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## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I - Fall 1993

North American Bird Bander

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**EBBA'S 1995 ANNUAL MEETING**  
**21-23 APRIL**  
**THE GRAND HOTEL, CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY**

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## ***Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I - Fall 1993***

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

Where have all the birds gone? This is the lament of almost all the northeast coast stations for the second year in a row. The main fall migration of warblers, vireos, and thrushes along the east coast just did not materialize. A wide diversity of species were caught but total birds banded and birds per 100 net hours were down at most AFR Region I stations (Table 1). Is this a reflection of last year's poor breeding season in the north where the weather was cold and wet, or it is evidence of something larger?

Most stations noted the lack of warblers this year; but since 1990, the position of warblers with respect to the ten most commonly banded species has changed very little (Table 2). The average position has varied from 5.6, 5.7, 5.0 to 6.0 (1990 to 1993 respectively). The species composition may change but a diversity of 12, 12, 13, 11 (1990 to 1993) warbler species are abundant each year in AFR Region I.

Finches are a new addition to the top ten lists with the appearance of goldfinches and House Finches. Is this the start of a new trend?

Despite the low banding totals, a variety of southern strays were captured. Kentucky, Yellow-throated, and Prothonotary Warblers were reported from Appledore Island, Maine, and Nantucket, Massachusetts. Appledore Island also had a Hooded Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat made it as far as St. Andrews, New Brunswick.

A rather odd fall migration pattern was produced in 1993; and if you would like to contribute data to this puzzle, please contact me (Tracey Dean) at 506-529-1200 or FAX 506-529-1212. Thank you to the four regular stations for their 1993 contributions. Good luck in 1994; I hope the winds are favorable.

**Table 1. Fall 1993 Region I Summary.**

	<b>St. Andrews NB</b> 450-0670	<b>Appledore Is ME</b> 425-0703	<b>Kingston RI</b> 412-0713	<b>Nantucket MA</b> 411-0700	<b>Block Island RI</b> 411-0713
First Day	9 August	14 August	15 August	29 August	27 August
Last Day	24 October	22 September	20 December	8 October	6 November
Days Operated	11	40	52	32	61
No. Nets Used	6-13	6-10	1-4	2-13	3-11
Total Net Hours	427.5	3180.5	427	2065	5165
Birds Banded '92	282	1432	441	414	2149
Birds Banded '93	146	1045	335	620	1356
Diff. Species 1992	45	66	45	56	75
Diff. Species 1993	35	66 + 1H	42	80	73
Lrgst Daily Catch	32	74	22	69	110
Date of LDC	9 August	21 September	24 October	1 October	24 October
Birds/100 NH '92	57	53.7	64	21	42
Birds/100 NH '93	34	32.9	78	30	26
% Hatch Year	66	91.4	72	93	96.4

**St. Andrews, New Brunswick 450-0670**  
Tracey Dean, head bander

The woods were strangely quiet here in New Brunswick by the end of August and bird activity only picked up with the late migrants in October. September especially was slow and frustrating with only five birds netted on the 2nd and three on the 11th. The usual waves of fall warblers, vireos, and thrushes did not stop in the St. Andrews area. This might have been due to the hot, dry summer weather which was not typical of the Maritimes. Drought conditions caused most of the deciduous trees to lose their leaves and August looked much like October. The Highbush Cranberry produced a good fruit crop but cherries were disappointing and attracted few birds.

Most noticeable in their absence or low numbers were the warblers; i.e., Nashville, Cape May, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, and Northern Parula. Only 12 species were caught this year compared to 19 in 1992 and 22 in 1991. The number of Nashville Warblers was drastically down: 23 were banded last fall; zero this fall and only three all year.

Most of the interesting retraps are caught in the spring, but two of note in the fall were a Solitary Vireo from 1990 and an American Redstart from 1991.

