

1976

A Review of the Atlantic Flyway Review

North American Bird Bander

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb>

Recommended Citation

North American Bird Bander (1976) "A Review of the Atlantic Flyway Review," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 1 : Iss. 3 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol1/iss3/11>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in North American Bird Bander by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

A review of the Atlantic Flyway Review

As we start AFR coverage of the 1975 banding year, it is a good time to review the objectives of this feature. AFR is an in-depth look at the fall migration of small birds throughout the eastern part of the country. It differs from migration write-ups such as those found in *American Birds* in that it is based solely on banding data. It is a complement to sight records in these areas. Banding data show the relative intensity of the migration at various points within designated areas.

We have five Regional Coordinators who do an outstanding job of reviewing the dozens of reports, coordinating the common factors in their introductory paragraphs. Some changes in areas have been made, with the aid of Chandler S. Robbins, in order to place the stations in the proper reporting areas, i.e., coastal stations with other coastal stations and inland stations from the same areas together. Some of the minor changes were necessary to keep the final reviews in balance with each other.

A short review of the geographical areas and the coordinators follows:

Region I Richard Ferren: Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Massachusetts (east of the Connecticut River).

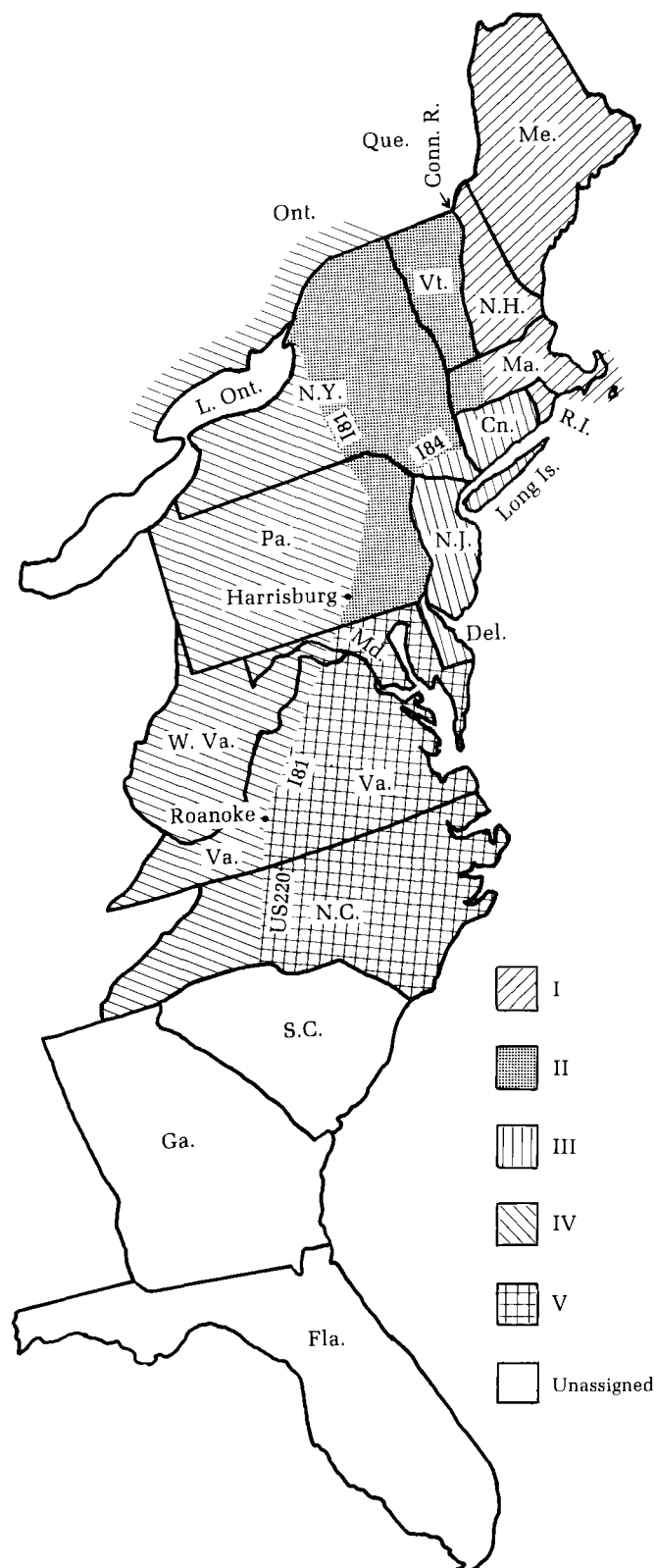
Region II Valerie Freer: New York (north of I84 & east of I81), Vermont, Massachusetts (west of the Connecticut River) and Pennsylvania (east of I81).

