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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I

North American Bird Bander

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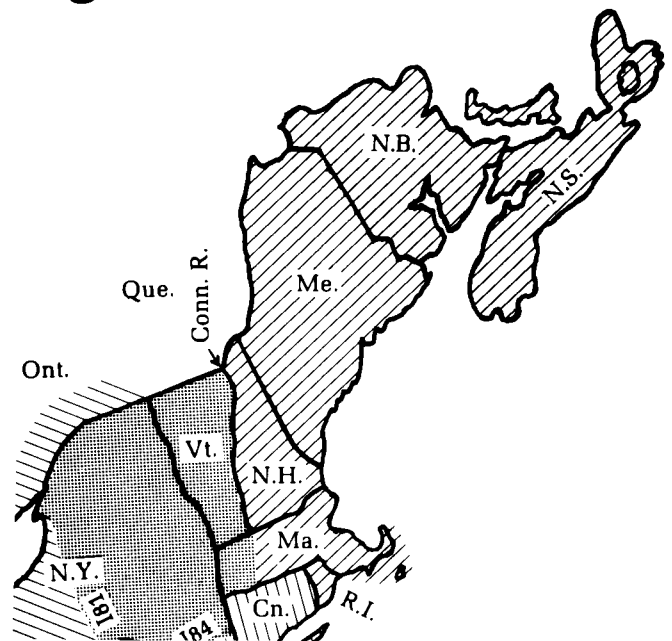
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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I

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During fall 1980, extensive banding was conducted at all AFR-I stations except Brier Island, N.S. and Brunswick, Maine, effort at the latter station being transferred to extend the season and considerably increase the coverage at Kent Island, New Brunswick. As a result of a succession of mild cold fronts and virtually no rain, the season provided the most interesting banding in years at some stations in terms of birds/n.h., although some stations obtained average results. The almost uniformly good weather did not produce the usual contrasts between flights and dull periods until late in the season.

This fall produced the first notable movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in several years. Mainland stations witnessed the best incursion of Black-capped Chickadees in nearly a decade and even Block Island banded a very high total of 9 for that station. Blackpoll Warblers were mentioned as down in numbers at 3 stations, as were the Spruce-Budworm-related Cape May and Bay-breasted Warblers after several years of high numbers. Dark-eyed Juncos, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows increased at several stations as did Golden-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Hermit



Thrushes. Brown Creepers continued on the minus side, and Winter Wrens again barely appeared at some stations. In all, 18,394 new bandings were reported as mist-netted in AFR-I in 1980.

Table 1. Region I summary

	Kent Island N.B.	Rockport Mass.	Manomet Mass.	Nantucket Mass.	Kingston R.I.	Block Island R.I.
Days of operation	67	100	85	25	62	53
Number of nets used	5-15	7	50	1-4	2-4	2-10
Total net-hours	5082	5195	36589	220	821	3593
Largest daily catch	396	91	443	116	56	95
Birds banded 1980	5344	2242	7474	1131	801	1402
Birds banded 1979	2968	1720	4753	655	978	1469
Different species 1980	90	85	110	54	61	77
Different species 1979	67	74	96	53	67	79
Birds/100 n.h. 1980	105	43	20.4	514	98	39
Birds/100 n.h. 1979	170	41	14	263	109	47

