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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Ii

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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II

Valerie M. Freer, Coordinator
RD #1, Box 21G
Ellenville, NY 12428

With the exception of Ferdinand, VT., the same stations reported in 1985 as in every year since 1977, although banding was sharply curtailed at Binghamton. The total number of birds banded in this region declined for the fourth year in a row, reaching a new low of 2506. Banders continued to complain of poor banding as they have during most fall migrations since the late 1970's, when more than twice as many birds were captured. However, the total number of net hours in 1985 reached a new low also, leading one to wonder if enthusiasm for the project has waned or if the nets are furred earlier because so few birds are being caught.

It must be noted that two stations, Ellenville and Averill Park, reported having fairly successful seasons. Closer inspection of their data reveals that House Finches were the most common species at both stations (see Table 2) making up 14% of the total banded at Ellenville and 31% of the total at Averill Park. No House Finches were caught at any of the Region II stations in the late seventies when total numbers were so much higher.

The five most common species banded in Region II, in decreasing order of abundance, were House Finch, Dark-eyed Junco, Purple Finch, Gray Catbird, and White-throated Sparrow. Common Yellowthroats were missing from this list in 1985, although they were on it every year from 1978 to 1984. Swainson's Thrushes ranked from #2

to #5 in abundance every year between 1975 and 1978; but only 47 were banded in the region in 1985, placing them far below the top five.

Banders in this region report on the age of common species, so we can compare the percent of young and adult birds from year to year. Examination of the data in Table 3 shows that while some show the normal proportion of young birds, others, such as Swainson's Thrush and Redstarts, are well below the range in earlier years. Only about 55% of the Swainson's Thrushes, 64% of the Red-eyed Vireos, and 50% of the Redstarts banded were HY birds, suggesting that few young were produced during the 1985 breeding season. In all three species, the percentage of HY's has been lower than normal for several years.

It has been suggested that some of our breeding birds are in trouble because of destruction of their winter habitats in Central and South America. Swainson's Thrushes, Red-eyed Vireos, and Redstarts all winter south of the United States, and the total numbers of each banded in this region are well below those of earlier years. It is not clear, however, why the percentage of HY birds caught in the fall should also be decreasing; this figure should reflect conditions on the breeding grounds. Perhaps the declines in these species are influenced by both wintering and breeding conditions.

Table 1. Region II Summary.

	HELLERTOWN PA	BINGHAMTON NY	ELLENVILLE NY	AVERILL PARK NY	VERMONT INSTITUTE, VT	MARSHFIELD VT
Days of operation	19	22	33	15	26	31
Number of nets	4	8	7-10	18	3-16	6
Total net hours	252	346	1052	698	1371	800
Largest daily catch	46	22	54	57	53	53
Birds banded, 1985	289	194	549	531	427	516
Birds banded, 1984	132	526	383	385	454	599
Different species, 1985	22	41	57	56	55	52
Different species, 1984	24	53	48	47	59	56
Birds/100 n.h., 1985	115	56	52	76	31	65
Birds/100 n.h., 1984	143	43	29	54	46	206

Table 2. Most common species in 1985.

HELLERTOWN, PA	BINGHAMTON, NY	ELLENVILLE, NY	AVERILL PARK, NY	VERMONT INSTITUTE	MARSHFIELD, VT
115 D-e Junco	20 Gray Catbird	76 House Finch	164 House Finch	47 C Yellowthr	154 Purple Finch
36 R-Cr Kinglet	17 C. Yellowthr	52 Gray Catbird	55 B-c Chickadee	34 Wh-thr Sparrow	39 C. Yellowthr
31 House Finch	13 Red-eye Vireo	41 D-e Junco	54 D-e Junco	30 Gray Catbird	36 Magnolia Warb
30 Wh-thr Sp	13 Veery	34 Red-eye Vireo	37 Gray Catbird	22 Yell-rump Warb	26 Bl-thr Blue Warb
18 Song Sp		33 Wh-thr Sp	34 Blue Jay		23 Canada Warb

Table 3. Percentages of HY birds at Region II stations, 1985, and the range from earlier years.

SPECIES	NUMBER	1985	1976-1983
		% HY	RANGE IN % HY
Bl-c Chickadee	112	72-84*	59-92
Gray Catbird	124	69-70	84-93
Swainson's Thrush	47	53-57	70-82 ¹
Red-eyed Vireo	50	64	67-90 ²
Magnolia Warbler	76	76-80	64-85
C. Yellowthroat	107	73-75	66-86
Amer. Redstart	34	59	68-85 ³
Dark-eyed Junco	220	59-61	44-84
White-thr Sp	130	62-68	61-83
Song Sparrow	63	79-84	78-91

*Where a range of percentages is given in the 1985 data, the number of birds of unknown age was greater than one.

¹in 1984: 65%

²in 1984: 61%

³in 1983: 40%, in 1984: 63%

Marshfield, VT 441-0722

Mrs. Marion Metcalf

Banding in 1985 was very disappointing. The weather was quite fair with very little rain. Banding was accomplished on weekends; there were no increases noted in any species, but a decline in many was evident. Decreases were especially heavy in thrushes, vireos, and White-throated Sparrows.

The top day in August was the 24th with 53 birds and in September the 1st with 31 birds. The most unusual bird banded was a Sharp-shinned Hawk. There were 13 returns: 9 Purple Finches, 2 Swamp Sparrows, and 2 Common Yellowthroats. There is no report for Ferdinand for 1985 as we were unable to return there.

