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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Ii

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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II

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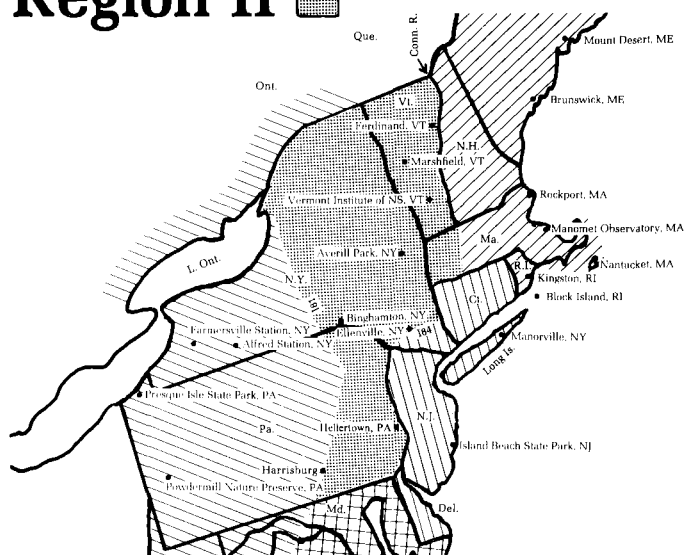
We are fortunate in Region II in having the continued cooperation of most of the same banding stations as in the past. The only absence in 1982 was the station at Hellertown, PA; we anticipate its return next year. One new station was added at South Vestal, and the reports and data that follow show that this is a valuable addition to the region.

The fall weather was generally cool, and the only strong fronts came through in late August. The peak days for most of the stations were in late August or early September, and the migration seemed to be rather evenly spread through the remainder of the fall.

The combined station totals show that the numbers of both Wood and Swainson's Thrushes were the lowest reported in this region since 1975. Gray Catbirds and Yellow-rumped Warblers were caught in their highest numbers since 1975, and (largely because of the new station at South Vestal) Song Sparrows and Common Yellowthroats greatly exceeded earlier totals. The station at Ferdinand, VT caught more Nashville Warblers than are usually caught at all of the Region II stations combined. Nashville numbers were higher than usual at the other stations as well.

The most commonly banded species in this region were, in decreasing order, Song Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, White-throated Sparrows, Gray Catbirds, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Combined, their numbers make up 41% of the almost 6000 birds banded at Region II stations.

Unusually high percentages of HY birds for several common locally breeding species were found in the combined station results (Table 3). These species (Gray Catbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Common Yellowthroat, and Song Sparrow) may well have experienced a highly successful nesting season.



In the 1981 report (NABB 7:126-127) I used Region II data on percentages of HY birds as indicators of migration routes following the method proposed by Ralph (*Wilson Bulletin* 93:165-187). Figures from the South Vestal and Binghamton stations in 1982 show that just over 2% of their total catch consisted of Ovenbirds, of which 84% were young. At the three Vermont stations, Ovenbirds made up about 1½% of the total catch, and about 96% of them were young. According to Ralph's concept, the higher percentage of HY's and lower percentage of total catch denote the periphery of a species' migratory route. The two NY stations are probably nearer the mainstream of the Ovenbird migration route than are the VT stations. Black-throated Green Warblers made up about 2% of the total catch at both the NY and the VT stations, but 95% of them were HY in VT as compared with 84% in NY, also suggesting a more westerly migration route. Fall banding stations should continue to collect and analyze this kind of data.

