

1986

Atlantic Flyway: Region I

North American Bird Bander

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Recommended Citation

North American Bird Bander (1986) "Atlantic Flyway: Region I," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 11 : Iss. 2 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol11/iss2/11>

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Atlantic Flyway: Region I

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Our 1984 station reports reflect similar information to that of Paul A. DeBenedictis' fall analysis in *American Birds* (The Changing Seasons, Spring 1985, p. 22)—dull. The uniformly mild fall had very few days of weather changes to "push" through the birds. The seed crop in the northeast was good and this seems to be reflected in the numbers of kinglets banded. Although David Holmes reported no kinglets banded he had an excellent report with few slack days at Appledore Island.

Although I do my banding in Region II I was also aware of the amazing lack of birds throughout the fall. Whether this was the norm for the inland Northeast or not will, I am sure, be reflected in other regional reports.

Since I have belatedly taken over this regional report I will leave the analyses to the more experienced coordinators. I would like to thank Dick Ferren for his long service as coordinator for Region I.

Table 1. Region I Summary, 1984.

	Block Island RI	Kingston RI	Nantucket MA	Manomet MA	Rockport MA	Appledore Island ME	Port Clyde ME
Days of operation	47	62	44	64	85	21	18
Number of nets used	3-10	2-4	1-14	50	8	5-7	5-13
Total net-hours	3379	768	2482	29,230	4525	1554	1115
Largest daily catch	60	27	89	218	79	155	45
Birds banded, 1983	1175	506	3027	5596	2316	1252	366
Birds banded, 1984	995	457	1209	2597	1218	1539	164
Different species, 1983	69	51	83	92	71	63	44
Different species, 1984	62	48	65	90	71	53	17
Birds/100 n.-h. 1983	40	56	56	21	45	118	17
Birds/100 n.-h. 1984	29	60	48	8.88	27	99	15

Table 2. Most commonly banded species, 1984.

Block Island, RI		Kingston, RI		Nantucket, MA		Manomet, MA	
White-throated Sparrow	75	White-throated Sparrow	116	Yellow-rumped Warbler	495	Gray Catbird	502
Hermit Thrush	37	Gray Catbird	70	Song Sparrow	102	Yellow-rumped Warbler	478
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	25	Black-capped Chickadee	32	American Redstart	83	White-throated Sparrow	153
Golden-crowned Kinglet	24	Common Yellowthroat	27	Cape May Warbler	79	American Redstart	133
Swamp Sparrow	24	Dark-eyed Junco	24	Common Yellowthroat	47	American Robin	113
Swainson's Thrush	16	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	21	Gray Catbird	43	Red-eyed Vireo	109
House Wren	16	Yellow-rumped Warbler	14	Bay-breasted Warbler	27	Blackpoll Warbler	95
Song Sparrow	14	American Redstart	10	Black-and-white Warbler	25	Song Sparrow	73
Ovenbird	6	Hermit Thrush	9	Red-eyed Vireo	22	Dark-eyed Junco	70
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	Rufous-sided Towhee	9	Black-throated Blue Warbler	19	Black-capped Chickadee	66

Rockport, MA		Appledore Island, ME		Port Clyde, ME	
House Finch	222	Northern Waterthrush	240	Bay-breasted Warbler	14
Yellow-rumped Warbler	138	American Redstart	159	Black-capped Chickadee	7
Gray Catbird	126	Red-eyed Vireo	128	Black-and-white Warbler	5
White-throated Sparrow	91	Cape May Warbler	116	Nashville Warbler	4
Tree Swallow	78	Cedar Waxwing	98	Black-throated Green Warbler	2
American Robin	73	Black-and-white Warbler	83		
Song Sparrow	50	Veery	67		
American Goldfinch	47	Common Yellowthroat	60		
Northern Waterthrush	42	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	57		
Black-capped Chickadee	27	Least Flycatcher	39		

Whale Cove 423-0703
Rockport, MA
Russell T. Norris

The Whale Cove Station has been in operation for nine years. In 1984, nets were open between 1 August and 15 November. A few traps were operated also. A total of 1218 new birds of 71 species were captured in the nets with an additional 175 taken in traps. There were 98 repeats recorded. Net-hours were down 13 percent from 1983 and new birds netted were down 48 percent. The following table shows the birds netted, net-hours, and birds per 100 net-hours for the fall months of 1984 and the previous seven years.

