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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Ii

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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II

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For the fall of 1983 the same Region II stations reported as in 1982. Five of our stations have now been reporting for at least 7 consecutive years, so good year-to-year comparisons can be made. This banding season compares poorly with others. There was a substantial decline in the numbers of birds banded, and our combined total is the lowest for Region II since 1976. Netting effort was also at a low, though very close to the total net-hours in 1980 and 1981. (We wonder if banders tend to furl their nets early when they're not catching many birds, or is it that they don't catch many birds because they close the nets early?)

Much of the decline at every station in this region occurred among the woodland species. Among those banded in lowest-ever numbers in this region were Wood Thrush; Red-eyed Vireo; Black-and-white, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, and Canada warblers; and American Redstart. A total of only 8 Black-and-white Warblers were banded in the region, vs. an average of 32 per season over the past 8 years! Only 21 Wood Thrushes were recorded, compared with an average of 50 in the past. And the list goes on—many species were caught at one-third or one-half of their former levels. Some of these also had the lowest percentage of HY birds we have ever recorded, probably reflecting a very poor breeding season in 1983. The most alarming example is the Redstart. Only 20 Redstarts were banded in the entire region (compared with an average of 79 per season during the previous 8 years), and only 40% of those were young birds (usually about 80% are HY).

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	74	35	39	11	26	22	4
Number of nets	1-15	1-16	4-8	5-7	2-15	6	14
Total net-hours	1381	1040	1111	196	961	733	462
Largest daily catch	64	39	30	30	59	95	81
Birds banded, 1983	1176	490	426	204	722	683	220
Birds banded, 1982	1810	1206	494	390	598	891	399
Different species, 1983	69	57	56	24	61	55	38
Different species, 1982	67	66	61	48	61	53	38
Birds/100 n.-h., 1983	85	47	38	104	75	93	48
Birds/100 n.-h., 1982	138	101	35	65	53	74	70

Table 2. Most common species in 1983.

South Vestal NY	Binghamton NY	Ellenville NY	Averill Park NY	Vermont Institute	Marshfield VT
279 Song Sparrow	62 B-c Chickadee	46 Gray Catbird	41 D-e Junco	97 C Yellowthr	149 Purple Finch
194 C. Yellowthr	37 W-thr Sparrow	36 B-c Chickadee	30 Gray Catbird	64 Song Sparrow	70 Tennessee W
117 Gray Catbird	35 Gray Catbird	30 W-thr Sparrow	29 Blue Jay	58 W-thr Sparrow	59 W-thr Sparrow
74 Field Sparrow	28 Swainson's Thr	28 R-cr Kinglet	25 House Finch	57 B-c Chickadee	33 Bay-br Warb
54 B-c Chickadee	26 Magnolia Warb	24 Ovenbird	18 W-thr Sparrow	50 D-e Junco	20 C Yellowthr

A few species held their own, however, Gray Catbirds were banded in average numbers, and the percentage of young remained at the usual level. Common Yellowthroats were caught in good numbers, and their HY percentage was also normal.

At least one part of the problem in the fall of 1983 could have been the weather. There were few cold fronts (and no strong ones), and therefore few waves of migrants. The August and September weather was hot, with many days at or near 90 degrees. October was milder. While rainfall was above average, it came in downpours on just a few days (as on August 11, when 3" fell). All in all, there was little in the weather to cause the migrating birds to stop over in our region.

When the reports from all stations are combined, the 3 most common species are Yellowthroat, Catbird, and White-throated Sparrow (3 species that are almost always in the top 5 in this region). Song Sparrows led the list for the second year in a row, largely because of the high numbers banded at the S. Vestal station, where they made up 24% of the total catch.

Table III shows the percentage of HY birds for some of our more common species. Each of these is very close to the 7-year average for this region (also shown in the table). It is of interest to compare these figures with those from Maryland [NABB 8(1):30-33]. The percentage of HY Dark-eyed Juncos is consistently lower in Region II than in Maryland, and the percentage of HY Yellowthroats here is regularly higher than in Maryland.

Table 3. Percentages of HY birds at Region II stations, 1983.

