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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Iii

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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region III

Robert Dewire, Coordinator
9 Canary St., Pawcatuck, Conn. 02891

Region III covers banding stations in Connecticut; Long Island, NY; New Jersey; and Delaware. This year four new stations have been added to the two existing stations: 2 from CT, 3 from L.I., and 1 from NJ. It would be worthwhile to receive additional station reports, particularly from New Jersey and Delaware, if there are any stations reasonably active in the fall.

All stations that were active both in 1978 and 1979 noted much better activity at their stations in 1979, with higher numbers of birds and a greater birds-per-net-hour ratio. A number of species noticeably low last year, such as the Yellow-rumped Warbler and the White-throated Sparrow, were back in what was considered more normal numbers. However, the two kinglets remained noticeably low in number, not having recovered from the winter kill of 1978.

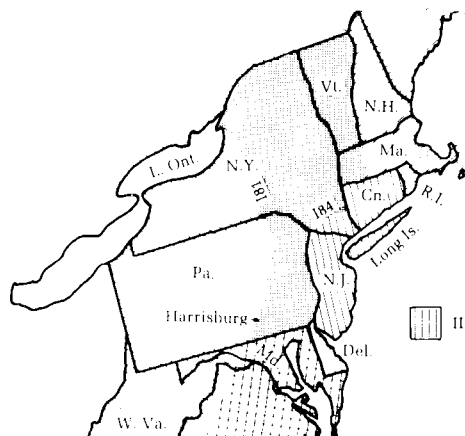


Table I Region III summary

| | Lighthouse Point East Haven, Conn. | Birdcraft Station Fairfield, Conn. | Fort Tilden Queens Co., NY | Harbor Hill Sanc. Lake Success, NY | Manorville Long Island, NY | Island Beach Seaside Park, NJ |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Days of operation | 30 | 27 | 7 | 10 | 49 | 74 |
| Number of nets used | 8-30 | 6-10 | 4-5 | 5-9 | 3-10 | 5-36 |
| Total net hours | 2085 | 1345 | 94 | 264 | 790 | 4097.5 |
| Largest daily catch | 371 | 75 | 106 | 45 | — | 1345 |
| Birds banded 1979 | 2700 | 540 | 231 | 282 | 467 | 7854 |
| Birds banded 1978 | 393 | — | — | 461 | 310 | 3877 |
| Different species 1979 | 88 | 56 | 27 | 45 | 48 | 111 |
| Different species 1978 | 29 | — | — | 56 | 40 | 101 |
| Birds/100 net hours 1979 | 129.5 | 39.1 | 245 | 10.68 | 59 | 191.6 |
| Birds/100 net hours 1978 | 170.9 | — | — | 56.7 | 35 | 85.2 |

Table II. Most common species in 1979

| Lighthouse Point Conn. | Birdcraft, Fairfield Conn. | Fort Tilden NY | Lake Success NY | Manorville NY | Island Beach NJ |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 483 Yel-rump Warb | 76 G. Catbird | 175 Yel-rump Warb | 63 W-th Sparrow | 104 W-th Sparrow | 1244 Yel-rump Warb |
| 257 Blue Jay | 56 Swainson's Th | 6 Swainson's Th | 35 G. Catbird | 90 G. Catbird | 966 W-th Sparrow |
| 146 Savannah Sp | 52 W-th Sparrow | 5 Blue Jay | 17 R-w Blackbird | 40 R-s Towhee | 681 G. Catbird |
| 140 Song Sparrow | 42 Am Redstart | 5 Am Redstart | 16 Blue Jay | 17 N Waterthr | 492 C. Yllthroat |
| 140 T. Titmouse | 35 R-c Kinglet | 4 G. Catbird | 14 Cardinal | 16 Yel-rump Warb | 422 Song Sparrow |
| 121 R-c Kinglet | 22 B&W Warbler | 4 C. Yllthroat | | 16 Swamp Sparrow | 400 R-c Kinglet |
| 116 Blackpoll Warb | 18 Magnolia Warb | 3 R-c Kinglet | | 15 R-c Kinglet | 360 Brn Creeper |

Lighthouse Point Park East Haven, CT 411-0725
Jeffrey A. Spendelow

For several years, Fred Sibley, his sons, and I have banded fall migrants at this site, but until now our coverage was too sporadic to warrant a write-up and inclusion in the Atlantic Flyway Review. In 1979 we concentrated our activities at this site at the request of Arne Rosengren, the director of the New Haven Bird Club's

"Hawkwatch" project, in an attempt to gather data on the passerine migration that could be compared with the hawk migration data. The LPP Station was operated for 30 days with anywhere from 8 to 30 nets in use, depending on weather conditions and the number of assistants available to help check the nets and record

data. Nets were usually opened at dawn and closed about 5 hours later. On some days banding continued until early afternoon, but on other days the nets had to be shut down early.