Region III Robert Dewire: Connecticut, New York (south of I84), Long Island, New Jersey and Delaware.

Region IV Donald F. Clark: Canada; and all areas west of I81 in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland; West Virginia; North Carolina (west of U.S. 220).

Region V Chandler S. Robbins: Areas east of I81 in Maryland and Virginia, Washington, D.C., and North Carolina (east of U.S.220).

The states of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida are unassigned at present. When stations develop in these states they will be assigned to Region IV or V, depending upon their locations. Please refer to the adjoining map.



A station, using mainly mist nets, may join in if its banding coverage is steady during the fall migration and there is regular (if not daily) coverage. The Regional Coordinator will gladly advise new stations of their eligibility. The basic records must include terrain, vegetation, number of nets, number of net-hours and the number of each species of bird banded. Recoveries and returns are also of interest in the reports.

We hope you will display your copy of *North*

American Bird Bander in which your regional coverage appears so that visitors to your banding station can see your final results, and that you will urge them to join us so that they'll be able to share the great papers that appear in this journal.

Ed. note: Much of the work on the following Regional report was done by Fred S. Schaeffer before he found it necessary to withdraw his services; for this I would be remiss if I did not publicly thank him.

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I

Richard L. Ferren, Coordinator

This year six stations participated in the Region I coverage. Grace Meleney was unable to band at her Martha's Vineyard station, but Barbara Patterson resumed her activities during 1975. Normally Jonnie Fisk reports from Homestead, Florida, but this year she banded at Nauset Lighthouse.

The 1975 fall banding season was a mixed success at Northeastern coastal banding stations. Most banders noted average or lower than average totals for most migrant landbirds. There was little agreement on which species were more or less common than usual. Most variations seemed well within the vagaries of the weather. Relatively few strong cold fronts crossed the region during the migration months. Most stations reported fewer good flights, apparently the most important factor in keeping overall totals down.

Manomet and Mount Desert noted the excellent flights of Black-capped Chickadees and Manomet banded five Boreal Chickadees. The Kingston station banded fewer of the first species than in the two previous years, but an active feeding program presented a bias. Block Island banded ten Black-capped Chickadees, a record total for this offshore locality and indicative of a definite incur-

sion across twelve or more miles of water. Red-breasted Nuthatches put in another excellent flight, unequaled at Block Island since 1965, but strangely were almost absent from the Mount Desert, Maine, station. Opinions varied on numbers of non-incursive species: Manomet considered 1975 to be a mediocre warbler year, Mount Desert thought the fall to be average and Nantucket registered a better-than-usual warbler migration. There was agreement at nearly all the stations that the Bay-breasted Warbler was in exceptional numbers this year, and that Cape May Warblers and Swainson's Thrushes were numerous. Manomet and Block Island agreed that the Red-eyed Vireo was generally in short supply, but the shortage of Golden-crowned Kinglets at Manomet was not encountered elsewhere.

A sprinkling of rarities brightened the species lists at most of the stations. One can hardly be prepared to read that a **Phainopepla** was captured in the nets of the Laphams at Block Island this year, a first known record east of the Mississippi and perhaps the first east of Oklahoma. It was an interesting and productive season despite a slight reduction in number of birds banded.

Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield, Mass. 01201

Somesville, Mount Desert, Maine

Barbara Patterson

The Somesville banding station was in operation on 25 days from 19 August to 25 September and on 5 days in October, between the 4th and the 10th. The same net lanes were used as in previous years and the time of netting was similar to past years — 0800-1400. Several spruces and White Pines near the lanes were topped to keep the growth low in the area (See *EBBA News* 32:3 for general description).

