

1993

Eastern Regional News

North American Bird Bander

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Founded 1923

**EBBA ANNUAL MEETING
2 - 3 APRIL 1993**

**WATSON HOMESTEAD CONFERENCE
AND RETREAT CENTER
PAINTED POST, NEW YORK**

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Donald Mease stated that our income during the past year was significantly lower as a result of lower interest rates on our certificates of deposit.

1994 Meeting Site: Second Vice President Tom Mutchler announced that the 1994 meeting will be held at *Cape May, New Jersey, in late March or early April*. (Since the meeting, the place has been changed to:

BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA, AT THE HOTEL BETHLEHEM, 18-20 MARCH 1994.

Memorial Grant: Committee chairperson Robert Sager reported that out of eleven applicants, many excellent, two awards have been made: **Mary Derr** of the University of Minnesota for her study, "Mercury and PCB Levels in Piscivorous Waterbird Community of Voyageurs National Park" and to **Mark LaBarr** of the Vermont Institute of Natural Science for his study on "Site Fidelity and Post Breeding Dispersal of Common Terns on Lake Champlain."

Net Committee: Gale Smith, committee chairperson, reported that the problem of availability of mist nets from Japan has not been resolved. He has received no nets from our manufacturer in Japan in the past year and is pursuing the possibility of obtaining nets from a source in Finland.

Editor: Robert Pantle reported that about 40% of the feature articles in *NABB* are from EBBA people. Excellent graphics have been received for use in the journal. An excellent feature article appearing in Vol. 18, No. 1, is a detailed paper on bird molt by Robert Mulvihill and should be in great demand.

Research Project: Kenneth Burton of The Institute for Bird Populations reported that he has data available to anyone who wants to look at it for their

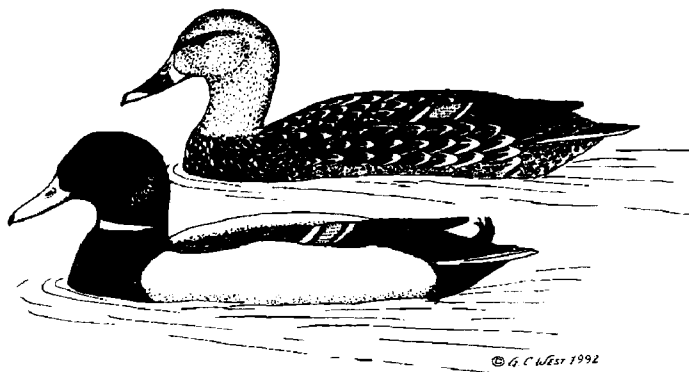
cooperative project, "Monitoring Avian Populations and Survivorship" (MAPS).

Honorary Members: **Elaine Mease** and **Donald Mease** were given honorary membership status in recognition of their many years of service to EBBA.

Historian: An appeal was made to all members to submit to Janet Shaffer any EBBA historical material they may have in their possession.

Membership: Elaine Mease announced that we have 472 paid members. Solicitations of new members have been sent and a new brochure printed.

Nominations: Nominating Committee presented the following slate for the coming year: President - Barbara Ross, First Vice-President - Mary Forness, Second Vice-President Tom Mutchler, Third Vice-President H. David Leake, Secretary - Robert McKinney, Treasurer - Donald Mease, Editor - Robert Pantle. Councilors for Class of 1996: Elizabeth Brooks, Earl Hodnett, Steven Pantle, and Patricia Taber. For Class of 1995 to replace Mary Forness, who was nominated for First Vice-President, Sharon Schwemmer. No nominations from the floor. It was moved and passed that the Secretary cast one ballot for the slate.



Workshops Presented:

Kevin Berner - Field Tests of Several Bluebird Box Designs and Predator Control Strategies

Robert P. Yunick - Using Skull Pneumatization to Determine Age in Passerines

Kenneth M. Burton - The Establishment and Operation of MAPS Stations

Mary Doscher - All About Mist Nets

Papers Presented:

Robert P. Yunick - Year-round Operation of Feeders at a Banding Station: A Battle with Weather, Mammals and Unwanted Birds

Kenneth M. Burton - Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS): An Update and Results from the 1992 Season

Judith and Ed Henckel - Raptor Capture Projects

Jeffrey V. Wells - Site Fidelity in Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows at an Isolated Maine Breeding Site

William R. Evans - Counting Nocturnal Flight Calls of Migrating Birds: An Environmental Monitor for the 21st Century

