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## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Ii

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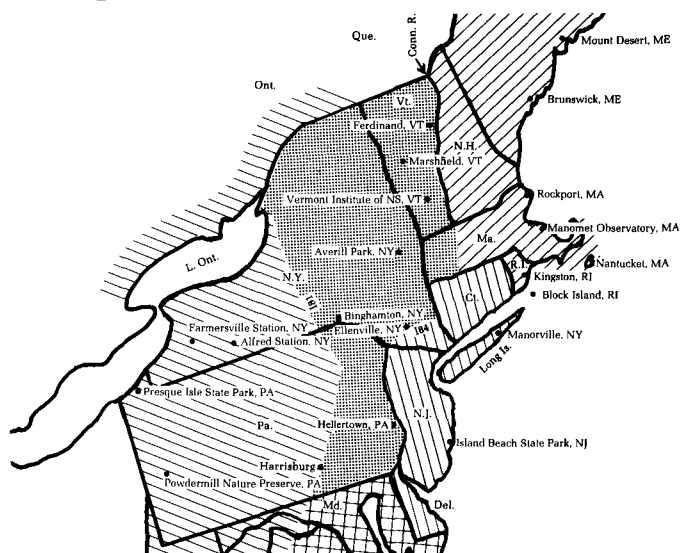
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# Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II

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The fall 1980 banding season was a rather good one, producing 65 new birds per 100 net-hours at the 6 reporting stations of Region 2. This is the highest rate of capture we have had in the 6 years I have been compiling these reports. The total number of birds captured, however, has declined since 1977 as have the total net-hours. (Perhaps our banders are becoming more efficient, setting the nets only in the better locations and at the better hours.)

The stations reporting have not changed in the past 4 banding seasons, allowing me to make some interesting year-to-year comparisons. 1980 was truly a banner year for Black-capped Chickadees, which were caught in their highest numbers since 1975. The combined station captures show that Gray Catbirds were recorded in their highest-ever levels, as were Common Yellowthroats. Black-and-white Warblers and American Redstarts, however, have continually declining numbers, now at half their levels of 1977. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were captured in low numbers. They topped all other species in 1975, making up almost 12% of the total number of birds



banded that year, but did not appear in the "Top Five" list of any station in 1980. Tennessee and Yellow-rumped Warblers were captured in good numbers at the 2 Vermont stations but were very low at the others; perhaps they migrated in a more easterly path than usual, or perhaps weather conditions did not bring many to the ground as they passed through New York and eastern Pennsylvania.

Table 1. Region II summary

	Hellertown PA	Binghamton NY	Ellenville NY	Averill Park NY	Vermont Institute	Marshfield VT
Days of operation	24	37	44	17	36	22
Number of nets used	5-7	11	2-10	6-20	5-13	6
Total net-hours	471	1441	1071	735	1219	1249
Largest daily catch	166	54	33	44	77	123
Birds banded 1980	533	736	677	377	916	805
Birds banded 1979	866	573	592	235	935	1154
Different species 1980	47	62	63	42	63	54
Different species 1979	69	53	57	38	61	62
Birds/100 n.h. 1980	113	51	63	51	75	64
Birds/100 n.h. 1979	43	39	59	51	55	82

Table 2. Most common species in 1980

Hellertown PA	Binghamton NY	Ellenville NY	Averill Park NY	Vermont Institute	Marshfield VT
162 Am Goldfinch	102 G Catbird	84 B-c Chickadee	109 G Catbird	119 Song Sparrow	90 Purple Finch
43 House Finch	62 B-c Chickadee	73 G Catbird	43 Blue Jay	105 Tenn. Warb	93 Y-rump Warb
41 Song Sparrow	77 W-th Sparrow	70 House Finch	32 Swainson's Th	95 C Yellowthr	53 Tenn Warb
26 W-th Sparrow	63 C Yellowthr	61 D-e Junco	32 B-c Chickadee	57 B-c Chickadee	69 C Yellowthr
20 Y-rump Warb	37 Mag Warb	60 Song Sparrow	30 Wood Thrush	45 G Catbird	50 Mag Warb

**Table 3. Percentages of HY birds at Region II stations, 1980.**

Species	Number	% HY
Black-capped Chickadee	205	79-92 <sup>1</sup>
Gray Catbird	309	87
Swainson's Thrush	139	73-76
Red-eyed Vireo	87	67
Tennessee Warbler	167	90-92
Magnolia Warbler	114	75
Yellow-rumped Warbler	147	90-95
Ovenbird	69	83
Yellowthroat	259	78-80
Canada Warbler	73	81
American Redstart	56	68
Dark-eyed Junco	114	44
White-throated Sparrow	225	67-75
Song Sparrow	226	78-86

<sup>1</sup> Where a range of percentages is given, the number of birds of unknown age was greater than one.

