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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Iv

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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV

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The fall migration in 1981 was a rags or riches story for Region IV of the Atlantic Flyway.

The northern stations had the rags with all stations reporting a decline in numbers of birds banded. Maitland River described the season as "unspectacular." Presque Isle listed it as "slow and uneventful." It was their second lowest number in the past 10 years. Alfred Station and Farmersville Station both commented on the excessive number of rainy days. It was the poorest year ever at Farmersville Station. Powdermill had a better year when compared to the averages over the past 5 years. Yet fewer numbers were banded in 1981 than in 1980.

Now for the riches: Allegheny Front reported, "It was by far the greatest year we have ever had." Record numbers were also banded at Pleasant Valley.

Weather factors could well have caused these differences. It rained so often in western New York that one wondered if sunshine would ever return. Did the birds just overfly this area? We did not catch birds for banding nor did we see the usual flocks.

In general, thrushes seemed to be low this fall. Vireos were also down in numbers. On the positive side, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets were being caught in better numbers at some of the stations. Warblers increased dramatically at the southern stations. There were few strong weather fronts, so the birds seemed to straggle through without any major waves.

One new station, operated by Thomas Harper at Darien Center, New York, is included in this fall report. Any bander operating a banding station in area IV is welcome to submit his fall migration records. The more stations the better coverage.

John Willetts' Piney Mountain Station at Eckhart, Maryland did not operate this year.

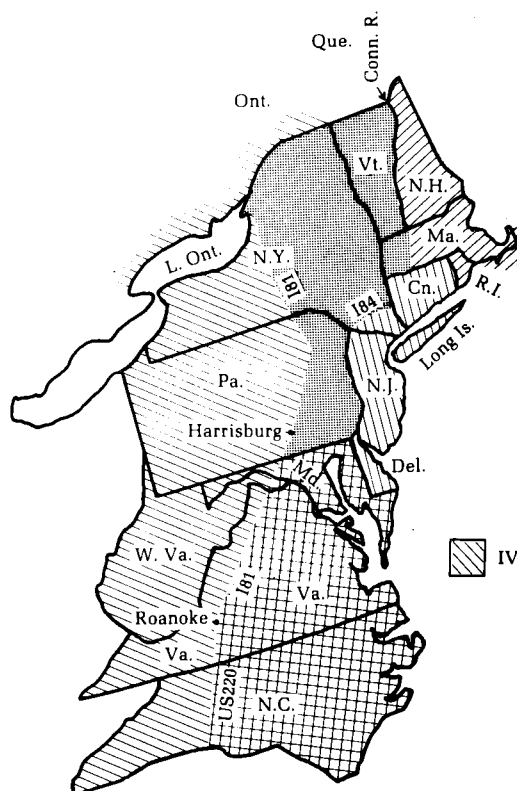


Table 1. Region IV summary

	Maitland River Ontario	Darien Center New York	Beaver Meadow North Java, NY	Farmersville Station, NY	Alfred Station New York	Presque Isle Pennsylvania
Days of operation	56	6	24	24	59	14
Number of nets used	30-34	5	9	2-6	1-8	20
Total net hours	22,467	20	838	442	2,916	674
Largest daily catch	86	—	31	19	36	215
Birds banded 1981	1,115	28	256	183	500	660
Birds banded 1980	1,272	—	465	581	597	833
Different species 1981	76	12	32	26	54	58
Different species 1980	74	—	46	55	46	60
Birds per 100 n.h. 1981	5	3	45	17	98	98
Birds per 100 n.h. 1980	8	—	34	25	28	88

Table 2. Interesting or most common species, 1981

Maitland River Ontario	Darien Center New York	Beaver Meadow New York	Farmersville Station, NY	Alfred Station New York	Presque Isle Pennsylvania
128 Bay-b Warb	7 B-c Chickadee	78 Tree Sparrow	52 D-e Junco	68 Yel-rump Warb	82 W-c Sparrow
93 D-e Junco	7 Song Sparrow	41 Am Goldfinch	27 Purple Finch	48 Magnolia Warb	77 Sw Thrush
92 B-c Chickadee	3 W-thr Sparrow	33 Gray Catbird	22 B-c Chickadee	37 B-c Chickadee	51 Hermit Thrush
69 Tennessee Warb	2 W-c Sparrow	17 W-thr Sparrow	12 Eve Grosbeak	35 D-e Junco	51 Magnolia Warb
51 R-b Grosbeak	2 W-b Nuthatch	14 B-c Chickadee	10 Magnolia Warb	33 Song Sparrow	41 G-c Kinglet
44 Song Sparrow				24 Tree Sparrow	34 G-c Thrush
40 Magnolia Warb				21 Am Goldfinch	30 R-c Kinglet
39 Red-w Black				18 G-c Kinglet	27 Nashville Warb
39 Sw Thrush				18 Nashville Warb	24 Red-eyed Vireo
35 G-c Kinglet				18 C Yellowthr	22 Brown Creeper
					22 Bay-b Warb
					22 Blackpoll Warb