A total of 757 new birds of 53 species, as well as 68 repeats, were netted in 545 net-hours which resulted in 151 BPNHx100. Warblers averaged out ca. 66%. The best

days were in August, which may suggest an early migration. On 21 August, 67 birds were taken in 14 net-hours (478 BPNHx100); other days when nets were notably active were 23 August (50/30/167), 26 August (72/32/225), and 29 August (61/23/265).

The number of Tennessee Warblers was up dramatically to 140 over a high of 55 in 1972. Bay-breasted Warblers also showed an increase — 95 banded as compared to a high of 50 in 1973. Two Gray-cheeked Thrushes were banded, the first since 1968. Black-capped Chickadees (46) were better than average. Three species of warblers decreased to a 10 year low: Northern Parula, 28 (60 in 1973, high of 69 in 1968), Magnolia, 13 (31 in 1973, high of 47 in 1967), Black-throated Green, 11 (44 in 1973, high of 91 in 1965).

Kentucky Warbler on 21 August was a new species and a rare one. A Yellow-breasted Chat on 31 August was not a new species but the first since 1968. Three warblers returned; all were adult males when banded: a Canada Warbler banded 24 August 1972, returned 24 August 1975; an American Redstart banded 14 August 1973, returned 23 August 1975; and a Black-throated Green Warbler banded 18 September 1973, returned 25 September 1975. There were no foreign retraps.

Manomet Bird Observatory, Massachusetts

Trevor L. Lloyd-Evans, Staff Biologist

Fall migration at M.B.O. was somewhat lighter than usual this year. Although good numbers of juveniles indicated a more successful breeding than usual the migration of shorebirds, whose numbers were average, were the first indicator. The scoter migration was lighter due to few days of heavy migration, excepting 19 October when there were over 1,200 scoters per hour at noon. Land bird migration on the property was not as low as the fall of 1973 but was well below the average for the last 5 years. From 1 August to 15 November, 1975 we recorded data on 7,882 birds of 104 species: 5,358 new bandings plus 2,524 repeats and returns. Approximately 47 nets were used on 79 days in sites similar to those used in previous years.

Table 1. New fall bandings

Season	No. banded	Net-hours	BPNHx100
1 Aug.—31 Oct. 1970	7,127	40,575	17.6
1 Aug.—23 Nov. 1971	10,424	44,906	23.2
1 Aug.—15 Nov. 1972	6,684	38,153	17.5
1 Aug.—15 Nov. 1973	5,458	41,301	13.2
1 Aug.—15 Nov. 1974	6,348	37,533	16.9
1 Aug.—15 Nov. 1975	5,358	33,656	15.9

Southwest winds dominated the fall weather to an unusual degree and were probably the main factor in our low totals. Main falls of migrants followed northwest winds with 204 birds handled (including repeats) on 29 September, 367 on 3 October, 219 on 4 October, 347 on 8 October and 213 on 9 October.

Individual species showed great variation with record low totals for all flycatchers, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Red-eyed Vireos. On the other hand, Tufted Titmouse totals remained almost as high as last year's record and there was a definite flight of Black-capped Chickadees in October. Warblers were lower than usual, excepting for the American Redstart which showed a 22% increase over the mean for five previous falls, Cape May Warblers +121% and Bay-breasted Warblers up a staggering 663% — the highest Observatory total in our 10 years of banding. The success of the last two species may perhaps be due to a boom in the spruce budworm in northern forests this year. Sparrows were low, as were the thrushes with the exception of the Veery (94% increase over the previous 5 years) and the Swainson's Thrush (up 168% with a record fall flight for M.B.O.). The higher species totals are shown below for the years 1972 through 1975 with B.P.N.H. X 1,000.

Unusual birds banded this fall included our first Common Loon on 20 October, grounded inland after a storm; a late Least Flycatcher on 5 October; Boreal Chickadees on the 13th, 29th and 31st of October and the 7th and 12th of November; our first Bicknell's race of the Gray-cheeked Thrush on 30 September; a Worm-eating Warbler on 5 October; a Brewster's Warbler on 14 September; a Kentucky Warbler on 10 September; and finally our first Pine Grosbeak for the Observatory caught on 1 November.