Just over 4000 birds were banded at the 6 stations. Almost one-third of the birds were of just 5 species. Gray Catbirds, Common Yellowthroats, and White-throated Sparrows have been in the combined top 5 list every year since 1976; Black-capped Chickadees and Song Sparrow completed the list this year.

As in the past, we recorded the percentage of hatching-year birds in common species (Table III). In most, the percentage is close to that observed in previous years, but we recorded the lowest percentage of HY birds in the past 6 years in Red-eyed Vireos, American Redstarts, and Dark-eyed Juncos. In Red-eyed Vireos and American Redstarts, the low percentages suggest that fewer young were produced than in recent years. Dark-eyed Juncos, however, show a much greater variation in percentage of HY birds captured than any other species we have checked (from 44 to about 80%). I suspect that this could be related to the tendency in D-e Juncos to travel in same-age flocks. The percentage of HY birds captured has varied the least in Gray Catbirds, ranging only between 87% and 93% in the 1976-80 period.

A prolonged drought meant almost no rain in August and September and very low amounts in October through most of Region 2. Accordingly, there were very few strong cold fronts, and few strong waves of migrating birds. The peak banding days were scattered through the 3 months at the 6 stations, but the period from 7 to 16 September yielded the greatest combined total for the season.

**Vermont Institute of Natural Science**  
**433-0723**

**Sarah B. Laughlin**  
**Nancy L. Martin**

Banding in the fall of 1980 took place on 3-4 mornings per week between 6 August and 5 November. 29 days of banding at our nature preserve produced 730 birds in 1128 net-hours, while 186 birds were netted during 91 net-hours on 7 banding days on the floodplain of the Ottauquechee River in Woodstock.

Total number of birds banded remained about the same as last year, but birds/100 net-hours increased significantly. Good flights occurred on 8 and 15 September, when 30 of 75

and 58 of 77 birds banded were Tennessee Warblers. 22 species were banded on 8 September, including 12 species of warblers. Black-capped Chickadees were moving on 22 October, when 31 were banded.

Rarities for the station this fall were a Connecticut Warbler on 10 September, 12 Pine Siskins on 25 September, and a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on 30 September.

**Marshfield, VT 441-0722**  
**Marion Metcalf**

The weather was excellent for the 22 days of banding, with only 1 rainy day. The banding was accomplished on 4-day weekends, Friday through Monday. The peak day was 5 September and the 2nd largest day was 6 September.

There were 52 repeats. 18 returning birds consisted of 1 Red-eyed Vireo, 1 Northern Waterthrush, 7 Purple Finches, 1 Nashville Warbler, 1 Red-winged Blackbird, 2 Common Yellowthroats, 3 Black-capped Chickadees, 1 Red-breasted Nuthatch, and 1 White-throated Sparrow.

**Ferdinand, VT 444-0714**  
**Marion Metcalf**

This small operation continued as we returned to the Black Spruce forest on 17 September for 4 days. We were favored with excellent weather. On arrival, we learned that our best netting area had been taken over by the beavers and was under several feet of water. Needless to say, we moved. In addition to the regular nets we used 1 aerial net.

New species for the station were 5 Common Flickers and 1 Field Sparrow. There were no repeats and 1 White-throated Sparrow return. In all, we banded 112 birds of 21 species in 396 net-hours. White-throated Sparrows were most common (24); and among our more interesting captures were 2 Gray Jays, 1 AHY Saw-whet Owl, and 2 Solitary Vireos.



**Averill Park, NY 423-0733**  
**James Covert**

Banding at the Averill Park, NY station began in late August as usual, restricted to weekends only, with the middle weekends in October missed. 20 nets were used through September then reduced to 6 nets during the first and last weekends in October. Although net-hours increased over previous years, the number of days operated (17) and number of species banded (42) approximated other years. Birds banded per 100 net-hours (51.3) was reduced from 62.8 in 1979 and 72.2 in 1978.

On no single day was there a notable number of captures. The Labor Day weekend was the best weekend. Gray Catbirds headed the list of top species banded; 46 were netted during the 3-day holiday weekend. A total of 109 were recorded during the fall operation — more than twice the 50-bird average for 1977, 1978, and 1979. Blue Jays were second in numbers banded — 43 vs. the average of 49 for the

previous 3 years. Swainson's Thrush increased to 32 after experiencing a notable decrease from 52 in 1977 to 16 in 1979. Black-capped Chickadee jumped to 32 vs. 12, 10, and 7 in previous years. Many remained in the area during the early winter months. Wood Thrush also experienced a notable increase, doubling the previous 3-year average: 30 vs. 14.5. A first for this station — an HY Yellow-breasted Chat — was captured on 21 September.