Maitland River Bird Observatory
Huron County, Ontario 435-0812
John B. Miles

The Maitland River Bird Observatory was in operation during the fall migration in 1981 for 56 days. Coverage was from 12 July, when the first Tennessee Warbler was noted moving south, until 8 November. The station was in operation on weekends only, with the exception of 14 August to 7 September when the station was in operation daily.

As usual, the fall of 1981 was unspectacular yet typical of an inland location away from physical land features which produce bird concentrations. Best days were 3 September with 86 birds; 5 September with 71 birds; 31 October with 58 birds; and 1 September with 50 birds.

New species banded for the station this fall were Sora Rail on 27 August and an immature Prothonotary Warbler on 27 August. Prothonotary Warblers at best are rare spring overshoots along the lower Great Lakes in Ontario, although there are a few isolated breeding colonies along the Lake Erie shoreline.

Darien Center, NY 425-0783
Thomas Harper

This report summarizes 1981 fall banding at my 10-acre refuge located at 903 Broadway, Darien Center, NY.

Banding was done on 6 days. Nets were used on 4 days and traps on 6 days. Banding was done on 23, 26, and 29 August, 7 September, 21 October and 14 November. 5 nets were used per day with a total of 20 net-hours. There were 28 new birds banded with 3 returns and 1 repeat.

**Beaver Meadow Environmental
Education Center**
North Java, NY 424-0782
David Junkin

In 1981, the Beaver Meadow Environmental Education Center operated from 2 August to 15 November. Banding was conducted on 24 days using 9 nets and 15 traps. The largest catch was on 1 November with 31 birds caught. 256 birds of 32 species were banded and 52 repeats were caught. This is only 55% of last years' numbers with 14 fewer species. Rainy, wet weather was perhaps the reason for the poorer catch.

Members of the banding class sponsored by the Center and the Buffalo Audubon Society included: Pamela Amy, Jane Cole, Taddy Dann, Betsy Davis, Dave Ebert, Karen Geiger, Tom Harper, Dave Junkin, Tom Klonowski, Dave Lownie, John Mitton, Dave Newton, Paul Reed, Ree Thayer and Nancy Tomczak.



Farmersville Station, NY 422-0782
Donald F. Clark

1981 was the 13th year of banding reports for the fall migration from this banding station. It was the poorest ever, mostly due to the amount of precipitation. During the 3 months, 46 days produced 11.25 inches of rain and 10 days had 15.25 inches of snow. So 56 days out of the 90 days were unsuitable for netting or even good trapping.

Banding was conducted on 24 days and 183 birds of 26 species were banded, weighed, and measured. No species was banded in record numbers and the number of species was the lowest ever. It may be that the migration overflowed us due to the weather conditions. We did not see any sizeable flocks of birds going through except for Canada Geese. During the period, we worked some days in a state forest a mile from our banding site, cutting firewood. Only on one day did we see small flocks of warblers in the tree tops.

2 Canada Geese rested on our ponds for several weeks in late August. One had been banded in Linesville, Pennsylvania a year and a half earlier. The other was banded in Bearsville, West Virginia. This bird stayed on our pond during its molt period in 1980 with 1 other Canada Goose. The bird returned with a family of 5 geese in 1981. (A return of a foreign retrap)

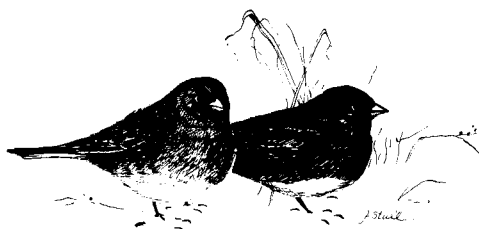
2 to 6 nets were used with an average of 3. The largest daily catch was only 19 on 24 October. 199 birds were caught in 442 net-hours for 45 birds/100 net-hours. There were 16 returns and 44 repeats.