Year	Number banded	Net-hours	Birds per 100 net-hours
1977	1386	5028	28
1978	1861	5196	36
1979	1720	4188	41
1980	2242	5195	43
1981	2222	6276	35
1982	1472	6082	24
1983	2316	5190	45
1984	1218	4525	27

August 1984 was the driest in 100 years, with only 1.59 inches of rain, and September was much the same. After a heavy rain in early October came three more weeks without precipitation. During these months there were many days with a strong southwest flow bringing warm tropical air. Northwest winds occurred only infrequently and were usually light. There was a light frost in low spots on 6 November with the first general killing frost on 20 November. Peak days were 10 October (79) and 12 October (77). Unfortunately the station was closed on 11 October.

The 12 most common species netted in the fall of 1984 are shown in the following table, where there totals are compared with those for the preceding six years.

	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978
House Finch	222	343	117	191	175	235	182
Yellow-rumped Warbler	138	172	36	162	302	111	73
Gray Catbird	126	236	130	196	164	237	221
White-throated Sparrow	91	185	132	195	165	248	305
Tree Swallow	78	204	52	35	117	70	8
American Robin	73	233	221	364	62	131	158
Song Sparrow	50	70	96	111	154	96	135
American Goldfinch	47	49	21	25	51	16	77
Northern Waterthrush	42	47	36	29	20	22	25
Black-capped Chickadee	27	105	70	156	258	67	60
White-crowned Sparrow	23	2	5	14	158	17	12
Starling	23	75	53	—	—	—	—

The fall months of 1984 produced the poorest banding since the station has been in operation. Twenty-eight species were either well below the average of previous years or were absent. The Downy Woodpecker and Northern Flicker were each represented by only a single individual, as was Eastern Kingbird. The *Empidonax* flycatchers (Yellow-bellied, Traill's and Least) were down again after some improvement in 1983. Blue Jay and Black-capped Chickadee were way down, both with the lowest totals in nine years. Tufted Titmouse bandings were also much lower than the past three years. Northern Mockingbird was well below average, and for the first time during fall months nuthatches were banded. Gray Catbird bandings were down to the level of two years ago and only 54 percent of 1983. American Robin had the lowest total banded since 1980 and was well below the nine-year-average. Hermit Thrush was absent for the first time in fall. Ruby-crowned Kinglet was much below average for the second straight year. Cedar Waxwing and Red-eyed Vireo were down, and Solitary and Philadelphia Vireo were absent. Among the warblers American Redstart, Blackpoll, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow were much below average. Northern Cardinal sank to the lowest total in six years, and Purple Finch bandings dropped from 97 in 1983 to two in 1984. Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, and Song Sparrow were well below average.

The few species that held their own in 1984 included Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Cape May Warbler, and Northern Waterthrush. American Goldfinch was also captured at the slightly above average rate, and the House Finch continued to be the most abundant species in Whale Cove.

White-crowned Sparrow had its best year since the great flight of 1980. Golden-crowned Kinglet and Black-and-white Warbler bandings were also up considerably from the average.

One new species, Yellow-throated Vireo, was captured, and three unusual species for this station—Belted Kingfisher, Blue-winged Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush—made an otherwise lackluster fall more interesting.

Monomet Bird Observatory, MA 415-0703
Christina T. Dowd and Trevor L. Lloyd-Evans
(Staff Biologists)

In contrast to 1983, when thousands of Black-capped Chickadees masked the otherwise low numbers of birds banded, 1984 was unmistakably the slowest fall banding season in the history of this banding station. Despite a slight increase in both the number of net-hours (29,230) and the days of operation (64), the number of new bandings tallied only 2597 (equivalent to all non-chickadees of 1983), or 8.9 birds/100 net-hours. Between 1 August

and 15 November, we operated our 50 nets on the traditional sites, with two minor relocations, and handled a total of 4271 birds of 90 species (including the 2597 new bandings, 17 unbanded and 1657 repeats and returns). Nets were open during all daylight hours and traps were not used, to avoid biasing comparative totals per net-hour. Weather may be cited as a partial explanation for the light migration in that temperatures were quite warm and there were few days of northwest winds. We had only two "big days": 218 handled on 9 October and 200 handled on 3 October.