We usually netted in the "edge habitat" between a large *Phragmites* swamp and an open grassy field. The vegetation at this site consisted mostly of a mixture of *Phragmites*, Staghorn Sumac, and several species of forbs and weeds. We set up to a maximum of 18 nets (including 3 aerial nets) at this site and most of the flycatchers, jays, blackbirds, and sparrows were caught here. On days when several assistants were available to help or when high winds made netting at the first site virtually impossible, a second site about 0.5 km from the first was used in an attempt to increase the number of hawks caught and sample a different habitat. Here up to a maximum of 16 nets were set up along the edge of a small section of woods overlooking the eastern side of New Haven Harbor. Most of the hawks, woodpeckers, titmice, and vireos were caught here. Parulids were netted at both sites in about equal numbers, although the species composition differed and the less common ones were usually caught at the first site.

We started in early August, but most of the banding was done in the last third of September and throughout October. In 2085 net-hours of operation a total of 2700 birds representing 88 species (including 5 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds released unbanded) were caught. The overall capture rate was 129.5 birds per 100 net-hours. The largest catch occurred on 14 October when 371 birds were caught in 130 net-hours of operation (285.4/100 net-hours). Of this total, 128 (34.5%) were Blue Jays and 113 (30.5%) were Yellow-rumped Warblers. The greatest capture rate occurred the following day when I was alone and caught 135 birds in 10 net-hours. So many birds were caught in the first 15 minutes following sunrise that I started closing the nets as soon as I could get them emptied and the birds placed in holding cages. Rain kept me from opening the nets again that day. Other notable flights occurred on 1-3 September (84 Boholinks), 18-19 October (103 Tufted Titmice), and 25-26 October (145 Yellow-rumped Warblers). On 8 October, a day with strong gusty winds from the north, 11 of the 58 birds caught were Sharp-shinned Hawks.



In 1978, unusual species included an Eastern Meadowlark, 2 Blue Grosbeaks, and a Lark Bunting. (A short note on the latter bird, the first state record for Connecticut, has been submitted to "NABB" for publication). In

1979 unusual passerine captures included an Orange-crowned Warbler, 2 Connecticut Warblers, and 1 each of Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Vesper Sparrow. Unusual non-passerine captures included 39 Sharp-shinned Hawks, a Cooper's Hawk, and 47 Common Flickers.

Participants in the operation of this station for the last 2 years include: Master Permittees Fred C. Sibley, Howard R. Spendelow, Jr., and Jeffrey A. Spendelow; Sub-permittees David A. Sibley, Steven C. Sibley, and Linda Spendelow; Assistants Jim Amatruda, Tony Bledsoe, Bear Fox, Jody Kennard, Pat Lynch, Craig Scharf, Lee Schlesinger, Fred Sheldon, and David Wilcove.

Birdcraft Banding Station Conn. Audubon Society
Fairfield, CT 418-6731 Carl Trichler

Birdcraft Station entered its first year of operation this spring. It is the site of the original Conn. Audubon Society Sanctuary, located within walking distance of the center of Fairfield. Surrounded by residential areas, the Conn. Turnpike (Interstate 95) and a Junior High School, this 7-acre oasis has become a vest pocket refuge for migrant birds.

The primary objectives for establishing this station were the training of new banders and presentations to the public about bird banding. Monitoring the spring and fall migrations was its secondary objective.

Banding operations are performed on as many days as possible, depending upon the availability of the banding crew and activity within the station. During the period of 26 August to 29 October, the station opened a total of 27 days, using between 6 and 10 12-meter mist nets and Potter traps at 2 feeding stations. Depending on activity, the station remained open most of the day.

A total of 540 birds were banded representing 56 species. Eighteen species of warblers were netted. Along with our net-hours, we had 104.5 trap-hours, with 13.4 birds per 100 trap-hours. Two days in September, the 8th and the 23rd, produced 75 and 67 birds respectively. There were no foreign recoveries this fall.

Our most notable birds included Great Crested Flycatcher, Acadian Flycatcher, Brown Creeper, Solitary Vireo, Nashville and Wilson's Warblers.

As this was our first year of operation, we have no previous reference data. Since the opening of this sanctuary in 1914, it has been known for its spectacular spring and fall warbler flights. Only through banding have we been able to get a feel for the extent of the migratory waves.

I would be remiss if I did not extend my thanks to the volunteers who turned this station into something other than a backyard operation. Dennis Varza provided extensive time and work in cutting net lanes and selecting sites. His enthusiasm infected our apprentice banders and without the help of Gitte Brennan, Winnie and Dave Burkette, Griselda and Tom Oliver, Jack Powell, Kris Norling, and Miley Bull, we would not have been able to obtain the results we did.