Species	1983		1976-1982
	Number	% HY	Avg. % HY
Gray Catbird	266	92	90
Swainson's Thrush	106	75	75
Tennessee warbler	112	85	88
C Yellowthroat	349	83	78
Dark-eyed Junco	144	57-58*	59
White-thr Sparrow	235	69-71	74
Song Sparrow	364	87-89	86

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

South Vestal, NY 420-0755
Gail Kirch

1983 was the second fall that this South Vestal, N.Y., banding station was in operation, thus all comparisons in this report are made to 1982. Net lanes remained basically as in 1982 except that unproductive locations were eliminated and new lanes were established (1) along the western boundary of the hay field, (2) in an area below the pond dike, and (3) on a south-facing slope that drains into the creek that was the eastern border of last year's net area. As in 1982 all banding during August and September was done between dawn and 9:00 a.m. In October, some additional banding was done late in the afternoon. Unlike last year, wind was a factor, especially in September and October, and no banding was done 11-14 October owing to the wind. From 1 to 15 nets were operated from 2 August through 31 October for a total of 74 days and 1381 net-hours. We processed 1179 birds of 69 species, of which 17% were AHY (202 birds), 78% HY (923), and 5% U (54). Again the largest two-day catch was from the first two mornings of operation—4 August (64 birds) and 5 August (43 birds); 4 August also had the largest one-day catch. The next biggest two-day catch was on 25 and 26 September (23 and 25 birds, respectively).

Song Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, and Gray catbirds remained the top three species. While the number of Catbirds remained the same, the number of Song Sparrows and Common Yellowthroats dropped considerably. These species (as shown below) reflect the general banding pattern of the fall.

Species	Year	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Total
Song Sparrow	1983	174	52	53	279
	1982	332	114	108	554
Gray Catbird	1983	46	68	3	117
	1982	37	80	7	124
C Yellowthroat	1983	130	63	1	194
	1982	119	189	4	312

August banding totals were down slightly from 1982 despite increased net-hours. September and October 1983 totals showed a sharp decline in numbers of birds banded although net-hours remained essentially the same as in 1982:

Month	Year	No. birds banded	No. net-hours	Birds/ 100 net-hours
August	1983	602	526.5	114.3
	1982	741	449.5	164.8
Sept.	1983	381	484.6	78.6
	1982	687	451.0	152.3
October	1983	196	369.9	52.9
	1982	363	372.3	97.5

There were 18 returns, all of which probably were permanent or summer residents, and one foreign Song Sparrow.

Binghamton, NY 420-0755 **Harriet Marsi**

This station's banding setup remained unchanged from that of previous years. A succession of nets follows the contours of a northwest-sloping hillside. As before, banding was done from dawn till approximately 10 a.m. any morning that weather and circumstances permitted. Banding was begun 8 August and was terminated 17 October—a few weeks earlier than planned, owing to vandalism problems.

However, even before the vandalism struck it was apparent that this station, after two outstanding autumn migrations, was having one of the poorest banding years of its existence. The total number of birds banded—490—compared poorly with 1206 in 1982 and 1028 in 1981. The same was true for birds banded per 100 net-hours—47 this year, vs. 101 in 1982 and 64 in 1981. The biggest day occurred on 26 August when 39 birds were banded (as compared with 127 on 25 September in 1982 and 102 on 1 September in 1981). A number of birds whose peak migration days occur in September and therefore would have been uninfluenced by the early retirement of the nets showed a definite decline in numbers:

	1983	1982	1981
Least Flycatcher	10	21	37
Gray Catbird	35	115	82
Swainson's Thrush	28	34	66
Red-eyed Vireo	14	88	98
Nashville Warbler	7	25	15
Magnolia Warbler	26	158	98
Black-thr Green Warbler	5	35	11
C Yellowthroat	24	116	67
Wilson's Warbler	4	26	17
Canada Warbler	9	15	28

A few species, including House Wren, Tennessee Warbler, and Yellow-rumped Warbler, maintained the level of past years. The Blackpoll Warbler even increased its count—11 as against 2 in 1982 and 7 in 1981.

The total of all thrushes was down—73 as compared to 90 in 1982 and 179 in 1981. Presumably a few Hermit Thrushes might have been added if the nets had remained up as long as usual. The total of all wood warblers was decidedly down—154 compared to 558 in 1982 and 378 in 1981. The sum of all fringillidae was also very low but undoubtedly this was influenced by the early retirement of the nets. So, what happened? We can only speculate. For one thing, the weather was hotter than usual in August but delightfully "seasonable" in September and October. There were very few definite "fronts" to push concentrations of migrants through; maybe that's how we missed them. Interestingly, in 1978 (when this station produced a similar low year) the weather was also "seasonable with few fronts." Another factor may be that along at least one-third of the area traversed by the net lanes a low thornapple stage is being succeeded by a young Red Maple stage so the birds may be flying over the nets. However, this has been the case for at least two years so such a sudden effect does not seem plausible as the main contributing influence. A third condition is worth considering as a possible cause: Last spring—May, particularly—was very cold and wet. Records showed wood warbler migration in particular delayed by about two weeks, which may have adversely affected the nesting success of these species. The increase of AHY birds in the age ratios of most wood warblers supports this theory.