Table II. Species totals 1 August—15 November 1972-75 (BPNHx100)

Species	1972	1973	1974	1975
Black-capped Chickadee	166(44)	979(237)	226(60)	936(278)
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1304(342)	632(153)	1400(373)	816(242)
Gray Catbird	809(212)	633(153)	864(235)	578(172)
White-throated Sparrow	532(139)	455(110)	565(151)	389(116)
Blackpoll Warbler	463(121)	258(62)	277(74)	271(81)
American Redstart	159(42)	90(22)	133(35)	212(63)
American Robin	424(111)	163(39)	266(71)	168(50)
Swainson's Thrush	74(19)	77(19)	55(15)	153(45)
Bay-breasted Warbler	28(7)	20(5)	16(4)	122(36)
Dark-eyed Junco	272(71)	145(35)	202(54)	103(31)

Nauset Light

Erma J. Fisk

A banding station was run at Nauset Light, Eastham on the outermost rim of Cape Cod. It operated 35 days from 1 September to 12 October when a run of Yellow-rumped Warblers exhausted the supply of O bands. Nets were opened at daylight and usually closed by mid-morning when the birds became inactive and the nets clearly visible. A few afternoon samplings proved unproductive.

Eight nets were set in an approximately 1.25-acre stand of small Pitch Pine directly below a headland, only partially shielded by two thickets of lower pine with a minimal amount of Scrub Oak and Pin Cherry. The headland slopes were densely covered with Beach Plum, Bayberry, Bearberry, Wild Rose, Catbriar and grasses. Later two nets were added in similar vegetation above the lighthouse and two in open oak woods across the road. All but those in the woods were vulnerable to wind and sun. One ground trap was used briefly and ineffectively as the sparrows were not yet in. Temperatures ranged from 32° on 8 October to 69° on 1 October. Cold fronts were 2 & 3 and 7 & 8 October. The sky was clear on 19 days, winds northerly on 18 days and southerly on 11 days. Banders were Alice B. Tait and Erma J. Fisk, with some help from Richard Cunningham. Our colleague and trainee, on whose property the station was set up, was Miriam Rowell. She served as chief statistician. Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and Yellow-rumped Warblers had just started to come in abundantly when we were forced to close.

Birds were routinely wing-measured, weighed and examined for fat. They were aged by skulling or plumage characteristics when these sufficed, sexed as possible. A foreign Gray Catbird was taken but the digits misread. Two Cape newspapers, the *Cape Cod Museum of Natural History* and the *Cape Cod Bird Club* gave us publicity; 230 visitors signed our day sheets. We had seven trainees and three talks were given to elementary schools.

The map indicates that birds migrating from Maine and the Maritime Provinces making landfall on Lower Cape Cod might readily be those reaching Nantucket. With this in mind and with Edith Andrews' cooperation, I attempted a comparison between birds taken at Nauset Light and those taken the same day or a day later on Nantucket. I found no comparison.

In 239 net hours Mrs. Andrews (with a far more varied habitat) banded 1171 birds of 56 species in 21 days from 16 August to 23 October. In 1752 hours Nauset Light banded 1019 birds of 67 species in 35 days from 1 September to 12 October. We agreed on having a high count each of Yellow-rumped Warblers and each of us

had our highest daily count on 8 October (Nauset 73 and Nantucket 56). Nauset's next highest species total was Blackpoll Warbler — 47 to Nantucket's 49; Catbirds followed at 40 for Nauset and 56 for Nantucket. Nantucket's second highest species was the Bay-breasted Warbler — 164 compared to Nauset's 4; then, Cape May Warbler — 100 to Nauset's 8.

The most commonly banded birds were: Yellow-rumped Warbler, 334; Black-capped Chickadee, 78; Blackpoll Warbler, 47; and Gray Catbird, 40.

Nantucket, Massachusetts

Edith Andrews

The Nantucket station this year operated in the same locations as in past years, with nets spread for five days, 16-28 August, five days on 1, 4, 7, 29, 30 September, and 11 days in October, between 2-23 October. Loss of most of the month of September makes comparison with other years difficult. Nevertheless, it was apparent that several birds, especially warblers, appeared in greater than usual numbers.