Species	No. banded 1984	No. banded 1983	% change	1979-83 5-yr. avg.
Wilson's Warbler	27	3	+ 800	15.4
Dark-eyed Junco	70	18	+ 289	49.2
Hermit Thrush	46	19	+ 142	38.2
Veery	39	21	+ 86	16.8
Gray Catbird	502	349	+ 44	666.2
American Redstart	133	107	+ 24	106.4
Blackpoll Warbler	95	171	- 44	218.2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	28	68	- 59	45.8
Purple Finch	3	48	- 94	31.2

Increasing species: While still a long way from the 273 banded in 1972, Dark-eyed Junco surged from a low of 18 in 1983 to a healthy 70 banded this fall, a 289% increase. It remains to be seen whether we will have a sizable wintering flock as we did 10 years ago. The *Catharus* thrushes as a group have continued to do well, with both Veery (39 banded) and Hermit Thrush (46 banded) well above their previous 5-year averages (16.8 and 38.2, respectively). Last year's concern for Wilson's Warbler (3 banded 1983) proved to be unnecessary as we banded the highest number of this species (27) since 1978 (44 banded). Although we are never concerned over the number of Gray Catbirds, it is our duty to note that the 502 banded this fall represented a 44% increase over last year's 349 banded. Finally, American Redstart continued to increase steadily without the rather large fluctuations evident in other species.

Decreasing species: Several startling lows emerged from the general downward trend of this fall. We banded NO Eastern Kingbirds this fall (average of 18.8/fall over the past 5 years); and only 2 Northern Orioles (average of 33.2/fall over the past 5 years). Both these species breed locally, and we can only surmise that the low numbers indicate an unsuccessful local nesting season. It is with some relief that we report only 66 Black-capped Chickadees banded this fall, the lowest number recorded since 1966! Purple Finch (a low of 3 banded), Golden-crowned Kinglet (28 banded) and Blackpoll Warbler (a low of 95 banded) all resumed their former declining trends in spite of the temporarily encouraging numbers of 1983 (48, 68, and 171, respectively).

Less frequently caught species: The first MBO Common Snipe was caught in October; a wayward Kentucky

Warbler (HY, M) was banded early in migration (August); and the first Pine Warbler since 1981 was netted in September.

Nantucket, MA Edith Andrews

The fall of 1984 was a disaster as far as numbers of birds banded was concerned. Coverage was not as extensive as in 1983; however, weather conditions were such that the cold fronts didn't follow the pattern that usually brings birds to Nantucket. Blackpoll Warbler was scarce—11 banded versus 266 in 1983, and there was not even one Red-breasted Nuthatch. On the other hand more *Empidonax* flycatchers were banded than in any other season: a total of 29 as opposed to 17 in 1983. The next highest total was 16 in 1970. The breakdown is as follows:

	1970	1983	1984
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	11	3	13
Traill's Flycatcher	1	6	7
Least Flycatcher	4	8	9

When things got dull we moved to a nearby farm where we drove birds into the nets, giving us our highest daily total of 89. Of these, 71 were Song Sparrows.

One new species was added to the Station list: a Marsh Wren.

Ticks were again collected for the Department of Public Health and Tropical Diseases, Harvard University; even these were fewer than last year. The highest number from any one bird was 15 on a Lincoln's Sparrow.

Kingston, RI 412-0713 Douglas Kraus

This station was operated in a manner similar to that of the past 12 years. Nets were opened at dawn and closed at 10 A.M. unless activity at the nets was evident. For the years 1979-84 the birds/100 net-hours were 109, 98, 74, 74, 56, and 60. Thus the netting in 1984 was only slightly better than in 1983, which was poor. Activity picked up in late October with the arrival of the White-throated Sparrows, many of which winter here.

