the road from the PIBO cottage.

PIBO's final 2010 summary will be posted on November 17th.

Photo: Sumiko Onishi

Be sure to check us out for daily updates throughout the rest of the migration season on Twitter at:

<http://twitter.com/PeleelslandBird>