Kenneth J. McGowan - The Complex Life of the American Crow

Robert C. Beason, Natalie Dussound, Mark Deutschlander, and Cheryl Augonis - Influence of Magnetization on Bobolink Migratory Orientation

Ward Stone - Toxins to New York State Birds

Reports:

Susannah Graedel and Mary Doscher - Interim Report on the Status of EBBA's "Operation Wing Chord" Project

Danny Bystrak - Annual Report from the Bird Banding Lab

Friday Night Speaker:

Chuck Yohn - The Decline of Migrant Songbirds; Patterns, process and response

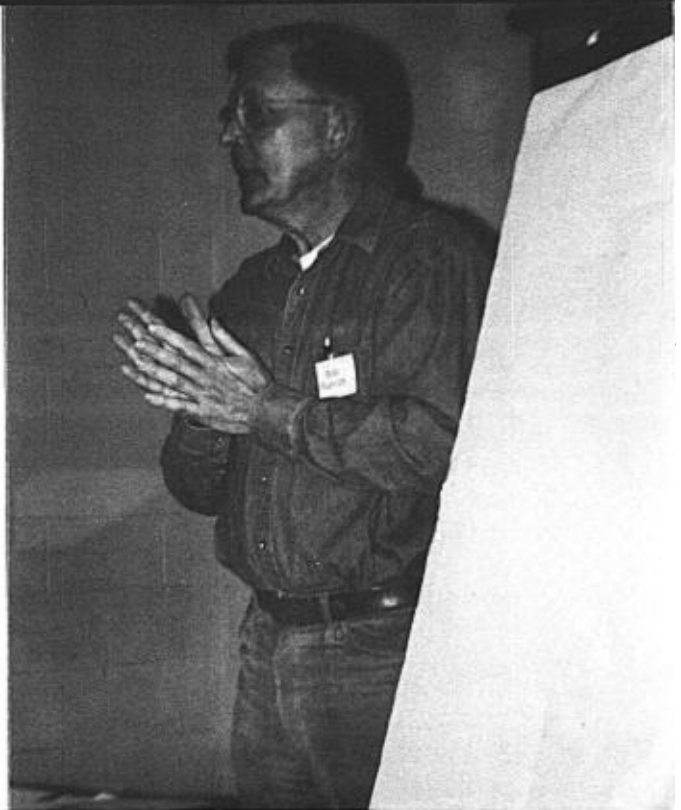
Banquet Speaker:

Keith L. Bildstein - Trouble in Paradise: The Plight of Trinidad's Scarlet Ibises

John and Mary Forness and their committee received appreciation for organizing and running this annual meeting.



EBBA'S President **Barbara Ross**, cutting EBBA'S 70th Birthday cake



Dr. Robert Yunick giving his paper on using skull pneumatization to determine age in passerines



Danny Bystrak giving the annual report from the Banding Lab



Kenneth M. Burton giving a workshop on the MAPS program

EASTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION OPERATION WING CHORD

A COOPERATIVE BANDING PROJECT DURING 1992-93
TO TEST THE HYPOTHESIS THAT THE SEX OF BIRDS OF SPECIES
CONSIDERED SEXUALLY MONOMORPHIC IS CORRELATED WITH WING CHORD.

This project has the endorsement of the

Bird Banding Laboratory, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Laurel, MD 20708

SPECIES INCLUDED IN THE STUDY:

BLUE JAY	CHIPPING SPARROW
SONG SPARROW	SWAMP SPARROW
NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH	NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD
WOOD THRUSH	VEERY

PROCEDURE:

1. **Review records of past banding activity** for pertinent data. All data collected on birds of known sex are acceptable so long as measurements were taken and assessments made according to this procedure. Submitting data from existing files will allow these data to be used. Data from banding activity in 1992-93 are also welcome.
2. **Use a separate form for each species.** (Please make copies of blank form before entering data.)
3. **Codes:** Use the codes listed on the report form. Other codes are not acceptable.
4. **Sex** birds **only** by presence of fully-developed **brood patch** or **cloacal protuberance**. Follow procedures described on pages 6/13-14, *North American Bird Banding Techniques*, Vol. II, 1977, Canadian Wildlife Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Ottawa (parts revised, 1981).
5. **Age** BLJA, SOSP, NOWA, WOTH, VEER, and NOMO according to the keys in *North American Bird Banding Techniques*, Vol. II, 1977.
6. **Wing chord and NOMO tail measurements:** follow procedures described in *North American Bird Banding Techniques*, Vol. II, 1977, 6/11-12. Wing **chord** measurement only -- **not** flattened wing.