A total of 1171 birds of 56 species were banded in 239 net-hours, (490 BPNHx100). The best days were 28 August with 95 birds in 6 net-hours (1583), 1 September 114/8 (1425), and 3 October 42/3 (1400). Higher totals were obtained on other days, especially in October, using more net-hours.

A cold front reached the island about 7 August with Northern Waterthrushes, Yellow Warblers and others seen but not banded, and a Yellow-throated Warbler seen on 9 August. Yellow-rumped Warblers appeared on 19 August (2 banded), but despite a substantial banding effort in October, this species seemed in lower numbers than usual. The most remarkable change in abundance was in the Bay-breasted Warbler, with 164 banded this year compared to 8 last year, and also compared to only 19 Blackpoll Warblers this year (*Coord note: Virtually all stations agree that the Bay-breasted Warbler was captured in extraordinary numbers this year. Compare also the Bay-breasted/Blackpoll ratio of 164/19 at this station with that of Block Island's 8/97, a fairly typical ratio there and perhaps indicative of a possible difference in habitat preference between the species — at Nantucket, the "Mothball Pines," and at Block Island, deciduous bushes.*). Other species which seemed more numerous were Cape May Warbler with 100 banded this year compared to 30 last year, and American Redstart (76/48). Red-breasted Nuthatches were also in good numbers, with 85 banded, including 25 on 23 August.

The only rarity banded at the station this year was a Cerulean Warbler on 19 August, the second for the station. There were no returns and no recoveries.

Kingston, Rhode Island

Douglas L. Kraus

The Kingston station was operated essentially the same as in the past 3 years. Banding was carried on from 15 August to 5 November with 14, 20, 20 and 4 banding days in each month consecutively. Banding was confined to the first four hours of the day when bird activity was most evident. A total of 776 birds of 69 species were banded in 828 net-hours (93.7 BPNHx100). This compares with 64.4 in 1974 and 89.3 in 1973. The increase in this figure over last year is largely due to increased September and October coverage.

In August, light migration was experienced on the 20th, 21st, and 29th; heavy migration on the 24th and 26th, both cloudy days. Noticeable movements were noted after cold fronts on 5, 10, 14 and 15 September; a very strong movement occurred on 28 September with a cold front preceded by 4-5 days of damp, rainy weather. A tremendous flight of hawks (*Coord note: the largest on record in Rhode Island*) occurred the same day. In October, moderate to good conditions were found after cold fronts on 3-4, 7-8, 10, 21, 28 and 31 October.

The increased numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Hermit Thrushes in 1975 can be attributed to increased coverage and more favorable cold fronts in October. Increased coverage and better weather conditions in September probably account for the increases in Gray Catbirds and American Redstarts banded. The population of Common Yellowthroats continues low for the second year, but the immature/adult ratio of 3.1/1 in 1975 as compared to 1.6/1 in 1974 indicates normal breeding success in 1975. The numbers of Blue-winged Warblers banded has decreased continually since 1970, perhaps in response to vegetative succession. The area of the banding station is rapidly growing up to mature woodland, and shrubbery of past decades is fast disappearing.

There were 24 returns but no recoveries or rarities at the station this year.

A tabulation of the number of bandings for the nine commonest species in 1975 together with information of the five previous years follows. Data for the Blue-winged Warbler are given for the same period because of a noticeable decline at this station.

Table III. Species totals for 1970-1975 (BPNHx100)