Table 1. Region II Summary

	South Vestal NY	Binghamton NY	Ellenville NY	Averill Park NY	Vermont Institute VT	Marshfield VT	Ferdinand VT
Days of operation	82	41	41	18	29	31	3
Number of nets used	1-12	2-16	6-8	20	2-16	6	16
Total net-hours	1308	1192	1422	600	1124	1197	568
Largest daily catch	95	127	44	47	37	142	180
Birds banded, 1982	1810	1206	494	390	598	891	399
Birds banded, 1981	—	1028	628	377	895	880	166
Different species, 1982	67	66	61	48	61	53	38
Different species, 1981	—	66	65	54	64	58	26
Birds/100 n.h., 1982	138	101	35	65	53	74	70
Birds/100 n.h., 1981	—	64	54	61	72	76	43

Table 2. Most common species in 1982

South Vestal NY	Binghamton NY	Ellenville NY	Averill Park NY	Vermont Institute	Marshfield VT	Ferdinand VT
555 Song Sparrow	158 Magnolia Warb	57 W-thr Sparrow	73 Blue Jay	101 C Yellowthr	174 Purple Finch	92 Nashville Warb
312 C Yellowthr	116 C Yellowthr	49 Gray Catbird	37 W-thr Sparrow	74 Song Sparrow	125 W-thr Sparrow	59 Yel-rump Warb
142 Field Sparrow	115 Gray Catbird	35 R-c Kinglet	34 House Finch	52 B-c Chickadee	124 Yel-rump Warb	43 C Yellowthr
124 Gray Catbird	88 Red-eyed Vireo	29 D-e Junco	32 D-e Junco	34 Gray Catbird	56 C Yellowthr	41 W-thr Sparrow
61 W-thr Sparrow	50 Ovenbird	26 Yel-rump Warb	30 Gray Catbird	23 Tenn Warb	55 Nashville Warb	20 Hermit Thrush

Table 3. Percentages of HY birds at Region II stations, 1982

Species	Number	% HY
Least Flycatcher	62	92
Gray Catbird	331	93
Hermit Thrush	86	94
Swainson's Thrush	92	82
Red-eyed Vireo	127	90
Tennessee Warbler	100	91
Nashville Warbler	218	82-87 ¹
Magnolia Warbler	188	77
Yellow-rumped Warbler	307	89-93
Blk-thr Green Warbler	102	89
Ovenbird	111	87-89
C. Yellowthroat	640	86
American Redstart	79	75
White-thr Sparrow	348	79-82
Song Sparrow	697	91-93

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

South Vestal, NY 420-0755
Gail Kirch

This new station is located on an abandoned dairy farm. The net lanes are in an area of approximately 8 acres, predominately old pasture now 60% covered with *Cornus racemosa*, 3 to 5 feet (1-1.5m) high. The net area is bounded on the north by a 3-acre farm pond; on the east and south by gently sloping hillside with typical old-field plant association (*C. racemosa*, *Cretaeus* spp., and *Acer rubrum*); and on the west by an old mixed hardwood hedgerow which separates the net area from a 30-acre hayfield. A slow-moving creek, bordered by willows (*Salix* spp.) and alders (*Alnus* spp.) runs from north to south along the eastern edge of the net area. Elevation is 1550 feet (472 m) above sea level.

Banding was done from dawn to 8 or 9 A.M. as the net lanes are exposed to sun and wind. In October, I did some banding late in the afternoon. The weather was dry and winds were calm so netting was done almost every morning from 5 August to 3 November for a total of 82 days. Of the 1810 birds processed, 196 were AHY (11%); 1557 were HY (86%); and 57 were U (3%). The largest two-day catches were the first two mornings of operation — 6 August (95 birds) and 7 August (86 birds).

Two-thirds of the birds caught were in three net locations. The best was at the pond outlet between two mature maples (*Acer rubrum*). Often 20 to 35 birds were in that one net on the first check. A second location was at the head of the pond where a net was stretched through a wide cut in the hedgerow, and the third good location was at the SE corner of the field where two hedgerows meet.

This is Song Sparrow country! Song Sparrows were the most common species. During August, 332 were banded, 323 of which were HY. I speculate that most of them were fledged on the brushy hillside which surrounds my station on three sides. Of the total of 555 Song Sparrows banded, 506 were HY (91%). Common Yellowthroats were very common — 312 banded (91% HY) — as were Field Sparrows — 142 banded (89 % HY). Thanks to Harriet Marsi for help clearing nets on "big" days and for her help in identifying several immature warblers.