Return forms (periodically, please!) to:

Susannah K. Graedel, 3 Talmage Road, Mendham, NJ 07945

Deadline for submission: postmarked by **January 31, 1994**

Sample of form:

OPERATION WING CHORD
EASTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION, 1992-93

Codes:

Capture: 1=new bird, 2=repeat, 7=return

Age: U AHY SY ASY TY ATY

How Aged:

Skull ossification	S	Retained Feathers	R
Mouth/bill	M/B	tips	t
Iris color	I	shaft streaks	st
Adult plumage	P	shape	sh
		wear	w
		color (dull,faded)	c

Species: _____
Common Name/Alpha Code/AOU#

Bander: _____ Permit No.: _____

Address/Phone: _____

Code	Location	Band No.	Age	How Aged	Sex MF	BP/CP	Wing		Date	Date Sexed If Different	NOMO Tail (mm)
	Lat-Long						Chord (mm)	R/L			

Memorial Grant Awards

The Eastern Bird Banding Association is offering two \$250.00 memorial grants for aid in research. The applicants must be undergraduate or graduate students and must be using bird banding as part of their research. For further information please write to the Chairperson:

Robert G. Sager
Department of Biology
Bloomsburg State University
Bloomsburg Pennsylvania 17815

Atlantic Flyway Review - Region I

Tracey Dean, AFR Coordinator
Huntsman Marine Science Centre
Brandy Cove, New Brunswick, E0G 2X0 Canada

The 1992 fall banding season was reported as "poor," "below average," and "unmemorable" by stations within Region I. All but one group caught fewer birds than last year (Table 1). Elise Lapham at Block Island recorded an increase in numbers and attributes this to extending the season until the end of October. The stations at St. Andrews, Nantucket, and Block Island reported a significantly lower number of birds per 100 net hours this year, while the other three showed minor increases (Table 1).

Migrants were on the move early this year with the stations in New Brunswick and Maine catching large numbers in August. In previous years, it has always been September that has provided the best netting. Farther south in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, October consistently seems to provide the hardest work and largest daily catches (Table 1).

Changes in latitude and habitats are clearly reflected in the top ten species banded at each station (Table 2). I have not seen, never mind banded, a Blue-winged Warbler, Tufted Titmouse or No. Cardinal up here in New Brunswick. Twenty-

six species appear in Table 2 but there is not a single one that makes everyone's top ten list (Martinsville excluded). Common Yellowthroats, Song Sparrows, Myrtle Warblers and American Redstarts come the closest, being included among the top ten of four stations. I would have expected White-throated Sparrows to be common; but even looking back over the past four years, they have never appeared in large numbers in Nantucket or Appledore.

On a personal note, cats continue to follow Margery Plymire and she was only able to band for six days at her new area before giving way to these predators.

I would like to thank all the reporting stations for replying on time to my request for information. It is only through the long-term continuation of these coastal stations that migration patterns will show up in this area. I would like to add new groups to Region I but I am only interested in those who will become regular contributors. If you would like to be part of the system, please contact me at Huntsman Marine Science Centre, Brandy Cove, New Brunswick, E0G 2X0. Telephone: 506-529-1200; FAX: 506-529-1212.

Table 1. Fall 1992 Region I Summary

	St. Andrews NB, Canada	Martinsville ME	Appledore Is ME	Kingston RI	Nantucket MA	Block Island RI
First Day- Last Day	5 Aug-23 Oct	19Aug-25Aug	15 Aug-20Sep	8 Aug-24 Nov	6 Sep-4 Oct	5 Sep-25 Nov
Days Operated	13	6	36	60	26	57
No. Nets Used	6-14	6-14	5-9	2-4	3-16	3-10
Total Net Hours	492	382	2665	719	2001	5156
Largest Daily Catch	71	11	139	23	76	211
Date of Lrgst Catch	11 Aug	19 Aug	23 Aug	24 Oct	4 Oct	18 Oct
Birds Banded 1991	534	376	1465	573	886	1419
Birds Banded 1992	282	30	1432	441	414	2149
Diff. Species 1991	55	39	69	59	79	69
Diff. Species 1992	45	10	66	45	56	75
Birds/100 NH 1991	75	10	51	60	36	56
Birds/100 NH 1992	57	19	54	61	21	42
% Hatching Year	78	88	92	82	95	89