**Binghamton, NY 420-0755**

**Harriet Marsi**

As in past years, 11 nets were set in a long line following the contour of a hillside through varying stages of succession as former pasture reverts back to woodland. An arrangement with the owners of a neighboring cat confined the banding hours — from dawn to 10 a.m. There was no other set pattern. Nets were up every day the bander was free to band and the weather suitable.

In general, the weather was good for banding, with only a few rainy mornings and the usual amount of morning fog. However, an unusually early onset of cold in the last third of October, frosting the nets in early morning, forced the discontinuing of banding operations by 22 October instead of 31 October. This was unfortunate, as it came at a time when White-throated Sparrows, Song Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos seemed particularly numerous.

August banding was steady but non-spectacular. One highlight was the return on 9 August of a Yellow Warbler originally banded 21 May 1972 as an adult, which made the bird at least 9 years old.

There were 3 big periods during this banding season: 1 and 2 September netted 80 birds (42 of which were warblers and 14 Gray Catbirds); 12 and 13 September netted 79 birds (48 of which were warblers, 14 Gray Catbirds); 18 and 19 October netted 80 birds (28 of which were Fringillidae, 13 kinglets, 20 Black-capped Chickadees, and 9 Wood Thrushes).

In spite of the early cessation of banding, 1980 was a good banding year. Black-capped Chickadees, at 62, were the highest ever taken. Gray Catbirds were high at 102. Magnolia Warblers (37) and Common Yellowthroats (63) helped bring the total number of wood warblers (250) higher than for any other year except 1977 (305). This was the highest count of Common Yellowthroats for this station. The thrush count was average.

**Ellenville, NY 414-0742**

**Valerie M. Freer**

In fall 1980 a total of 677 birds were netted between 1 August and 2 November. This was a rather average number, but the 63 birds per 100 net-hours was very high. The weather through the period was unusually dry, with temperatures averaging somewhat above normal. Both August and October yielded high numbers of birds per net-hour, and September's catch was average.

Only 92 warblers were caught this year, the lowest by far since I started organizing my fall banding in 1970. The average number for the 1970-1979 period was 213. The decrease in warblers took place in resident species (American Redstarts

and Common Yellowthroats) as well as in migrants (Yellow-rumped, Tennessee, Nashville). The numbers of brown thrushes also was low; only about one-third as many were captured as in the peak year of 1976.

A Black-capped Chickadee irruption resulted in the highest numbers ever for this station (84). Dark-eyed Juncos (61) and Song Sparrows (60) were also at their highest levels. Gray Catbirds, Red-eyed Vireos, and most flycatchers were caught in near-normal numbers.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets were caught in numbers comparable to those of 1971 to 1973 — about half that of the peak years of 1974 to 1976, and much better than the very low years of 1977 and 1978. Perhaps this species is recovering from the damage done during the severe winter of 1976-77.

A Mourning Dove and a Mockingbird were captured for the first time in the fall at this station, bringing the species total to 97.

The most interesting return was that of a migratory species, the Tennessee Warbler. The bird was banded by Frank Fish as an HY-U on 8 September 1979 and was recaptured in my nets on 8 August 1980 in heavy molt. We are well south of the normal breeding range of this species; the early recapture date suggests that this bird may not have bred for some reason.

Barbara Belanger, Frank Fish, and I did all of the banding at this station.



**Hellertown, PA 403-0752**

**Elaine & Donald Mease**

We started our fall banding on 8 September, considerably later than in previous years. The final day of banding was 2 November 1980. The majority of banding was done weekdays, in the morning, closing the nets around noon and opening them in the evening about 2 hours before sundown. This year we seemed to have more strong winds which forced us to close the nets. Rain was lacking in our area all summer. A severe drought situation in our Lehigh Valley area had a vital effect on migrating birds. Once October came with some rain, we noticed birds moving almost normally. We missed many migrants such as Gray Catbirds, American Robins, thrushes, and warblers. Sparrows and finches were moving normally.

As during last year, we placed 6 nets in the overgrown pasture and creek area about 1500 ft (450 m) from our house. At the house we also had 5 nets and our aerial net. We did not open the nets in both areas at the same time. The aerial net did not do as well as in previous years, probably because of the absence of warblers in our area.

We banded a total of 533 birds of 47 species. The biggest days were 22 October with 166 birds; 2 November with 56 birds; 6 October with 39 birds; and 9 September with 31 birds.

We had 1 White-throated Sparrow and 1 Dark-eyed Junco return. Both were banded in the fall of 1979.

In addition to our netting, we banded 155 Pine Siskins captured in Potter traps on 7 days between 5 November and 15 November.