There were 6 stormy days in September and 6 more in October, when netting was not possible. Migrants were observed in small numbers during the fall, but no significant peak in banding occurred until 24 October when 27 birds were banded.

Using the data for banding in August of species nesting locally, the ratio of immatures to adult was 78 to 8, indicating a successful nesting season here.

There were 76 repeats and 32 returns. Of the latter 19 were of nonmigratory species.

Block Island, RI
Elise S. Lapham

Although nets were run in the same habitat as the last few years I am concerned with the growing height of the bushes along the net lanes. What used to be a rather open area has become overgrown and either the birds are able to avoid the nets or there is a great reduction in numbers.

The weather of 1984 was almost a repeat of 1983 though fewer birds and fewer species. The last week of September and the first week of October, usually the peak of migration, was about the worst period. I had trouble netting even one Gray Catbird for Kathleen Anderson to use to demonstrate banding for the Rhode Island Audubon Society on 29 September. Southwest winds were strong and there were no northwest winds until late in October. We missed the early September migration which I understand brought in a great many warblers.

Another year with NO Red-breasted Nuthatches! In 1981 71 were netted. House Wren was prolific—16 vs. the 4 and 6 of the last two years. Gray Catbird held its own, but Swainson's Thrush was down to 16 from 90 last year, and there were only 2 Gray-cheeked Thrushes compared with 67 in 1983. Golden-crowned Kinglet and Ruby-crowned Kinglet increased with 24 and 25 vs. 1 and 7 in 1983. Unfortunately we were unable to start banding before 15 September, missing the early flight of warblers, and therefore we won't try to compare them with other years. There were 14 Song Sparrows vs. 7 in 1983 and 0 in 1982; 24 Swamp Sparrows vs. 6 the year before and 75 White-throated Sparrows vs. 20 in 1983. Five Sharp-shinned Hawks made some of the netting hazardous, and for the second year in a row we were disappointed in failing to net a single Saw-whet Owl. We had to release 402 Yellow-rumped Warblers owing partly to lack of assistants and partly to lack of bands.

Although it didn't come near the nets, a Jackdaw was shot by a young man hunting crows on Block Island. I believe this is the first specimen ever for the United States.

Sixty-seven birds repeated and there was one return.

Appledore Island, York County, ME 425-0703
David W. Holmes

The Shoals Lab Banding Station (see 1982 and 1983 reports for more complete description) operated generally dawn to dark, as usual, from 20 August through 9 September on its bit of rock in the Atlantic, 6 miles southwest of Kittery Point, Maine. The standard 5 nets were run almost as always. Two half-nets were added to the north end of the "long lane" to take advantage of a magnificent stand of fruiting wild cherry and elderberry. The 2 nets in the marsh were opened a bit more frequently this year owing to the reopening of an historic road which halved travel time; but their opening also reflects many days with few birds in August.

This was the first season in which we experienced predation by mammals. Norway rats took one bird each from our most widely separated nets at exactly the same time one evening. Both nets were kept closed for several days and the problem did not recur.

The migration just pattered around in August with the only real flight being 93 birds on 26 August. But on the days 1-8 September the smallest catch was 88 new birds. The largest flight days were 8, 3, and 1 September with 155, 150, and 146, respectively. Several species which are normally present throughout my banding period were virtually absent until 1 September: Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Veery, Cedar Waxwing, and Red-eyed Vireo. Philadelphia Vireo did not appear until 3 September.

This was not a season of interesting occurrences. There were no irruptive species. The species total of 53 was 10 below last year's, and 4 below 1982's 12 days of netting. An HY-F Prothonotary Warbler and an HY-U Palm Warbler (Western) were second station records and an HY-M Whip-poor-will was the first. Another item of interest was the Blue-winged Warbler total. Normally, we catch 4 to 6; this year, there were 15. The two-day peaks in Northern Waterthrush flights were also a curiosity. All birds per 100 net-hour figures for the top 10 species are well within previously established totals except for Red-eyed Vireo, which was very low. There was one return, a Song Sparrow which was banded in fall 1983, and no foreign birds. Ruby-throated Hummingbird is not included in the totals; 14 were trapped and had various combinations of tail feathers clipped.

