

Rushton Woods Preserve Banding Big Fall 2018

On October 30, 2018, the Rushton Woods Banding Station conducted the first Banding Big Day. During this 24-hour effort, banders opened the nets for songbirds before sunrise until dark. Closing the songbird nets while simultaneously opening the nets for migratory Northern Saw-whet owls, banders continued straight through the night until just before dawn on the 31st. The purpose of this is to ask whether the bird community shifts throughout the day here at Rushton, do birds change their foraging strategy later towards dusk, will we see different species throughout the day.

The results are in with 115 songbirds of 22 species and 12 Northern Saw-whet Owls.

Species	New	Recapture	Total
WTSP	27	1	28
RCKI	25		25
SOSP	13	3	16
AMRO	11		11
SWSP	6		6
FISP	3		3
CARW		3	3
HETH	3		3
EATO	1	1	2
NOCA	1	1	2
DOWO		2	2
PUFI	1	1	2
GRCA	2		2
MYWA	2		2
YPWA	1		1
WCSP	1		1
WBNU	1		1
SSHA	1		1
GCKI	1		1
CACH		1	1
BRCR	1		1
TUTI		1	1
Grand Total	101	14	115

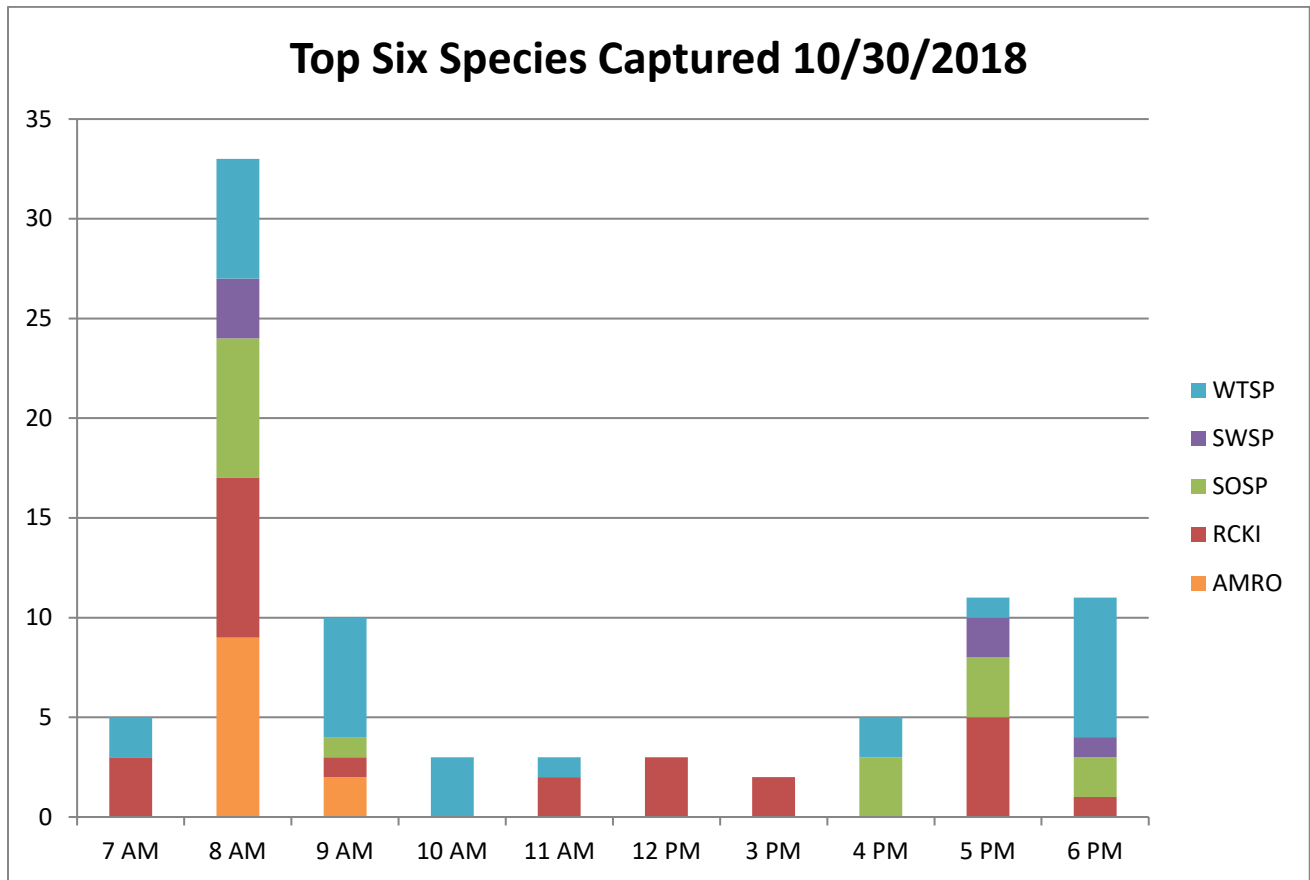
We found that as usual, most of the bird activity occurred in the first four hours of sunrise, a drop in activity during the mid-day, then a quick surge of activity from 4pm until sunset. As dusk settled in birds were flying into the nets faster than we could close them up!