The St. Andrews fall totals reflect the influx of later migrants (see Table 2). Good numbers of both

**Table 2. The most commonly banded species - 1993.**

	<b>St. Andrews NB</b> 450-0670	<b>Appledore Is ME</b> 425-0703	<b>Kingston RI</b> 412-0713	<b>Nantucket MA</b> 411-0700	<b>Block Island RI</b> 411-0713
1	21 WTSP (9)	170 NOWA (1)	94 WTSP (1)	66 SOSP (3)	315 GRCA (2)
2	16 BCCH (4)	144 COYE (3)	44 GRCA (3)	65 COYE (2)	110 GCKI (3)
3	11 RCKI	85 AMRE (2)	29 BCCH (8)	63 GRCA (6)	107 MYWA (1)
4	9 GCKI (8)	58 BAWW (7)	21 COYE (2)	31 MYWA (1)	64 COYE
5	9 MAWA (5)	51 RBNU (9)	16 RCKI	30 AMRO	60 RCKI (4)
6	8 ALFL	45 REVI (4)	12 BWWA (5)	29 AMGO	52 SCJU (9)
7	8 SOSP (2)	39 OVEN	11 NOCA	24 RBNU	41 HETH (5)
8	6 COYE (3)	39 SOSP (6)	10 ETTI (7)	22 BCCH (9)	40 BRGR (7)
9	5 BTNW (10)	37 GRCA	10 BAWW (9)	16 HOFI	40 WTSP (6)
10	5 BAWW	28 BLPW	9 AMRE (6)	13 REVI	40 AMRE
	5 AMGO			13 WPAW (8)	
				13 SAVS	

( ) position last year.

species of kinglets, chickadees and White-throated Sparrows were caught towards the end of October, but few thrushes were found in the nets. The low HY ratio is mainly due to the uncertainty I had in accurately aging the kinglets and many of them were left as unknown age.

The highlights of the fall banding included the station's first Sharp-shinned Hawk on 24 August; a Yellow-breasted Chat, 14 October; and a Pine Grosbeak, 19 October. This again seems to reflect the strangeness of the fall as a bird wandering from the south was almost caught the same day as a bird straying down from the north.

#### **Appledore Island, Maine 425-0703**

*David Holmes, Sara Morris*, head banders  
Mary Wright, Rozzie Holt, and Marilyn McKenna, assistants

Another season has come and gone and how does one keep finding superlatives for "worst," "slowest ever," or "no busy days." Only two major fronts

made it beyond the immediate vicinity: one on 10-11 September and the next on 18-19 September. And while birds moved with both, decent numbers did not reach us.

The most fascinating part of this season was our southern connection. In addition to banding Kentucky Warblers, a Hooded Warbler and a Summer Tanager, we were visited by a White Ibis, a Yellow-throated Warbler, a Prothonotary Warbler, and a Blue Grosbeak. Remember, we are in Maine!

The other notable feature was there was almost no measurable rainfall from 10 June until the night of 3 September. Leaves were drooping, curling up, and dropping off. The cherry crop looked pretty good, but the other berries did not. We do not know what this did to insects, but our retrap rate was unusually low. Our favorite repeaters, Red-eyed Vireos, were one of the disaster species this year.

We ran the usual six nets regularly and the four outlying nets once in a while. No full days were lost to weather, so we tied our highest number of

net-hours for a season. Since we had the fewest birds ever, our birds per 100 net hours figure (Table 1) starts to look like that for an inland station. We caught very low numbers of flycatchers, Cedar Waxwings, Red-eyed Vireos, Cape May Warblers, American Redstarts, and Song Sparrows. Tennessee and Bay-breasted Warblers almost missed us, while Yellow Warblers, Prairie Warblers, and Yellow-breasted Chat numbers were low. Red-breasted Nuthatches staged a nice flight and everything else came at least close to normal numbers.

Our first ever No. Saw-whet Owl appeared on 20 September and our second Lawrence's Warbler delights us on 31 August. Our oldest friend, a Common Yellowthroat which was banded as an AHY-M in August 1987, checked in for his fourth visit on 10 September.

The Lab. was host to an Association of Field Ornithologists meeting from 10-12 September and Sara gave presentations on Shoals banding work. As part of a poster for the June American Ornithological Union meeting, I prepared this simple but chilling chart:

Year	# days with >75 birds	# days with <30 birds
1983	8	4
1984	9	3
1985	10	4
1986	12	4
1987	8	1
1988	12	3
1989	14	3
1990	2	17
1991	5	17
1992	3	13
1993	0	30

No adjustments were made for weather or other partial days.

How can our springs be so good when our falls are so bad? I am anxiously awaiting next year's results.