Species	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Yellow-rumped Warbler	64(11.3)	46(11.7)	31(4.6)	53(7.3)	12(2.1)	141(17.0)
Gray Catbird	136(24.0)	64(16.3)	69(10.3)	94(12.9)	73(12.7)	108(13.1)
American Redstart	117(20.6)	158(40.0)	29(4.3)	17(2.3)	18(3.1)	67(8.1)
White-throated Sparrow	37(6.5)	40(10.1)	77(11.5)	24(3.3)	15(2.6)	43(5.2)
Common Yellowthroat	78(13.7)	86(21.8)	69(10.3)	75(10.3)	34(5.9)	32(3.9)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	12(2.1)	7(1.8)	6(0.9)	11(1.5)	6(1.0)	32(3.9)
Hermit Thrush	4(0.7)	7(1.8)	9(1.3)	7(1.0)	13(2.3)	29(3.5)
Dark-eyed Junco	0	24(6.1)	31(4.6)	52(7.1)	8(1.4)	27(3.3)
Black-capped Chickadee	45(7.9)	43(10.9)	18(2.7)	28(3.9)	22(3.8)	23(2.8)
Blue-winged Warbler	69(12.1)	50(12.7)	41(6.1)	36(5.0)	19(3.3)	9(1.1)
Total net-hours	569	394	667	718	576	828

Block Island, Rhode Island

Elise and Helen Lapham

The fall of 1975 was not a spectacular one for banding but produced a steady migration. There were not the strong northwest winds needed to carry reluctant birds over the water to Block Island although there were good increases in numbers after the slight northwest winds of 28 September, 4 and 17 October. It is difficult to make comparisons with previous years; thanks to the help of sub-permittees the nets were run many more days and for longer hours. Banding was conducted almost continuously from 13 August onward with three missing days in late September and three in late October. For these three months, 3779 birds of 88 species were banded in 4087 net-hours (92 BPNHx100).

In addition to birds banded, we were again swamped with Yellow-rumped Warblers and exactly 1000 were released unbanded through 31 October. This gives a truer overall figure of birds caught of 116 BPNHx100. This year the nets were also kept open for the first time through November and December, with birds banded on all but 8 days of those months. This experiment yielded many new facts about the local migration, and an additional 1038 birds banded with 250 more Yellow-rumps released unbanded. This gave us a total figure of 97 BPNHx100 with 97 species banded for the entire period. All birds were well documented: they were weighed and aged and wing length and sex determined when possible.

The most numerous species caught was the Yellow-rumped Warbler (2941), followed by the Gray Catbird

(445), Dark-eyed Junco (181), White-throated Sparrow (180), Song Sparrow (156), Swainson's Thrush (132), Golden-crowned Kinglet (128), Red-eyed Vireo (128), Hermit Thrush (128), American Robin (125), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (123), and Common Yellowthroat (102). Notable increases over last year (1975/1974) were Common Flicker (38/2), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (22/9), Red-breasted Nuthatch (66/2), Swainson's Thrush (132/58), Cape May Warbler (54/4) and Blackpoll Warbler (93/42). Unaccountably decreased were the Northern Parula (9/17), Nashville Warbler (5/16), and Tennessee Warbler (9/26). (Coord note: See Mt. Desert station report) and Red-eyed Vireo (127/173) (Coord note: Compare with Manomet).

Stuart Keith has a saying: "If you wait long enough, all birds come to Block Island." We almost proved this to be true this year when on 14 November, a **Phainopepla** was caught in one of our nets. It was a very young bird showing no signs of captivity. How could it have reached Block Island from its normal habitat in Arizona? After

photographing it and having it examined at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, it was transported live to the World of Birds at the Bronx Zoo. Other locational rarities and new birds for the station were a male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** on 24 September and a Prothonotary Warbler on 9 October. The season produced numerous late transients: two Philadelphia Vireos on 21 October, a White-eyed Vireo on 24 October, a Swainson's Thrush and a Black-and-white Warbler on 26 October, a Northern Waterthrush on 31 October, a Red-eyed Vireo on 6 November, and a Blackpoll Warbler on 19 November.

There were several returns, most notably a Song Sparrow banded on the island in October 1966 by Elise Dickerson and netted by us 21 December 1975. Other returns included a Common Yellowthroat, a Yellow-rumped Warbler and a Swamp Sparrow. Three of our birds from other years were recovered elsewhere this year.



Common Grackle with a malformed bill

Thomas M. Mutchler

When the bill of this bird — a Common Grackle AHY-F — was closed, the mandible was 3mm longer than the maxilla. There was a 3mm gap between the tips when the bill was closed. The length of the bill was in the normal range (26mm) and the bird appeared to be healthy.

Banded and photographed 21 July 1973.

112 13th Ave., Bethlehem, PA 18018.