Our top captures were White-throated Sparrow (WTSP), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (RCKI), Song Sparrow (SOSP), American Robin (AMRO) and Swamp Sparrow (SWSP). WTSP, SOSP and SWSP were captured only in the morning and evening. Maybe they were sticking to the farm fields, or taking a siesta in the

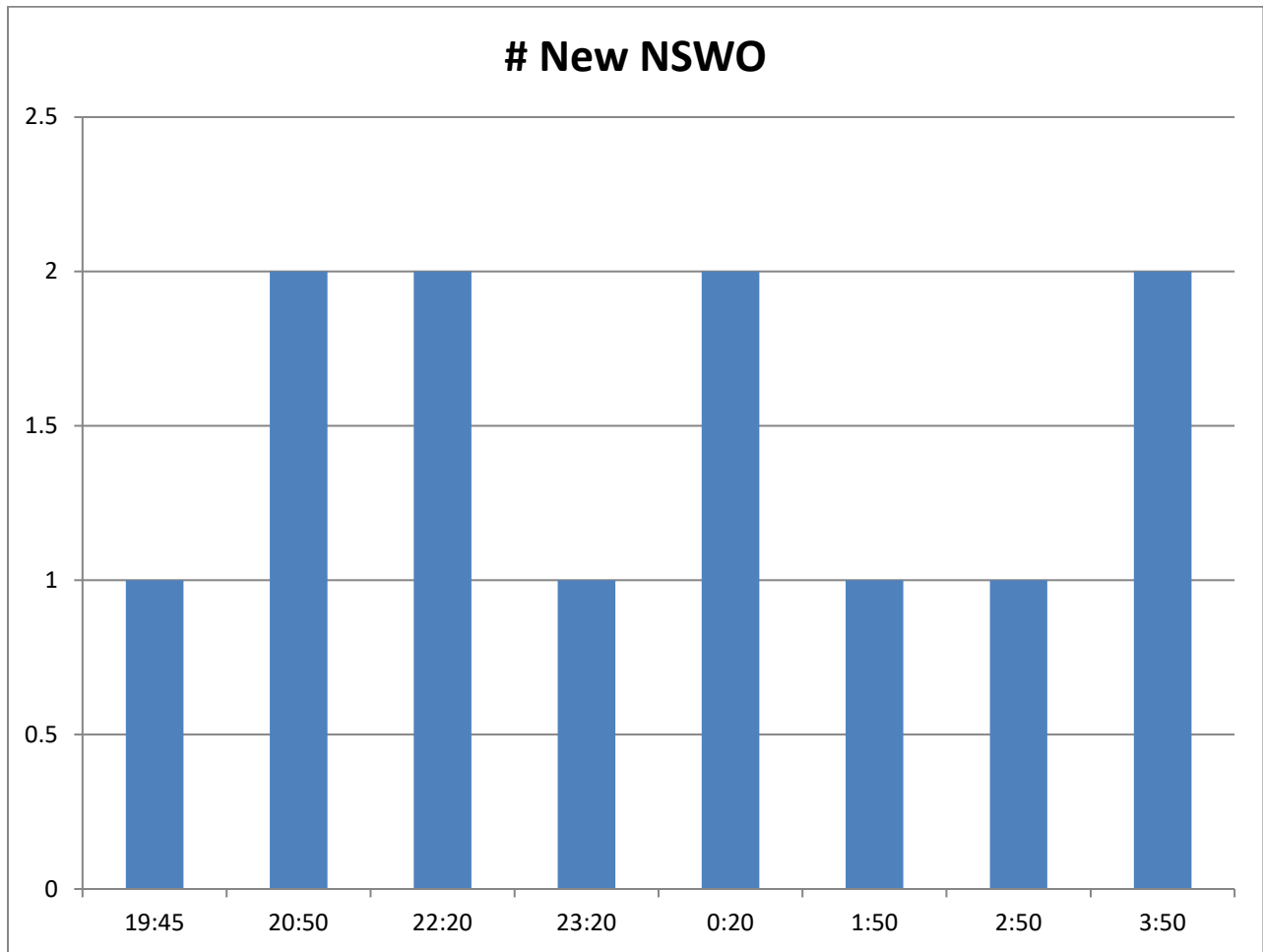
mid-day? AMRO were only captured in the morning, but RCKI were captured consistently throughout the day.

The few species caught in the afternoon included resident species such as Downy Woodpecker (DOWO), Tufted Titmouse (TUTI), and Carolina Chickadee (CACH). A couple migrant species such as Grey Catbird (GRCA) and Brown Creeper (BRCR) were also captured in the mid-day.

Time of Day	Number of Birds Captured
Morning (7am-9am)	58
Mid-day (10am-3pm)	23
Afternoon (4pm-6pm)	34



As the songbirds settled in for the night and the banders switched shifts, the NSWO owl lure was on and bringing in the nocturnal targets. A total of twelve owls were captured throughout the night, six by 11:30 pm, the usual closing time, and double that by 4 am. Banders hoped to see the sunrise to put in a full 24 hours of banding, however, around 5:30am, they started to catch songbirds again! This was surprisingly early to start seeing songbird movement, perhaps it was migrants coming in from the north, settling the hedgerows at Rushton.



The fall 2018 Rushton Banding Big Day was an impromptu effort to continue our efforts to learn more about the avian community at the farm. Future efforts could include coordinating with radar predictions of large migrations to allow us to better capture migrant behaviors in the study area. Thanks to the efforts of all the banders and volunteers to successfully sample the birds for twenty four hours at Rushton Woods Preserve.