The August 1984 issue of *House and Garden* did a lovely spread with pictures on the historic garden which lies about 50 years from my "office." Check it out for a bit of island flavor.

Special thanks go to John Willetts who came up from Western Maryland for that first dull week; to Rosalind Holt from Star Island, NH, and other places who served as recorder, etc., for several days; and, as always, to the staff, students, and friends of the Lab who helped with and provided much interest in all the workings of the station.

Port Clyde, ME, 1984
Margery R. Plymire

In a disappointing fifth fall migration season at Port Clyde the station was operated on only 18 days, beginning 15 August and ending 12 September, with net-hours totaling 1115. Only 164 new birds were netted, for an average of 14.7 birds/100 net-hours. The August flight was particularly light, with only 8.89 birds captured per 100 net-hours; this is compared with August flights of previous years in the summary table below.

	Total days	Net- hours	Total banded	Total species	Birds/100 net-hours
1980	17	1525	187	26	12.26
1981	29	2137	512	40	23.95
1982	21	1122	203	30	18.08
1983	18	1161	196	38	16.88
1984	12	820	73	17	8.89

Once again the period was generally hot and dry with no significant westerlies, cold fronts, or rainy spells. Fog was nearly constant through mid-August.

A good warbler movement was noted between the hours of 1030 and 1300 on 2 September when wind gusted to 20 mph out of the west. Forty-five birds were netted on this date (representing almost 27 percent of the season total), making it the season's biggest day.

Spring 1984 is said to have been the wettest since record-keeping began. By mid-August wild food crops, with the exception of spruce cones, were fair at best, as continued fog and lack of sunshine appeared to retard both flowering and subsequent ripening. Elsewhere in Maine wild food crops were described as phenomenal, and some

observers felt that this largess may have caused some migrants to take a more inland route.

After only 5 years, with so small sample, it is difficult to draw any conclusions at all. Only two species, Black-and-white Warbler and Bay-breasted Warbler, have been among the top 10 species banded in each of the 5 years of operation. Nineteen species have figured in the totals for all 5 years. Four of these appear to have declined over the period, as does a fifth, Blackpoll Warbler, which was encountered in the first four years but not in the fifth. One other species, Black-capped Chickadee, may be experiencing a decline, as later field observations suggest.

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Black-and-white Warbler	16	72	17	13	5
Nashville Warbler	21	20	8	8	4
Bay-breasted Warbler	62	33	27	29	14
Blackpoll Warbler	21	11	6	2	0
Black-throated Green Warbler	10	8	8	2	2
Black-capped Chickadee	81	26	13	12	7

The future will show whether these declines are real, or merely part of cyclic fluctuations.

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II

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Region II lost one station in 1984 (South Vestal) and regained Hellertown, PA, after a lapse of a couple of years; the other stations participating remained the same as in recent years. All reported the 1984 banding season to be extremely poor. The combined region total catch was the lowest since 1975, and was less than half the numbers caught in the best seasons (1977, 1978, and 1982).

The poor results were reflected in every group of birds. Combined totals resulted in lowest-ever numbers of many species, including Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, and Tennessee Warblers; Ovenbird; Red-eyed Vireo; and White-throated Sparrow. Swainson's Thrush was banded in only one-eighth of the usual numbers, and a total of only 3 Bay-breasted Warblers were banded in the entire region.

If the low numbers caught reflect the results of a very poor breeding season, we would expect the catch to show smaller numbers of HY birds. For many years this report has included a table showing the percentage of HY's in our most common species. This year, however, only 6 species totaled 100 or more birds, and each showed HY's in numbers close to the average figures published in the 1983 report. If the breeding season produced very few young, perhaps we caught too small a sample to reflect that; or perhaps normal numbers of young were produced, but the birds migrated along unusual routes, or much of their migration occurred at times when they could not be caught in nets. It is interesting to note that the regional reports of bird sightings in *American Birds* and *Kingbird* show general agreement on the scarcity of songbirds this fall.