Table 2. Interesting or more common species, 1980

Kent Island N.B.	Rockport Mass.	Manomet Mass.	Nantucket Mass.	Kingston R.I.	Block Island R.I.
808 Cape May Warb	302 Y-rump Warb	2531 B-c Chickadee	767 Y-rump Warb	127 G Catbird	366 Y-rump Warb
799 Y-rump Warb	258 B-c Chickadee	1032 Y-rump Warb	42 R-b Nuthatch	84 Y-rump Warb	223 G Catbird
326 Bay-br Warb	175 House Finch	902 G Catbird	40 Blackpoll Warb	73 W-th Sparrow	65 R-e Vireo
239 Savannah Sp	165 W-th Sparrow	526 Am Robin	27 G Catbird	60 Am Redstart	88 G-c Kinglet
237 Am Redstart	164 G Catbird	318 W-th Sparrow	25 Song Sparrow	56 C Yellowthr	56 W-th Sparrow
180 Song Sparrow	158 W-cr Sparrow	267 Blackpoll Warb	22 Palm Warb	55 B-c Chickadee	57 Am Robin
155 "Traill's" Flyc	154 Song Sparrow	109 Am Redstart	20 G-c Kinglet	55 D-e Junco	78 D-e Junco
154 R-e Virec	117 Tree Swallow	102 D-e Junco	18 Pine Siskin	24 B-and-w Warb	
148 Tennessee Warb	62 Am Robin	92 Tufted Titmouse	15 B-c Chickadee	19 Wood Thrush	
147 Yellow Warb	58 D-e Junco	91 Blue Jay	15 Cape May Warb	18 R-s Towhee	
			12 Savannah Sp		

Although the number of nets (5-15) and their locations remained roughly the same, banding effort at Kent Island was greatly increased in 1980 over the 1979 fall migration period. Sixty-seven days of operation between 24 July and 13 October included 30 additional days and extended coverage more than a month later into the fall. Mean daily net-hours were also increased significantly in 1980, to 75.8 hours. The number of birds handled, 6752, more than doubles the 1979 figure, but indicates a 30% decrease in overall birds per net-hour (1.33 in 1980) compared with 1979.

The latter half of July and first half of August were largely foggy and rainy in the Bay of Fundy. Only minor movements occurred during this period, consisting primarily of Yellow Warblers and Red-breasted Nuthatches. The evening of 16 August was clear, with a moderate (15 mph) north wind. The next day 163 birds were handled, marking the first large flight of the migration in the region. The remainder of August was fogless with frequently clear evening skies and light to moderate winds with a northerly or westerly component. An average of 227 birds were handled per day over the 14 days following the 16th, with Cape May Warblers, Bay-breasted Warblers, and Myrtle Warblers as the predominant species.

Fog and precipitation increased in September and early October, with increasingly frequent high winds which often hindered netting. Flycatchers and most warblers tapered off by mid- to late-September, with Palm, Myrtle, Blackpoll, and Black-throated Blue Warblers being the exceptions. Myrtle Warblers and White-throated Sparrows became the most common species handled. By the second week of October both kinglet species and Dark-eyed Juncos had increased dramatically. Also present during this time, although not frequently caught, were large numbers of American Goldfinches and, especially, Pine Siskins. The large number of White-crowned Sparrows, arriving on the 13th, 14th, and 15th, could not be captured, either, as the operation was, regrettably, closed by then.

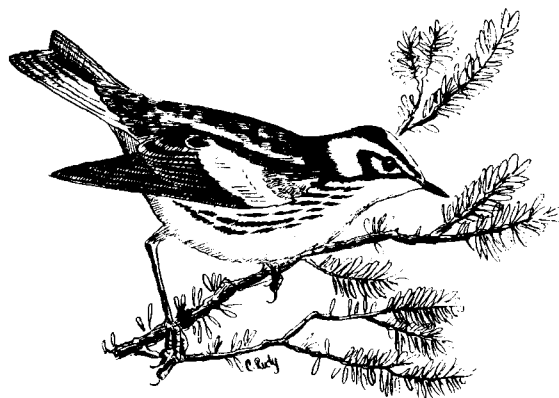
Two major points of comparison may be made between the 1979 and the 1980 fall migrations at Kent Island. First, the migration began later in 1980. Whereas a major peak in the 1979 migration occurred in early August (7th-11th), there were no large movements before 17 August in 1980. The arrival of the first Common Flickers on 29 August was almost a month later than more normal dates indicated by long-term sight records for this locality.