Alfred Station, NY 421-0774
Elizabeth W. Brooks

Fall banding operations were carried out from 3 September to 20 November at this year-round banding station — the 7th consecutive year of activity. A frustrating succession of rainy days limited netting to 18 days in September, but the addition of 2 nets to my set-up resulted in a gain in total net-hours. Total new birds banded was 500 with 135 repeats and 15 returns. I used from 1 to 8 mist nets during 2916 net-hours of operation on 59 days resulting in a 17 birds/100 net-hours ratio, considerably down from 1980.

Good daily catches occurred on 3, 5, 15 September and 2, 3, 5, 8 and 16 October. Highest daily catch was 36 on 5 October. A total of 54 species were handled, including 17 warbler species, highest ever for this station.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Blackburnian Warbler, and Canada Warbler were new for this station. Noteworthy returns included a Tree Sparrow at least 6 years old. Thrush encounters were again almost non-existent with only 1 Hermit and 4 Swainson's Thrushes banded. Fall sparrows were down but there was a promising upswing in numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Brown Creepers. House Finches continue to multiply.



Presque Isle State Park
Erie, PA 420-0800
Jean Stull

Slow and uneventful are the two words which characterize the fall 1981 banding season at Presque Isle, the station's 20th year. 660 birds of 58 species were banded in 674 net hours, about 98 birds/100 net hours. During the last 10 years, only in fall 1979 did we band fewer birds, 640 in 723 net hours.

Our highest catch, in both numbers and species, was on 4 October with 215 birds of 28 species. Early October tends to mark our heaviest flights of White-throated Sparrows, kinglets and Hermit Thrushes, bringing the totals up at that time. Few Gray Catbirds were caught and no Dark-eyed Juncos. Both were in the top 10 last year.

Nets were operated on 14 days, mostly weekends, from 9 August through 11 October. Locations and net lanes remained the same as in previous years. On 30 August we made an effort to catch shorebirds on Gull Point at the extreme eastern tip of the park and managed to capture and band 1 of 3 Buff-breasted Sandpipers found there. (1 bird, 1 net-hour)

Cool, damp, and windy weather prevailed with a few exceptions. There were no recoveries and no returns.

Banders were: Ronald C. Leberman, Mary Leberman, Jean Stull (station leader) and James G. Stull.

Powdermill Nature Preserve
Rector, PA 400-0792
Robert C. Leberman

The fall of 1981, our 20th such banding season at Powdermill Nature Reserve, was one of contrasts. A total of 6595 new birds were banded this fall, up 19% from the average of the previous 5 years, yet well below the 7200 birds of 1980. In general, warbler and sparrow numbers were up; vireos and thrushes down. There were very few strong weather fronts this season, thus few "waves" of migrants. Our banding totals exceeded 200 birds on only 2 days: 17 September (205 birds, including 30 Common Yellowthroats), and 11 October (230 birds, including 50 Yellow-rumped Warblers and 40 White-throated Sparrows). This was the first fall in our 20 years of banding at the Reserve that we failed to band even a single Black-billed Cuckoo, and only 1 Yellow-billed Cuckoo was netted. Another species missing from our list for the first time was the Common Flicker, a bird that we have been seeing in smaller and smaller numbers each year in southwestern Pennsylvania.

A few nets that had been set for shorebirds along the edges of several small ponds were successful in catching 14 Solitary Sandpipers and a Common Snipe, and one such net held 3 Blue-winged Teal on 9 September. The teal, a Northern Shrike netted on 21 October, and a Dickcissel on 15 November, were all new to the Powdermill banding list. Other unusual catches included a Wood Duck, 5 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 4 Saw-whet Owls, 10 Belted Kingfishers, and 4 Olive-sided Flycatchers.

As mentioned above, most thrushes were netted in lower than usual numbers: the 26 Wood Thrushes were down 16%; 6 Veeries down 47%; 36 Gray-cheeked Thrushes down 35%; and although 241 Swainson's Thrushes were banded, this was still down 28% from the average of the previous 5 years.

Of the 33 species of warblers banded, 25 were in above average numbers; 4 were in just average numbers; and 4 (Blackburnian, Prairie, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow-breasted Chat) were in below average numbers. Especially good warbler totals included: 74 Nashville, 7 Orange-crowned, 50 Chestnut-sided, 18 Connecticut, 20 Mourning, 93 Hooded Warblers, and 169 American Redstarts.

