

Valley Falls State Park
Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Station

2018

Marion County, West Virginia

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The fourteenth year of banding Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWO) at Valley Falls State Park produced a total of 27 owls, which was just three captures under the ten-year average.

Banding began on 10/18/2018 and ended on 12/09/2018. The station operated on twelve nights with the nets being opened for fifty hours. Ten of the twelve nights yielded owls with a peak capture of 6 NSWO's captured on the night of November 14th. Six of the ten nights yielded multiple owls, with October 25 and November 3rd producing four each. A lone foreign re-trap was caught this year on the night of November 3 which was banded 2 years ago in Pennsylvania.

The station had 75 visitors from four states. Fortunately, on each night with visitors, owls were captured, with multiple owls captured on two of those nights. What a thrill it was for all the visitors to experience such tiny owl in this way.

Of the 27 captures, 15 were adults, 12 were hatch year birds. Females again lead the way in captures in 2018 with 20, with 1 male and 5 unknowns.

After fourteen years of banding a total of 394 NSWOs have been captured, including 31 foreign recaptures and one return. The breakdown shows a heavy advantage for females, 75% to 8% for males. The unknown category completes the last 17%. The adult, hatch year ratio is almost even with 52% adult to 48% hatch year individuals. The station has hosted over fourteen hundred visitors from twelve states and the District of Columbia.

Again, I would like to thank Valley Falls State Park superintendent, Brett Harshbarger for the use of the park facilities and allowing visitors to experience the fall migration. Without Brett's support, this operation would not be possible.

14-year totals

Females	Males	Unknown	Hatch Year	After Hatch Year	Second Year
305	28	61	195	123	76

Banding Summary for 2018

Date	NSWO caught	
10/18/18	1	
10/25/18	4	
10/30/18	1	
11/2/18	1	
11/3/18	4	(1FR)
11/7/18	1	
11/10/18	3	
11/11/18	3	
11/14/18	6	
11/17/18	3	
11/21/18	0	
12/9/18	0	

Total 27 NSWO Banded 2018

Age

After hatch year (AHY).....6

Second year (SY).....9 56% (adults)

Hatch year (HY).....12 44%

Sex

Female – 21..... 78%

Male – 1.....4%

Unknown – 5.....18%