A second comparison, based on bird-per-net-hour figures, suggests an apparent overall decline in abundance of 30% in 1980, as compared with 1979. Species showing conspicuous declines included Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, and Bay-breasted Warbler. The latter species remained dominant in terms of absolute numbers, as did the Cape May Warbler which declined only moderately in relative terms. The only species showing a dramatic relative increase was the Red-breasted Nuthatch. Song Sparrows, Tennessee Warblers, Northern Parulas, and Wilson's Warblers were somewhat more abundant in relative terms. Species which tend to be later migrants are excluded from this comparison, as they

would have been insufficiently sampled in 1979 when banding stopped on 7 September.

Unusual birds caught at Kent Island during the fall of 1980 included: a Yellow-throated Vireo on 1 September and 2 on 5 October; a White-eyed Vireo on 25 September; a Cerulean Warbler on 10 August; a Yellow-throated Warbler on 30 July; 5 Prairie Warblers (seen regularly); 5 Yellow-breasted Chats; a Seaside Sparrow on 24 August and another on 11 September; a Lark Sparrow on 26 August. All of the above birds were HY. The Yellow-throated Warbler was notable considering its early date and class 3 fat level (bulging from furculum).

We would like to thank the following for their participation in this season's banding: Amanda Cannell, Abby Colihan, Seward Highley, Kim Noyes, Patty O'Brian, Liz and Jan Pierson, Sarah Sargent, David Tabby, Chris Thompson, Mary Windels. We also wish to thank Dr. Charles Huntington and Bowdoin College for help in supporting the banding operation.



Rockport, Massachusetts

Russell T. Norris

This is the fifth year of operation for the Whale Cove Station. Seven nets were open on most days, weather permitting, between 1 August and 15 November for a total of 5195 net-hours. Several traps were in use during some days. A total of 2242 new birds of 85 species were captured in the nets with an additional 404 birds taken in traps. Also, 126 repeats were recorded.

The Cape Ann region experienced severe drought conditions during the summer and early fall of 1980. Netting operations could be carried out through most of the period since no substantial rain occurred until the last week of October. Temperatures were generally quite warm with the first killing frost on 3 November.

The fall migration of 1980 was much better than 1979, but most species peaked somewhat later than in previous years. There was much movement of migrants on 25 September and 7 October, but unfortunately the station could not be operated on those dates. The largest wave of birds occurred on 15-16 October with the peak day on the 15th. One hundred and three birds were captured on that date — 91 in nets and 12 in traps.

A listing of the 10 most common species netted in 1980 is shown in the following table and compared with the totals for those species in 1979 and 1978.

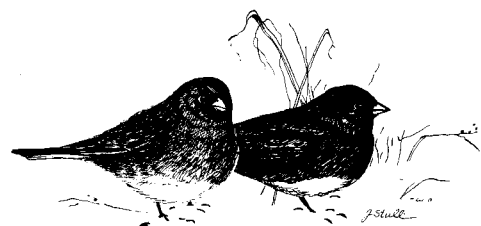
	1980	1979	1978
Yellow-rumped Warbler	302	111	73
Black-capped Chickadee	258	67	60
House Finch	175	235	182
White-throated Sparrow	165	248	305
Gray Catbird	164	237	221
White-crowned Sparrow	158	17	12
Song Sparrow	154	96	135
Tree Swallow	117	70	8
American Robin	62	131	158
Dark-eyed Junco	58	15	88

Black-capped Chickadees and White-crowned Sparrows occurred in the greatest numbers since this station has been in operation. The flight of Yellow-rumped Warblers was the largest since 1977. Both kinglets showed substantial increases over the last four years. The Hermit Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, and American Redstart were up considerably and the Yellow-breasted Chat continued to increase. For the first time in the period of record Common Grackles occurred in some numbers during the fall months with 66 being captured. The American Goldfinch and the Dark-eyed Junco increased greatly over 1979 but were still not near their previous high levels. Nine Red-breasted Nuthatches were captured, up from a complete absence in 1979 and very low numbers in 1978.

The White-throated Sparrow, Gray Catbird, and American Robin all showed marked decreases from the past two years, although still among the most common species at the Whale Cove Station. Red-eyed Vireos, Cape May and Blackpoll warblers were down considerably from previous years.