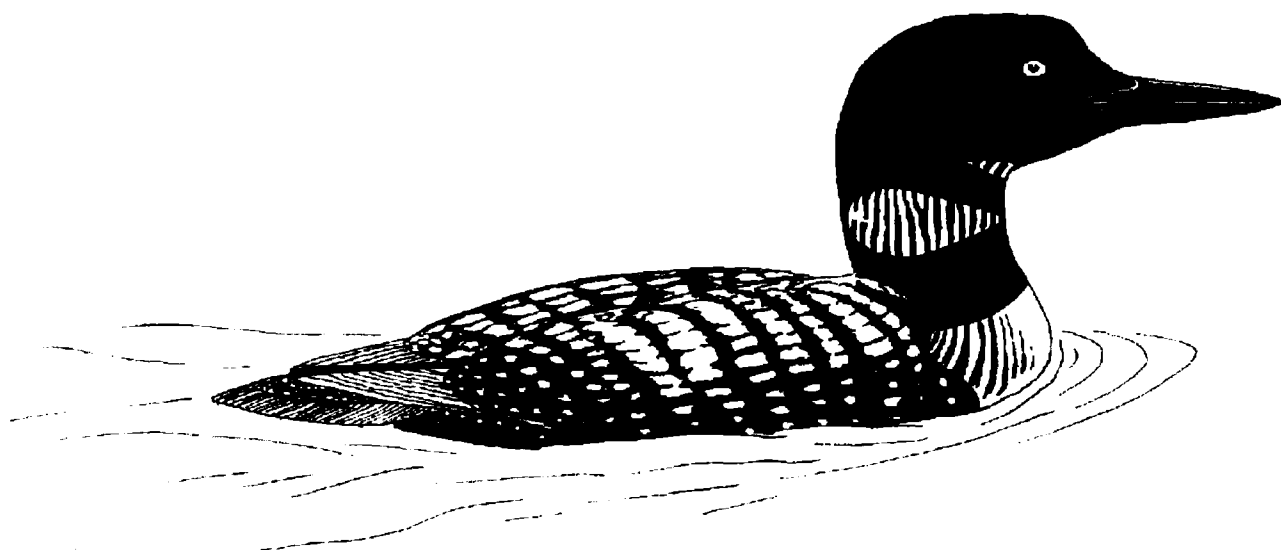


Table 2. Most commonly banded species - 1992.

	St. Andrews NB Canada	Martinsville ME	Appledore Is ME	Kingston RI	Nantucket MA	Block Island RI
1.	23 NAWA (2)	10 SOSP (2)	260 NOWA (2)	112 WTSP (2)	58 MYWA (1)	504 MYWA (2)
2.	21 SOSP	4 COYE (3)	150 AMRE (4)	41 COYE (3)	44 COYE (4)	345 GRCA (1)
3.	21 COYE (4)	4 CEDW	126 COYE (3)	37 GRCA (1)	32 SOSP (3)	244 GCKI (3)
4.	21 BCCH (9)		110 REVI (1)	23 MYWA (8)	29 GCKI (7)	127 RCKI (5)
5.	17 MAWA (5)		64 CMWA	21 BWWA (6)	29 CMWA	84 HETH
6.	14 MYWA (3)		63 SOSP (6)	18 AMRE (4)	28 GRCA (2)	69 BRGR
7.	13 AMRE (7)		50 BAWW	18 ETTI	19 AMRE (8)	63 WTSP (7)
8.	12 GCKI		46 BAOR	17 BCCH (5)	13 WPWA	60 SOSP (9)
9.	11 WTSP (1)		42 RBNU	13 BAWW (7)	12 BCCH (5)	59 SCJU
10.	9 BTNW		40 YWAR (10)	13 SCJU (10)	12 BTBW	57 REVI (4)

() Position last year.

St. Andrews
New Brunswick, Canada
Tracey Dean

450-0670

The net lines and trails are now well established at St. Andrews as the banding station ended its third full year of operation. Fall coverage 1992 was well down as wet weather and work seemed to get in the way. The nets were opened on only 13 days and then sometimes closed in a hurry as rain moved in. Overall, 282 birds of 45 species were banded. Despite the low numbers, there were some good days: 11 August produced 71 birds including 14 species of warblers; and 5 September, 39 birds with 12 species of warblers and the only Mourning Warbler and Philadelphia Vireo of the year.