Binghamton, NY 420-0755
Harriet Marsi

This station in 1982 used the same general set-up as it has in the past, i.e. one continuous line of nets strung along a contour of a north-facing slope. This net-lane leads first through abandoned pasture (where old thornapple trees are now well topped by red maples), then through a shallow woodlot and finally ends in an abandoned pasture between two small swamps. Here gray dogwood, nannyberry, and multiflora rose are the dominant plants, tree growth being somewhat inhibited by the wet soil.

Banding operations took place between dawn and 10 A.M. on whichever days my schedule permitted. The number of net-hours (1192) was the lowest in the last five years. (The highest was 1610 in 1981.) On the other hand, the number of birds banded (1206) was the highest of the last five years. (The lowest was 455 in 1978.) The weather was exceptionally good for banding with few rainy days and a warm trend that produced no morning fog and no frosted nets. Not surprisingly, August and September showed excellent results. The best days in August were the 30th (44 birds) and the 31st (55 birds). In September there were five days when over 50 birds were banded, the best being 25 September (127 birds).

October, however, was a disappointment. For some reason — perhaps a very dry July and August — the gray dogwood berry crop was minimal and what there was fell early. Possibly because of this, White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Song Sparrows, usually present in sizeable numbers, largely by-passed this station. Only two October days netted over 20 birds, with the highest on the 15th (46 birds). Positives for the season were: 1. Wood warbler numbers (558) were the best ever. (The next highest was 378 in 1981.) Magnolia Warblers, in particular, continued a steady increase over the past five years (from 8 in 1978 to 158 in 1982). The same was true for Common Yellowthroats (from 13 in 1978 to 116 in 1982), Black-throated Green Warblers (from 0 in 1978 to 35 in 1982) and Wilson's Warblers (from 0 in 1978 to 26 in 1982). 2. Two new birds for the station were Common Nighthawk (one 30 August, one 28 September) and Prairie Warbler (one 24 August).

Negatives were: 1. Hermit Thrushes were the lowest in five years (from a high of 30 in 1979 to 14 in 1982). Other thrushes were average. 2. The ratio between Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers continued to tip in favor of the Blue-winged (one Golden-winged to 12 Blue-winged), a trend that has been noticed as abandoned pastureland reverts to woodland.

Ellenville, NY 414-0742
Valerie M. Freer

For the first time since 1971, this station operated without the assistance of Frank Fish, who was unable to man his nets. His absence resulted in the lowest total catch ever for this station. Increased effort in the remaining net lanes yielded just fair numbers of birds and good net-hours, but a low figure for birds per 100 net-hours. Up to 8 nets were in use on 41 days between 3 August and 2 November, with most banding done in the mornings.

Birds have been banded at this station every fall since 1969 and, while there is a fair amount of variation in year-to-year

results, the general trend in the capture rate has been downward. While the net lanes have been maintained in nearly the same locations during that time, some of the surrounding vegetation has grown above net height. Over the years a few trees have been removed, and a more concerted effort in removing trees was made during the fall 1982 season. Most of the trees cut were White Ash.

The peak date in August was the 27th (25 birds banded), in September, the 21st (29 birds), and in October, the 12th (44 birds).

Black-capped Chickadees were captured in normal numbers (24) following two high years (84 and 79 banded in 1980 and 1981). Other species whose numbers were down included Common Yellowthroats (12 caught vs. an average of 35 for the previous 12 years), and Swainson's Thrushes (6 vs. an average of 24). More Hermit Thrushes were banded than ever before at this station (21 vs. an average of 6). Gray Catbirds were on the list of most common species caught, as they have been every year since 1970. Other species found on that list as usual include White-throated Sparrows and Song Sparrows (each on the list for 10 out of 13 years).

All banding was done by Barbara Belanger and Valerie Freer.



Averill Park, NY 423-0733
J.C. Covert III

Banding began in late August as usual, restricted to weekends only, and ended the last weekend in October. While the number of days operated increased from 16 to 18, net-hours decreased slightly to 600 net-hours. This may be attributed to the generally clear and mild weather we experienced almost every banding day. Heavy feeding activity began at daybreak but subsided rather quickly as the morning temperatures rose into the high 50's and above. Banding virtually ceased by 9 A.M.