The House Finch continued to be the most abundant bird year-round in Whale Cove. During 1980 the total number captured was 750 as compared with 804 in 1979.

No unusual returns or recoveries were recorded during the fall months of 1980. There were, however, unusual occurrences of the Tennessee Warbler. A female with incubation patch was captured on 24 July and 3 late birds were banded on 24 and 27 October and 14 November. Other unusual birds captured during the period included two American Woodcocks, a Black-billed Cuckoo, Hairy Woodpecker, Gray-cheeked Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and 2 Sharp-tailed Sparrows. Evening Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls, and Pine Siskins were banded in late October and early November but none were seen later in the year.



Manomet Bird Observatory, MA 415-0703

Trevor L. Lloyd Evans
Christopher C. Rimmer
Staff Biologists

A stronger spring migration than usual was followed by an excellent autumn migration in 1980 with many days of NW winds, and virtually no interruption of the mist netting effort by rain. Fall totals were 44% above the previous eight-year average, our busiest autumn since 1971.

Season	No. banded	Net hours	Birds/100 n.h.
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
1 Aug—15 Nov 1976	4,720	39,400	12.0
1 Aug—15 Nov 1977	4,305	29,635	14.5
1 Aug—15 Nov 1978	3,908	34,865	11.2
1 Aug—15 Nov 1979	4,753	33,164	14.3
1 Aug—15 Nov 1980	7,474	36,589	20.4

From 1 August to 15 November we recorded data on 10,433 land birds of 110 species: 7,474 new bandings plus 2,869 repeats or returns and 90 unbanded. Approximately 50 nets were used on 85 suitable days, in sites similar to those employed in previous years. Nets were open during all daylight hours, and traps were not used in this season to avoid biasing comparative totals/n.h. Major falls of migrants (including repeats) were 296 on 15 October, 371 on 16 October, 443 on 17 October, 334 on 20 October, 331 on 27 October, and 270 on 29 October.

(a) Decreasing species: Warblers were the only major group to decline in 1980 compared with 1979, local breeders dropping a further 7% and northern-breeding species declining 21% after last year's increase. Blackpoll Warbler numbers were particularly low this fall, down 40% from autumn 1979. The Spruce-Budworm-related "boom" in several northern coniferous forest-breeding species appears to have diminished, with totals of the 2 most notably affected — Bay-breasted and Cape May Warblers — down from 1979 by 49% and 46%, respectively, much closer to the pre-1974 levels.

(b) Increasing species: Flycatcher numbers increased over fall 1979, the *Empidonax* genus in particular rising 110%. Black-capped Chickadees staged a major irruption, threatening for a time to supersede 1971's overwhelming autumn total of 4,549, but diminishing during October and November. The final total of 2,600 was still a 550% increase over last fall! Thirteen Red-breasted Nuthatches contrasted with 1979's zero (1979 was our first season since 1966 without banding this species); Mockingbirds continued to increase with 65 banded (55% more than fall 1979) for another record total. Thrushes also increased after several lean years, with rises of well over 100% from 1979 for Hermit Thrush and American Robin. Dramatic gains appeared in sparrows, particularly northern-wintering White-throated Sparrows (+178% over 1979) and Dark-eyed Juncos (+226%). The exceptionally heavy flight of White-crowned Sparrows on the northeast coast resulted in twice as many bandings at MBO (22) than in any other fall.

Unusual birds banded this autumn included our first Red-bellied Woodpecker, our first Boreal Chickadee since 1975, a Louisiana Waterthrush in late July, our fourth Cerulean Warbler, an immature Dickcissel, and our second and third Pine Grosbeak in MBO history. Away from the site, our shorebird banding concentrated on migrant Red Knot at Scituate, Mass. Of several hundred birds banded and yellow-dyed we have already had several sightings, the farthest being 42°S at Valdes Peninsula, Argentina.