Hellertown, PA 403-0752

Elaine Mease

Banding was usually done for about two hours in the mornings on two or three days during the week. I missed the early warblers since banding did not start until 16 September. Most warblers move through our area in late August and we are away at that time each year.

One net is placed in a woodland, and the other three are along the perimeter of our property which is on a south-facing hillside with extensive woodland behind the house and farmland (soybean fields) on the other side. I had one return, a Dark-eyed Junco banded 17 January 1983.

Ellenville, NY 414-0742

Valerie M. Freer

Fall banding in 1985 restored confidence regarding bird populations as the long-term downward trend at this station was finally reversed. From 7 to 10 nets were in opera-

tion during 33 mornings from August 1 through October 26. The total of 549 birds banded was the highest in many years; true, the number was boosted by 76 House Finches, a species not found here until recently. But even when the House Finches are not counted, the total catch was exceeded only four times since this project began in 1970.

Sparrows, juncos, and House Finches made up 35% of the birds caught, a much higher share than in the previous 15 seasons, when that group averaged only 23%. The warblers, at 23% of the total catch, were below their 15-year average of 28%, but were above the average for the most recent 5 years. Other groups were near their usual proportion of the total catch: thrushes 6%, mimids 10%, kinglets 4%, flycatchers 6%. The vireos at 7% were above their 15-year average of 4.5%, while *Cardueline* finches and Parids were below their usual share.

Among the usually common species, catbirds, White-throated Sparrows, and juncos were banded in near-average numbers. The only species caught in record high numbers for this station was Red-eyed Vireo, with 34 banded (vs. a 15-year average of 20).

The temperatures and precipitation for the three months were near normal. Hurricane Gloria came through Long Island on September 27 and brought very high winds and 3" of rain, curtailing banding but causing little damage to the area. The busiest day of the season was 26 October, when 54 birds were banded, mostly juncos.

Averill Park, NY 423-0733

James Covert

Our weekend banding program began, as usual, in late August and extended to the first weekend in November. The weather was generally pleasant, allowing normal

morning banding activities. The last Saturday in September, following Hurricane Gloria, inclement weather caused a late start and early furling. Unfortunately, we were unable to band the next day or the weekend of October 5. Through the small sampling recorded September 28th and subsequent observations during the following week, it appeared the hurricane did not affect the local bird activity.

Eighteen nets were used each day for a total of 698 net hours. Birds banded per 100 net hours equalled 76, above the norm of about 60 CNH. Total birds banded (531) and species (56) were new five-year highs. The most active two days were during Labor Day weekend, as usual, when 106 individuals were banded. House Finches were the most numerous (38) followed by Blue Jay and Black-capped Chickadee, fifteen each. The second most active weekend occurred on October 26 and 27, about a weekend later than usual. Dark-eyed Junco and, again, House Finch topped the lists those two days.

The increasing number of House Finch captures is remarkable. In 1979 we recorded a single banding, none in 1980, then 22 in 1981. This species has steadily increased to become the most numerous caught for the last two years. In 1984 we banded 92, and this fall 164 were recorded.

The warbler family accounted for over thirty percent of the species banded with 18 species and 43 bandings. Magnolia (9), Black-and-White (5), Yellow-rumped (4) and Yellowthroat (4) were most numerous. Thirty-four of the warblers banded were HY birds—almost 80%.

Black-capped Chickadees were noticeable throughout the fall season. We recorded 55, by far the largest total in the last five years. Thirty-seven of this species were HY, about 67%.

During the ten-week season we did not capture or observe any really unusual species although we did have lone bandings of Gray-cheeked Thrush, Indigo Bunting, Wood Pewee, and Bay-breasted Warbler, none of which has been caught in the previous four falls. Veeries were noticeably absent; we usually capture 3 to 7 each year.

All in all it was a pretty good year.

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

Autumn 1985 was the second very poor fall banding season in a row at VINS banding locations. Banders were active one to four mornings per week from 6 August to 29 October but banded only 427 birds of 55 species in 1371 net hours (31 birds per 100 net hours). The 47 Common Yellowthroats captured represented only 43% of the average of the previous six years. Numbers of Song Sparrows and Black-capped Chickadees were also down 50% or more. The chickadee decline was first evident in 1984, as were declines in Tennessee Warblers and Swainson's Thrushes.

Our busiest day was 24 September when 53 new birds and 6 retraps of 25 species were handled. The other highlight of the season was the banding of an HY female Pileated Woodpecker on 29 August. Birds recaptured included 26 banded in prior years. The oldest were two Black-capped Chickadees with sequential band numbers banded as U-U on 25 September 1979, recaptured on 15 September (no previous returns), and a Veery banded as an AHY-U on 26 May 1980, recaptured on 3 September (previous returns in May 1981 and 1984). All three were at least six years old. A male Common Yellowthroat banded as SY on 31 August 1981 was recaptured on 16 September when five years old (previous returns in September 1981 and May and June 1984 when he apparently bred).

Binghamton, NY
Harriet Marsi

1985 was a very poor banding season at this station. This was mostly the fault of the bander who even hesitates to turn in this report. Nothing went right. Illness plagued the early period. Family obligations, out-of-town trips in good weather, bad weather when the bander was at home—all reflected in the banding results.

However, for the sake of continuity, these are the basic banding figures for 1985: Seven nets were up 11 days in August and 11 days in September. None were up in October. The banding took place from one to two hours after dawn. Total net hours were 346. In all, 194 birds representing 41 species were banded. Birds per 100 net hours came to 56.07.