There have been 2 recent recoveries of fall-banded birds from Powdermill: a Gray Catbird netted as a young bird at the Reserve on 16 September 1980 was found dead 15 days later on 1 October at Calhoun, Georgia, approximately 500 miles (800 km) to the southwest of Powdermill. A Chipping Sparrow banded at the Reserve as an adult on 9 September 1978 was hit by a car at Gainesville, Georgia on 6 February 1981, when it would have been a minimum of 3 years, 8 months old.

The success of a station such as Powdermill depends on the interest and cooperation of many people. Special thanks this season are due Robert S. Mulvihill, who was able to help with the field work over much of this fall; and I also thank Kenneth C. Parkes, Larry Barth, Jane Huff, M. Kathleen Klimkiewicz, D. Scott Wood, and Marilyn Niedermeier for their much appreciated help.

Pleasant Valley
Bittinger, MD 393-0791
Dorothea Malec

A new high in banding was experienced this fall with more than normal flights of warblers having been banded.

Banding was started 1 September and continued for 28 days through 28 October with 799 birds banded. A maximum of 23 mist nets and a minimum of 5 were in use. We logged a total of 4,265 net-hours for an average of 18.7 new birds per 100 net-hours. 67 species were banded plus 3 new species for our banding station. New were Savannah Sparrow, Northern Parula, and Warbling Vireo. We also had an unusual number of Blackpoll Warblers — 16. Again this year, 16 September was our best day with an all time high of 143 new birds of 21 species. Banders this year were K.Y. Hodgdon, Janet Ganter, Harriet Williams, and Dorothea Malec (compiler).

Allegheny Front Migration Observatory
Grant County, West Virginia 390-0791
George A. Hall

The 24th year of bird banding at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory can only be described in superlatives. It was by far the greatest year we have ever had. Banding was carried out on 41 days, although the station was in operation continuously from 20 August to 9 October. On 2 days extremely high winds shut down operations and a snowstorm added another closed day. On 3 days operations were shut down early because of rainy weather.

A total of 9,220 birds (highest ever) of 82 species were banded in a station effort of 4,214 net-hours (2nd highest) giving a capture ratio of 219 birds/100 n.h. (5th highest).

The pattern of migration was much different than in other years. In most years we have a moderately heavy flight early in the season, but this did not occur in 1981. During the first 20 days of operation only 510 birds were handled. On the next 6 days (September 9 to 14) the fabulous total of 3,618 birds were banded. The last half of September had 3 shorter and less intense waves of migrants. October captures were on the small side, although there was a heavy migratory flight on 5 October. The day of highest number of captures was 21 September with 935 birds. Other big days were 14 September with 849, 11 September with 725, 13 September with 714, and 12 September with 712. All 5 of these days exceeded the previous high daily total of 660 birds. On 3 other days captures exceeded 400 birds, on 4 days between 300 and 400, and 3 days between 200 and 300.

One new species, the Louisiana Waterthrush, was added to the station list, bringing that list to 110 species with a grand total of 76,091 birds banded. Only 6 birds, 3 juncos, 2 Yellowthroats, and 1 Downy Woodpecker banded in earlier years at this station were recaptured this year. Since the last report, we have had no recoveries from distant points of birds banded at this station.

The Tennessee Warbler, with 1,848 (new high) bandings led the list, followed by the Blackpoll Warbler with 1,415, the Black-throated Green Warbler with 1,089, and the Black-throated Blue Warbler with 1,016. 3 of these species are

perennial leaders, but the Black-throated Green is not normally caught in anything approaching these numbers. Warblers constituted 85% of the birds banded and 13 warbler species were banded in numbers above the 5-year average, 2 species were banded in about average numbers, and 4 species were in below average numbers (Ovenbird, Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler and American Redstart). A total of 7 species were banded in record high numbers. Of special interest was the Red-breasted Nuthatch for which only 286 had been banded in 23 years, but this year's total was 101.

On the other hand, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Wood, Swainson's, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Lincoln's Sparrows were all banded in below average numbers. The 2 kinglet species may also belong in this category, but we may have closed operations before the main migration of these took place.

During the season a total of 1,136 people, who came from 15 states, District of Columbia, Scotland, and France signed the visitor's book. As usual several bird clubs, college classes, and elementary school classes visited the station. A story about the station appeared in the "Grant County Press."