Fort Tilden, Gateway NRA Queens County, NY 403-0735 Frederick S. Schaeffer

Fort Tilden as a passerine banding station is new, although it has been used as a raptor station for some time (Chevalier et al). The area is locally unique, consisting of a tidal pool, dune habitat, beach front, and upland habitat which is located about 1500 meters (.9 miles) west of the Marine Parkway Bridge Approach, and 200 meters (.12 miles) south of Rockaway Beach Boulevard which forms the northern boundary of Fort Tilden. The upland habitat consists of conifers, deciduous vegetation, mixed grassland, areas of bare sand, and high thickets. The area used for the banding in the fall of 1979 consisted of sandy areas interspersed with conifer plots, some bayberry, white poplar, and phragmites. There are several overgrown military structures on the site; most notable are two gun emplacements which tower over the remainder of the area and seem to be a good landmark for migrants.

My initial objective for banding work at Fort Tilden is not migration banding. I am trying to conduct a series of studies with particular emphasis on the spring and breeding seasons. My main objective in the pre-breeding season is to determine which species select this area for breeding, how this breeding is related to vegetation and food requirements and, most importantly, where should local human activities be minimized to preserve breeding sites of important species.

This first fall season I experimented with an area, fairly packed with vegetation (mostly deciduous) on one side of the nets and very open on the other side, in order to capture as many Yellow-rumped Warblers as possible, for the purpose of studying ossification — particularly the degree of ossification vs the number of weeks after the breeding season. It was also my hope to compare this to the degree of ossification later in the season and in winter, but found, to my dismay, that the Yellow-rumps which arrived in November kept right on going. From 8 September until 18 November (7 banding days), 231 birds of 27 species were banded but in a remarkably small number of net-hours. Generally, netting/banding was done between 9 AM and 2 PM (it was fruitless to start earlier). Of these 231 birds, 175 were Yellow-rumped Warblers. The second highest total was 6 Swainson's Thrushes!

**Lake Success Long Island, NY 404-0734
M. James Pion**

I have been fortunate in gaining permission from the Nature Conservancy, Long Island Chapter, to use one of their properties for my banding work. It is located in the village of Lake Success, NY and is just over the "city-line" so to speak in Nassau County. The sanctuary, known as Harbor Hill Sanctuary, gets its name from its location on the north shore of Long Island abreast of the Harbor Hill Terminal Moraine — the last resting spot of the Wisconsin Ice Sheet. The property is 4.4 acres (1.78 ha) and is quite hilly. Large Sweet Gums, Tulip, and Norway Maple are predominate trees growing alongside hickories, oak, and ash.

The property contains an old chicken house which has been re-conditioned and electrified and houses a very efficient wood burning stove, so we can use the "hut" all year round. The electricity enables us to maintain a relatively constant light source for "skulling" and all of our inspection and recording work.

The low number of birds banded at the station in 1979 (282) compared with 1978 (461) was mostly due to fewer days of operation (10 vs 25 days in 1978) when the station could not be manned, unfortunately much of the time during the usually most productive weeks in October and November.

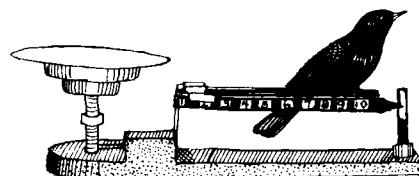
Of special interest this year was a Philadelphia Vireo banded on 15 September. I use water drips in front of each pair of 12-meter nets. My water supply was shut off in 1979, and I am sure that it contributed to a decline in warblers and those passerines frequenting tree-tops. It should be repaired for 1980.

High school youngsters are used to assist in the banding. This year we involved the Youth Conservation Corps in cleaning up operations and in reinforcing trails and building a new net lane. A master plan has been developed for the preserve which outlines the future uses (in particular, banding) and its future management.

Manorville, L.I., NY 405-0724 Gilbert Raynor

The Manorville Station experienced its highest birds-per-100-net-hours total since 1976 and its third highest in 21 years. There were 15 returns but no recoveries. As with other stations, the totals were well above the 1978 season when this station had its lowest birds-per-100-net-hours total since 1965.

Two new species were recorded at the station this year — a Belted Kingfisher and a Golden-winged Warbler.



**Island Beach State Park Seaside Park, NJ 395-0740
Herman "Bud" Cooper**

Island Beach, like the other stations, had a much better season than in 1978. The number of Yellow-rumped Warblers in 1978 was one of the lowest ever at the station (351). In 1979 it was again the most commonly banded bird, with a total of 1244 taken. Raptor banding at the station yielded a most impressive 23 Peregrine Falcons, while owl banding produced 6 Barn Owls, 3 Long-eared Owls, and 6 Saw-whet Owls.

14 and 15 October produced the most birds, with 1345 and 871 banded, respectively. Among the unusual species were a Cooper's Hawk, Acadian and Olive-sided Flycatchers, and 3 Grasshopper Sparrows.