We can only hope for better luck next year—both with birds and vandals.

Ellenville, NY 414-0742 **Valerie M. Freer**

Banding at this station in fall 1983 could be characterized as "slow average." Up to 8 nets were in use on 39 mornings between 1 August and 1 November in the same net lanes as in the past. The total catch was below average though the number of net-hours was average.

Many species were caught in low numbers. For example, only 11 Common Yellowthroats were banded, compared with an average of 34 per season in 1970–1982. Song Sparrow numbers were also down; only 15 were caught vs. an average of 38 in earlier years. (Both of these usually appear on the list of most common species at this station, but not this year.) Other birds banded in below-average numbers include Gray Catbird, Swainson's Thrush, White-throated Sparrow, Canada Warbler, and American

Redstart. A number of species usually caught were missed entirely this year (for example, Swamp, Lincoln's and Field sparrows, and American Goldfinches). The species caught in average numbers include Red-eyed Vireo, Veery, Ovenbird, and Magnolia Warbler. No species were more numerous than usual.

The busiest days were September 8 (following a weak cold front the night before) and October 13, a cloudy drizzly day. August and September were frequently hot, and October was generally mild; there were no strong cold fronts. The weather did not often interfere with netting except for a few windy days in late October. The first killing frost did not occur until October 21.

The long-term trend in numbers of birds banded at this station has been downward from peaks in the early 1970s, at least partly because of maturing of the vegetation around the net lanes. In 1982 we started to remove taller trees, especially White Ash. More were removed during the summer of 1983 (with no noticeable effect on fall banding), and after the fall 1983 banding season all remaining White Ash and most White Pines were removed. Most of these trees were 10 to 15 years old, so were very small when the banding was best. The vegetation that remains consists mostly of shrubs (Silky Dogwood, Multiflora Rose, Willow, Arrowwood) and smaller trees (Gray Birch, Apple, Cherry). It remains to be seen whether this major alteration of the net lane environment will improve 1984 banding.

All banding was done by Valerie Freer assisted by Barbara Belanger.

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

The VINS banding stations operated 1 to 4 mornings a week, weather permitting, during the fall of 1983. The 15 nets around the pond on our nature preserve captured about 75% of the 722 birds banded, on 19 of the 26 banding days. Good numbers of sparrows of 9 species were banded during 3 days on the Ottauquechee floodplain. Netting in a feeder-equipped yard in White River Junction for short periods on 4 days resulted in the capture of 9 House Finches as well as other longer-term Vermont residents.

Number of birds banded and birds per 100 net-hours (75) were up from the poor 1982 season although banding took place on fewer days. Changes in bird numbers observed this season included the best numbers of *Catharus*

thrushes and Ruby-crowned Kinglets since 1980 and the station's first Olive-sided Flycatcher, Brown Creepers, and Evening Grosbeaks in several years. A highlight this year was the capture of a Water Pipit in a net set on the edge of a cut-over cornfield near the Ottauquechee River.

An AHY male Common Yellowthroat banded in Woodstock on 10 May 1982 was recovered on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean, on 23 October 1982.

Marshfield, VT 441-0722
Mrs. Marion Metcalf

Owing to family commitments we were not able to band as often as in previous years. We operated our station on 4-day weekends, from Friday through late Monday afternoon. We noted increases this year in Tennessee Warblers, Bay-breasted Warblers, and Swainson's Thrushes. Decreases were found in vireos and Common Yellowthroats. The weather was excellent, with only two days of rain. The top day in August was the 22nd, with 29 birds; in September it was the 4th, with 95 birds. There were 52 repeats, no recoveries, and 9 returns as follows: 1 Downy Woodpecker, 1 Purple Finch, 2 Black-capped Chickadees, 1 Swamp Sparrow, 1 Blue Jay, 1 Hermit Thrush, 1 White-throated Sparrow and 1 Song Sparrow (the latter banded in 1979). Among our unusual catches were a Saw-whet Owl, a Black-billed Cuckoo, and a Western Palm Warbler.

Ferdinand, VT 444-0714
Mrs. Marion Metcalf

Banding in Ferdinand continues to amaze me. Our station is located within a vast area of Black Spruce forest, yet we do quite well with only 3.5 days of netting. We returned there on 8 September. One aerial net was used along with the regular nets. The weather was excellent. We had only 6 repeats. Our returns included 3 Black-capped Chickadees, 1 Gray Jay, 2 White-throated Sparrows, 1 Common Yellowthroat, and 1 Swamp Sparrow. The crowning point was a male Magnolia Warbler banded near Block Island on 5/19/83 by Mrs. Lapham and recovered at Ferdinand on 9/8/83. The bird was identified, weighed, and released.