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Fall 1994 Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Ii/iii

North American Bird Bander

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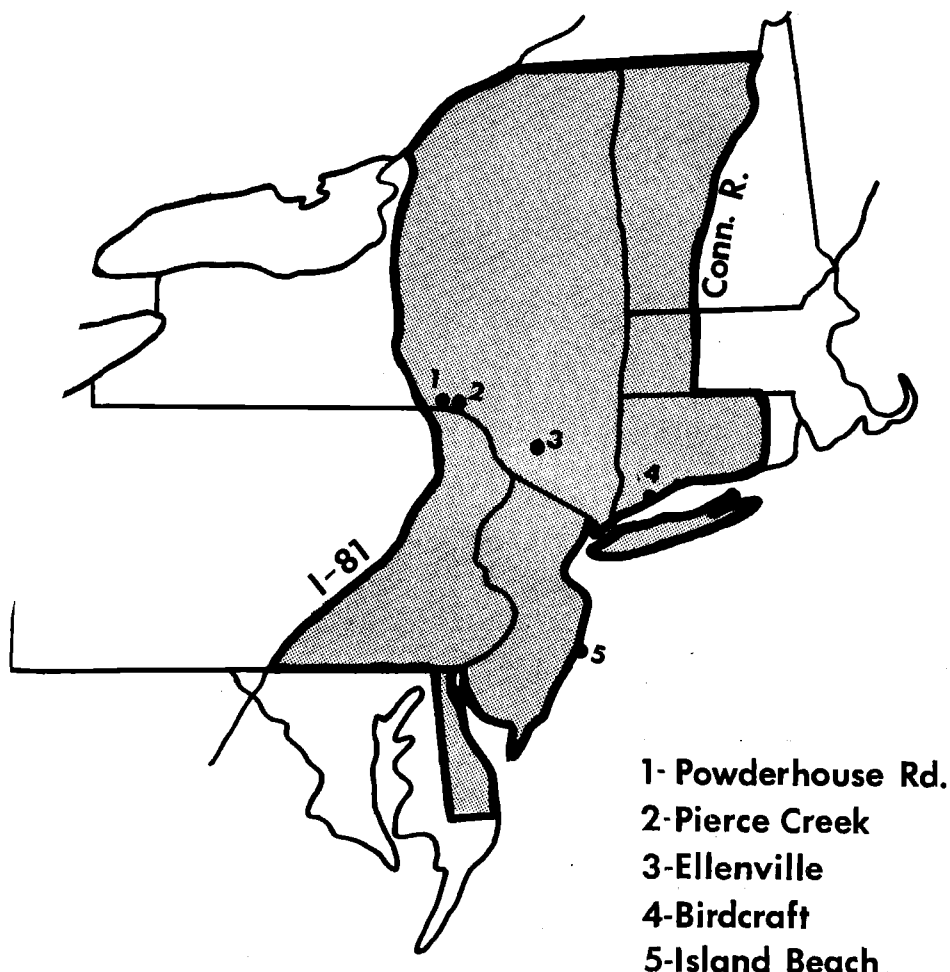
Fall 1994 Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II/III

John A. Gregoire, Coordinator
Kestrel Haven Farm
5373 Fitzgerald Road
Burdett, NY 14818-9626

All of our stations were rejuvenated this fall with motivation varying from more birds to more warblers to the capture of new and rare migrants. Valerie Freer's warbler numbers and Island Beach State Park's extremely high totals were indicative of a rich migration which was documented from the Finger Lakes, eastward. Weather, timing, and diversity throughout the region were much as Freer describes for Ellenville. Magnolia and Black-throated Green Warblers were particularly well represented throughout the extended region and many more species were documented in numbers significantly above station norms.

This is Ellenville's silver anniversary as a fall migration station. The ornithological cooperative field research community has greatly benefitted from Valerie's insights into migration, which demonstrate the value of long-term monitoring. Ellenville's strong analytical perspective and clear, succinct reports are a cornerstone of this cooperative study.