The number of species dropped from 54 to 48, but the number of birds increased 3.4% to 390. The two weekends which usually produce the most birds were again the most active in 1982. 4 and 5 September produced 47 and 30 birds respectively and 16 and 17 October produced 41 and 29 birds. Blue Jay, Gray Catbird, and House Finch dominated the earlier weekend and through mid-September, while Dark-eyed Junco and White-throated Sparrow clearly outnumbered all other species during mid-October.

The first or second most numerous species caught each year is the Blue Jay. Seventy-three were banded, about a 50% increase over the previous five-year average. Last year 51 were banded. Gray Catbird, which usually ranks one or two with Blue Jay, dipped again this year to 30, down from 40 last year and 109 in 1980. Its five-year average is 60 birds banded annually. House Finches continued to increase; in 1979 this station recorded its first capture, followed by none in 1980, 22 in 1981, and 34 the fall of 1982. While Purple Finches were present in extraordinary numbers last year (35 captures), a single bird was banded this fall, which is about the norm. The thrush family in general remained down. Swainson's Thrush-

es declined a second year in a row, from 32 in 1980 to 18 in 1981 and 13 this year. The five-year average for this species is 30 birds per year. Wood Thrushes remained at 9 birds banded versus a five-year average of 16. Veeries were down to 3 (five-year average, 7). However, 9 Hermit Thrushes were recorded, up from 3 in 1981 (five-year average, 3). American Robins were up from 3 last year to 7 this fall, above the five-year average of 4 birds captured per fall season. The warbler, flycatcher, vireo, and sparrow families remained about normal. There were no unusual captures, although a young female Sharp-shinned Hawk did blunder into the nets in search of an easy meal. We capture this species about once every other year.

Vermont Institute of Natural Science 433-0723
Sarah B. Laughlin, Nancy L. Martin

VINS banding took place on 1-4 mornings per week at three locations in the fall of 1982. Our main operation continues to be at our nature preserve in Woodstock, where we netted 518 birds in 23 days. Two days on the floodplain of the Ottawa-quechee River resulted in the capture of 53 birds in 23 net-hours. Our newest location, used mainly on weekends, is a yard with feeders near White River Junction, Vermont where 27 birds were banded in 17.5 net-hours.

The total number of birds banded (598) and birds banded per net-hours (53) were down by 30-35% from the past two years, although number of species and total net-hours were down only slightly. This was probably because of the lack of any wave-type movement, especially in September, as our biggest catches (37 on three dates) were only half of our high days for previous years at this location.

The only notable bird of the fall was an HY Connecticut Warbler, who obligingly appeared for a public banding demonstration on 19 September.

Marshfield, VT 441-0722
Mrs. Marion Metcalf

Banding was on 4-day weekends, from Friday to late Monday afternoon. Increases were noted in White-throated Sparrows, Hermit Thrushes, and Nashville Warblers, and decreases were found in American Goldfinches and Red-eyed Vireos. The top days were 5 August with 57 birds and 5 September with 73 birds. There were 60 repeats and 6 returns, including 3 Purple Finches, a Redwinged Blackbird banded in 1980, an American Redstart banded in 1979, and a Swamp Sparrow. Interesting catches included 4 Mourning Warblers, a Black-billed Cuckoo, and a Fox Sparrow. We seldom band Evening Grosbeaks at Marshfield but this year we caught two.

Ferdinand, VT 444-0714
Mrs. Marion Metcalf

This was our 11th year of banding in the Black Spruce Forest in Ferdinand. We returned there on 8 September for three full days of banding. One aerial net was used with the regular nets. The weather was excellent, and the number of birds caught was way beyond our expectations. A total of 180 on 10 September really kept us busy. We had two returns, a Gray Jay banded in 1980 and a Common Yellowthroat banded in 1981. Other interesting birds included 6 Gray Jays, 5 Boreal Chickadees, a Saw-whet Owl and 15 species of warblers.