It is hard to compare 1992 with previous years as the banding effort has not been consistent, but significant increases were seen in Song and Swamp Sparrow numbers. The largest decline was in White-throat numbers dropping from 46 to only 11. Red-eyed Vireos were notably absent with four

banded compared to 29 last year. Perhaps the high number in 1991 was unusual? Most warbler numbers were down and I attribute this to wet weather and being unable to open the nets when the migrant flocks were in the area.

No rarities were recorded in the fall, but two Fox Sparrows were unusual and three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks added a new species. Ten birds returned from previous years, nothing uncommon. Nashville Warblers, Common Yellowthroats and American Redstarts seemed to have had a successful breeding year despite the cool, wet summer, as over 90% of the fall birds caught were HY.

Public education is still a priority at the station and banding demonstrations were given to visiting groups of high school students and teachers from the local area as well as from Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Maine.

The plans for 1993 are basically the same as this year: to continue the migration monitoring in the spring and fall and contribute to the MAPS project during summer.

Martinsville, ME
Margery Plymire

435-0691

My banding season ended abruptly when on three successive days I encountered a white cat lounging by three different nets. I closed all the nets, called our local animal control office, and got a trap. I never caught the cat though it showed quite a lot of interest in the trap but it appeared to have seen one before.

It is very discouraging. I really want to run the station--that's why I bought the property--but I can't sacrifice birds to someone's discarded cat.

Appledore Island, ME
David Holmes, Sara Morris

425-0703

This was a fairly unmemorable season. We caught only one rare warbler--a Cerulean; had a single new species for the station--Lark Sparrow; one new individual high count with 47 Baltimore Orioles; and two species tie previous highs--Eastern Wood-Pewee (26) and Yellow-throated Vireo (3). We also had one new low with a single Rose-breasted Grosbeak; one low tie--Eastern Kingbird (2); and the lowest numbers of flickers, blackpolls, Connecticut Warblers, and chats since 1985. Eastern Phoebe and Warbling Vireo numbers were the lowest since 1984; and numbers of catbirds, Ovenbirds, Black-throated Blues and Mourning Warblers the lowest since 1983. The general pattern of migration seemed to follow the season's vegetation by being at least a week late and the expected Red-breasted Nuthatch flight turned out to be modest. Our resident species appeared to have a fairly poor breeding season but the Carolina Wren population seems to have stabilized.

We set up the standard 10 nets but help was unusually scant this year, so we ran only six to eight nets each day. The "bog" was dry enough to run about three weeks of our five, but our boardwalk net stayed closed almost the whole season after a rat got dinner the first afternoon and we didn't have anyone to net-sit. The outlying nets at the north and south ends of the island were usually run on alternate days. Days lost to poor weather were minor.

Vegetation was wonderfully lush, the fruit crop was outstanding, and the fall webworms were almost non-existent. Fronts were a mixed mess. One on 20 August finally produced a calm night on the 22nd and a classic "dump" (139 birds) the next day. The front on 11-12 September brought a major species change but not great numbers.

Our 66 species was about average, while our total of 1432 individuals was low though better than 1990 (1258). To give you a perspective on "low", our 1984-85 totals were in the 1500's, 86-87 totals were around the 1700's, and 88-89 totals were well above 2100.

We recently received our twelfth recovery--a Gray Catbird banded 18 September 1991 was found dead at Barnegat Light, New Jersey, on 1 August 1992.

Kingston, RI
Douglas Kraus

412-0713

The nets were opened daily from 8 August to 31 October for the first four hours after sunrise, weather permitting. The nets were also opened 4, 11, 12, 21, and 24 November.

The 64 birds/100 net hours for August was above the previous ten-year average of 52; but due to five rainy days, the number of birds banded was low, only 131. The best day was 22 August when 21 new birds were recorded.

In September, the banding rate (30 birds/100 nh) fell well below the ten-year average of 46 birds/100 nh. Nineteen birds were banded on 1 September but after that it was all down hill. Cold fronts did not seem to bring migrants to my nets, although I did see a few in the trees.

The 1992 rate of 78 birds/100 nh in October was slightly above the ten-year average for this month. Migrants were scarce until the 16th. Numbers peaked on the 17th and 24th with 21 and 23 banded respectively.