Our Vestal station comments on the uncertainty of migration and, across the Susquehanna, Steve



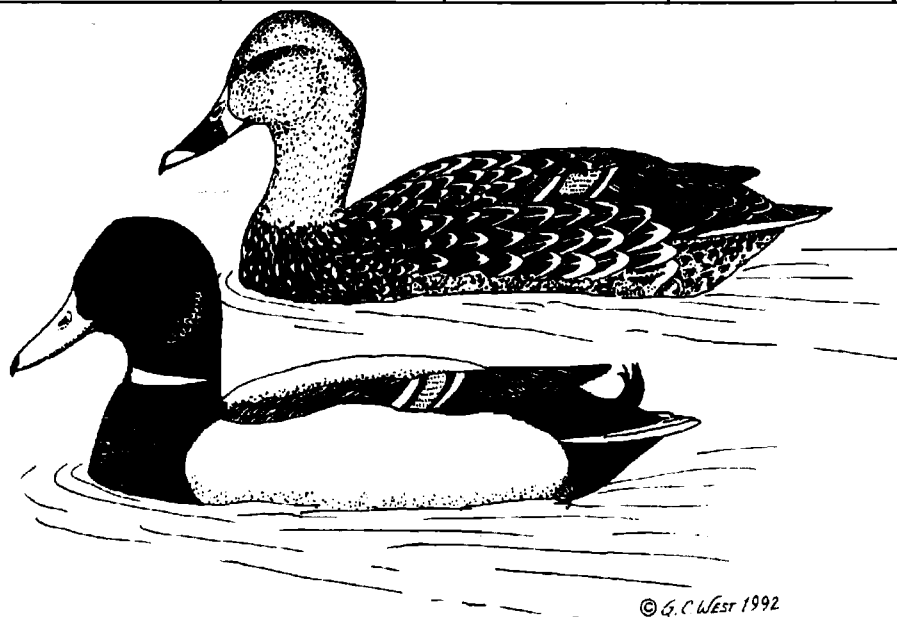
Rice proves it by coming up with a Sora! Vestal is another station with a significant and long period of cooperative migration research. Harriet and Gail were well rewarded with a regional first White-eyed Vireo. This was a most unusual summer throughout the Southern Tier of New York in that several spring migrants of more southern species overshot and remained into fall. Yellow-throated Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat were present at several locations while Vestal documented the rarest of them all. Range expansion of Common

Raven and Acadian Flycatcher is also occurring throughout the region. Carl and his crew at Birdcraft intertwine their research contribution with the primary mission of environmental education but must wonder why they were heavily scheduled on what may have been a record-breaking day. Island Beach had the good fortune of having huge waves drop in. One wonders how four banders felt after handling, measuring, banding and releasing 1,973 birds of 43 species. This Herculean effort on 11 October was accomplished in 170 net hours (24.5 nets).

Migration may have commenced quite early this fall. I routinely begin migration banding when resident breeding species disperse. By the first of July, many local breeders had departed and a migrant Yellow Warbler banded that month was recovered on Long Island by 10 August. That should encourage us all to begin banding prior to the traditional August start date in order to fully document migration. What began early also ended

early. Unusually mild weather, an uncommon jet stream pattern, and a tremendously bountiful wild food crop throughout the Northeast combined to greatly delay late season migrants and wintering populations. Many stations experienced low sparrow numbers and commented on particularly low numbers in species that comprise regional winter populations. This situation continued into the start of 1995.

Table 1.	AFR II/III Summary of Operations 1994.				
	Vestal	Pierce Crk	Ellenville	Birdcraft	IBSP
Start Date	08 Aug	26 July	01 Aug	24 Aug	21 Aug
Stop Date	06 Nov	08 Nov	05 Nov	27 Oct	05 Nov
Total Days	50	18	40	27	54
Nets Used	1-11.5	3-6	7-9	14-16	4-32.5
Net Hours	1103	700	1070	1607	5087
Best Day	26	36	31	76	1973
Banded '93	626	427	403	650	4837
Banded '94	486	321	498	624	9318
Species '93	55	40	54	63	99
Species '94	58	43	56	47	97
B/100 NH '93	68	73	45	33.5	118
B/100 NH '94	44	46	46.5	38.8	183
% HY	79%	77%	72%	88%	?%



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Table 2. Most Frequently Encountered Species 1994.								
Vestal			Pierce Creek			Ellenville		
Species	NO.	% HY	Species	No.	% HY	Species	No.	% HY
GRCA (2)**	85	81	SOSP (1)	77	92	GRCA (3)	63	91
SOSP (8)	46	83	CHSP	40	73	COYE (6)	38	68
REVI (9)	44	75	GRCA (4)	30	97	RCKI (4)	35	49*
HOFI (3)	40	50	HOFI	22	41	WTSP (8)	30	43
COYE	31	71	WTSP (7)	18	89	MAWA (5)	28	57
OVEN (6)	27	93	AMGO (2)	17	47	SCJU (1)	24	25
WTSP (5)	24	88	WCSP (9)	17	65	REVI (9)	21	76
BCCH (4)	13	77	BCCH (6)	16	100	EAPH	17	65*
VEER	13	100	AMRO (10)	12	83*	AMRE	17	53
MAWA	12	75	NOCA (8)	9	67	BTNW	15	80
* Percentages for those where skulling was possible.								
** Number in parentheses indicates ranking last fall.								