## KINGSTON, RHODE ISLAND

412-0713

*Doug Kraus*, head bander

Four nets were operated for the first three hours after sunrise between 15 August and 30 October unless it was too cold. Banding was continued for seven days in November and three days in December, but with only one or two nets open for the couple of hours before dark.

The birds/100 net hours for August, September, and October were 67, 48, and 97, respectively, up from the ten-year averages of 52, 43, and 79 (see Table 1).

In August, no strong cold fronts passed over and very few northern migrants were banded or seen in the area.

The cold fronts were weak in September, and there were 12 days that were either too wet or too windy to net. Some migrants were seen in the area but very few were netted.

In October, the cold fronts came through with NE winds, but they did not bring many birds with them. Six days were rained out. The Yellow-rumped Warbler, which is usually abundant in October, was scarce and only four were banded. The ten-year average is 23.

There were 27 returns and 67 repeats—none of much significance. No notable birds were captured.

## Nantuckett, Massachusetts

411-0700

*Edith Andrews*, head bander

Max Leenholtz, assistant

The 1993 banding season at Mothball Pines began a week earlier than last year with 32 days in operation, compared with 26 days in 1992. However, the total net hours for both years were close; i.e., 2001 in 1992 and 2065 in 1993. Other totals are given in Table 1.

More trees have died and been cut down so we had to change the location of some of our nets. I never cease to be amazed that the area still at-

tracts migrating passerines. With the woods opening up, the Pokeweed, *Phytolacca americana*, flourished and fruit was abundant.

In spite of everything, we had some unusual birds, possibly the result of Hurricane "Emily" offshore during the first week. One was a Yellow-throated Warbler, the first to be caught at this station. It was seen 29 August and banded 5 September as a HY-F. Next was a Kentucky Warbler on 8 September. All that week we were having unsettled weather with southerly and easterly winds and fog. On 12 September we banded a Prothonotary Warbler which was recaptured on the 13th and 14th and stayed in the area until the 20th. On the 25th, a male Hooded Warbler was seen and subsequently captured.

Twenty-nine species of warblers were banded; however, many were in unusually low numbers—for instance, only one Bay-breasted, nine Blackpolls, four Cape Mays, and twelve American Redstarts. *Empidonax* flycatchers, thrushes, and Slate-colored Juncos were also scarce. A flicker integrade was unusual and two station firsts were a Brown-headed Cowbird and a House Sparrow. Another indication of the changing habitat was an increase in the number of American Goldfinches and House Finches.

There were 216 recaptures with an additional 17 returns. One of these was a Song Sparrow originally banded 10 September 1986 as a HY-U, making it now seven years old.

**Block Island, Rhode Island 411-0713**  
*Elise Lapham, Helen Lapham, Kim Gaffett*, head banders  
Stanley Perlo, Holly Stamler, assistants

I always seem to bemoan the lack of northwest winds that are responsible for sweeping so many birds to Block Island and 1993 was no exception. There was only one day of northwest wind in September—the 24th—and one in October, also the 24th. The latter brought in our highest count of birds per day—110. What a difference the wind makes! Perhaps we should not have expected a

good fall migration, as the spring banding was well below that of 1992. We had about 300 fewer birds than last year over almost the same period and the same net hours.

There was a change in the ten most commonly banded species this year compared to 1992 (Table 2). Most species numbers were down in 1993, but it is interesting to see that the Common Yellowthroat, which was not listed in 1992, ranked fourth this year. The American Redstart made the top ten list, while Song Sparrows and Red-eyed Vireos are missing.

The highlights of 1993 included eight Yellow-breasted Chats, more than ever before, and a Golden-winged Warbler, which we had not seen since 1988. A Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroat, both banded as adults in the spring of 1987, returned, making them at least seven years old.

A young Bald Eagle spent two months on the Island but was obviously sick. When it was caught, avian pox was diagnosed and the bird had to be put to sleep.

Jeffrey Parrish, an ornithologist working on his Ph.D. at Brown University, has been banding on the Island to the north of us. He is studying the feeding habits of migrants and has used some of our banding data. He has also been counting and measuring the fruiting bushes that surround our net lanes.

We accepted many visitors to the station in 1993; and even when we only had a few birds, people were always thrilled to see one in the hand. When possible, we encouraged the visitors to hold a bird to experience its greater warmth and quicker heart beat.

Still no Tufted Titmice have been seen on Block Island.