Nantucket, Massachusetts **Edith Andrews**

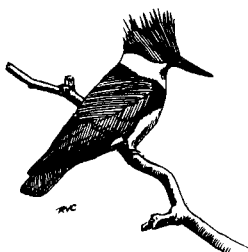
The Nantucket banding station was in operation a total of 25 days (the same as 1979) from 7 September through 6 November with the greatest number (15 days) in October. The same net lanes and number of nets were used. As in the past, nets were not in operation when wind and weather prohibited banding and, on very busy days, they were furled for an hour or two at a time to allow for processing the birds. The result was that nets were not in continuous operation, thus accounting for the low number of net-hours and consequent high number of birds/n.h.

Again, Yellow-rumped Warbler led the list of most numerous species banded. More than twice as many were banded in 1980 as in 1979, and an additional 89 were released unbanded when the supply of bands ran low. There were 2 days when the overall largest daily catch was 116, and these counts included 105 and 113 Yellow-rumps, respectively.

In a small way, Nantucket reflected the incursion of Red-breasted Nuthatches which occurred along the coast, with 42 banded compared with none in 1979. The arrival of Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks suggested a good year for winter finches, but this did not prove to be the case on Nantucket.

Flycatchers, Brown Creeper, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Dark-eyed Junco — to name a few — continued low in numbers. A single House Wren added a new species for the station.

A female Yellow-rumped Warbler banded as an HY on 15 November 1979 returned on 17 October 1980.



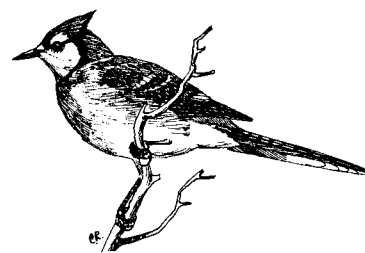
Kingston, Rhode Island 412-0713 **Douglas L. Kraus**

This station was operated in the same manner as in the past 8 years, with the nets opened before dawn and closed when activity had dropped to near zero. Some afternoon netting was done in November and December to take advantage of the higher temperatures. For the years 1975-80, the birds/100 net-hours were 94, 121, 113, 65, 109, and 98. The migration in 1980 was slightly below average.

During the operations, 10 days were lost as a result of inclement weather. Many cold fronts moved through but were of short duration, and the winds were not favorable for bringing migrants to this station. Banding peaks occurred on 8 September; 15, 17, 21 October with 31, 32, 29, 56 birds respectively.

The ratio of adults to immatures banded was 1 to 9, indicating a successful breeding season for the more common species.

There were 20 returns but 17 involved year-round residents. There were no foreign recoveries.



Block Island, Rhode Island **Elise Lapham**

Despite excellent weather, the early part of the season in August and September seemed unusually slow, with the first significant northwest wind on 5 October. Thereafter, netting improved, but the overall catch declined in 1980 compared with 1979, despite 500 more net-hours.

It was encouraging to see the Golden-crowned Kinglet back in numbers with 88 compared with 34 in 1979. Black-throated Blue Warbler, at 26, was the second most numerous warbler after the ubiquitous Yellow-rumps which numbered 366 banded and an additional 316 released unbanded. Red-breasted Nuthatches made a sharp comeback — 34 versus 3 in 1979 — while Brown Creepers decreased to 24 from 50 in 1979. Blackpolls were sharply down, to 14 from 48 in 1979. Only a single Cape May Warbler and 2 Bay-breasted Warblers were banded. White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos seemed to be recovering, with 56 of the former (27 in 1979) and 78 of the latter (only 3 in 1979).

7 Sharp-shinned Hawks in the nets made netting a little hazardous at times, and 8 Saw-whet Owls were a bonus on early morning net runs. 2 of these owls had the mouse on which they were feeding still in their talons.

One afternoon — with a single net — we caught 3 new shorebird species for the station. Also, a Gray Catbird banded by Russell Hoefflick near Southampton, NY on 24 September 1978 was recovered in our nets, and a Common Yellowthroat that we banded 16 October 1978 was caught by Bruce Adams at Island Beach on 13 May 1980.