Only 45 species were banded this year as compared with the ten-year average of 57, and most species were well below normal numbers. Twenty-

four returns and 50 repeats were also recorded; none of these were very significant.

The most exciting birds caught were a Red-bellied Woodpecker and a Marsh Wren, both firsts for the station.

Nantucket, MA

411-0700

Edith Andrews

The 1992 banding season at Mothball Pines began auspiciously on 6 September with a male Golden-winged Warbler, only the fourth encounter in over 30 years. It seemed to herald the beginning of a good season. However, as the week progressed our daily totals dropped drastically and it was 13 September before we had another wave of migrants. There had been a strong north wind the day before; but dawn on the 13th was calm allowing 73 birds to be banded, including 16 species of warblers. Another wave of migrants appeared on 20 September with 10 species of warblers. Periods of stormy weather followed and it was too wet or windy to open the nets. Finally on the last day of the month, we awoke to find the woods alive with birds. So, in spite of a fierce north wind, we opened seven nets for an hour and a half and banded 76 birds. Of these, 55 were Myrtles and we kept catching more as we closed the nets. In the end we had to release 67 birds unbanded as we were strapped for time.

During the fall, we had 113 recaptures of which nine were returns. The two oldest were a Black-capped Chickadee originally banded as a HY in 1985, and a Common Yellowthroat from 1988. All the returns were residents and we had no foreign retraps.

This fall we banded only two chats compared to 12 last year (maybe due to the effects of last year's hurricane on their pokeweed food supply). Empidonax flycatcher numbers were also down with no Yellow-bellied recorded. There were no Ovenbirds, only two Northern Waterthrushes, and even the numbers of our old standby, the Gray Catbird, were down.

All in all it was a poor season. We had one injury: a Song Sparrow with a broken leg. This occurred on the last wild morning when we were swamped.

More trees have died off leaving the woods more and more open to strong winds. However, in spite of this, the area still attracts fall migrants. Situated near a barrier beach between the ocean and a pond, it acts as a "warbler trap." When the wind is NW, birds are seen to come in off the ocean from the south. It is as though they find themselves out over the water and head back for the nearest land.

Banding demonstrations were given to the Rhode Island Audubon Society, the Brookline Bird Club and the Maria Mitchell Bird Walks group.

Block Island, RI

411-0713

Elise Lapham

The year 1992 was the 25th year for our banding station on Block Island; and looking back, we see notable changes both in the habitat around the nets and in the variety and number of birds caught. Originally, the area was mainly bayberry three to six feet high; but now the same plants are eight feet tall with an understory of wild rose, chokecherry and poison ivy. Pine seedlings that were planted in the 60's have grown to forty-foot trees.

Migrant birds usually come to Block Island with the NW fronts and we are not sure how habitat changes affect the birds we net. Over these 25 years there has been a continual decline both in the numbers and the varieties caught. Visiting birders have seen the same decrease.

This fall our nets were up through the last two weeks in October, a period we don't usually cover, and this affected our results significantly. These later weeks added 900 birds and eight species to our fall list. Well over half of the top ten species were banded between 13 and 28 October.

September banding was poor and it took until 1 October to reach 500 birds, though we used 41% of the season's net hours. We didn't get many warblers either in variety or total numbers, though

the five chats were nearly a record. This spring we had our best migration in over ten years, with a record 59 Magnolias and it was disappointing to get only five this fall.

The warbler situation is similar to that among other groups of birds; a few species arrived in large numbers, most in small numbers, and some missed entirely, probably due to the warm weather during their migration time. Thrushes arrived in average numbers, except for Hermits. Not only the longer banding period but also the unusual influx resulted in 92 Hermits banded, a record number and more than twice the 45 banded in 1991.

We had one unusual return--our first ever Eastern Kingbird from 1990. There were three interesting recoveries: a House Wren in Rhode Island, a Gray

Catbird in Connecticut, and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Maryland, all banded in the last two years.

Unusual birds sighted this fall included a Prothonotary Warbler which entertained many birders quite close to our nets but which we didn't catch, and a Northern Wheatear behind a favorite hotel for birders downtown.

We had no really unusual species but we and many birders visiting the station enjoyed what we did see. Although we do not count, we estimate we demonstrated banding to well over 250 visitors including birding groups, individuals and school children, as well as some non-birders. Whether we show a catbird or a Saw-whet Owl, the interest and excitement of these visitors makes our banding days fun even when we net few birds.