Table 2. (Continued) Most Frequently Encountered Species 1994.					
Birdcraft			IBSP		
Species	NO.	% HY	Species	No.	% HY
WTSP (1)**	159	88	WTSP (7)	1793	-
GRCA (2)	102	98	GCKI (1)	1191	-
SOSP (5)	45	81	GRCA (2)	854	-
COYE	39	80	RCKI (3)	575	-
HETH (4)	25	95	COYE (8)	509	-
SWSP	20	98	MYWA (6)	414	-
AMRE	19	88	AMRE (10)	400	-
SWTH	12	99	SCJU (5)	320	-
BAWW	11	85	SWSP	272	-
RSTO (7)	11	75	BTBW	226	-
* Percentages for those where skulling was possible.					
** Number in parentheses indicates ranking last fall.					
- Information not available.					

Powderhouse Road Station **420-0755**
Vestal, Broome County, NY
Gail Kirch and Harriet Marsi

Our station is on a north-facing hillside of overgrown fields bordering on secondary woods. Grey-stemmed Dogwood is the dominant plant. The fall season was unusually warm and long and very few mornings were foggy, frosty, or overly windy as is the norm. August and September banding was good with most species of warbler represented in nice (for us) numbers. Common Yellowthroat, Magnolia, Ovenbird, and American Redstart were particularly high. Flycatchers were also well represented. Unusual for this station in recent years was a Brewster's Warbler and an Acadian Flycatcher. (*Acadian has been expanding its breeding range into the central Southern Tier counties of New York...J.G.*)

October was an entirely different matter. It is usually our best banding month as we get large numbers of sparrows. This year, October banding was dismal with only 125 banded compared to 270 in 1993 over the same number of net hours. There were no Fox, Lincoln's, or American Tree Sparrows; and only a very few juncos, Chipping, Field, White-crowned and Swamp Sparrows were captured. Testimony to the lack of birds is evident in the fruit of the Grey-stemmed Dogwood, usually gone by the end of October, which remained through December.

The highlight of the entire season occurred on 30 October when an immature White-eyed Vireo, the first in over thirty years of banding at this station, was captured. Its stainless-steel eye was striking and very different from our more commonly banded species.

Our list of most frequently banded species is changed little from past years, although the order is very different. Changes of note include a 40% increase in Magnolia Warbler, a 68% increase in Common Yellowthroat, and a 66% increase in Red-eyed Vireo. Significant decreases include Slate-color Junco, down 96%; White-throated Sparrow, down 60%; and Black-capped Chickadee, down 79%.

Fall banding is always interesting and unpredictable. This year was no exception. While October was disappointing, August, September, and the White-eyed Vireo made up for it. We are looking forward to fall 1995!

Pierce Creek Station **420-0755**
Binghamton, Broome County, NY
Steve Rice

The second year of banding at this station covered 18 days of operation and accounted for the banding of 321 individuals of 43 species. Although we experienced a very mild fall, totals were down from last year. An immature Sora Rail was banded on 9 September. This was a nice surprise, as I band in overgrown fields!

Other species new to the station included Grasshopper and Fox Sparrow, Blackpoll and Magnolia Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager. Species sorely missed were Swamp Sparrow, Purple Finch, Western Palm Warbler, and all thrushes.

While I am not pleased with the drop in birds per hundred net hours, I intend to increase days of operation and net hours in 1995 to establish an acceptable baseline database.

Ellenville Station **414-0742**
Ellenville, Ulster County, NY
Valerie M. Freer

The 25th consecutive fall banding season at this location was above average in several categories: numbers of birds, variety of species, and birds per hundred net hours. The early summer weather conditions in this area were excellent for nesting birds, resulting in good fledging rates and a high ratio of young in captured birds. August was cool and wet (almost three inches of rain above normal), and several strong cold fronts moved through the area. The combined result was the highest number of captures for August since this project was begun in 1970. Over 44% of the season total was captured in that month as compared with about 30% in most years. September brought slightly below-average temperatures and near normal precipitation, frequent breezy conditions, and very low

numbers of birds. October was very dry (over two inches below normal) with normal temperatures, several frosts after the 13th, and average numbers of birds banded.

Warblers were the outstanding birds of the season. A total of 185 warblers of 20 species was banded, comprising 37% of all birds caught (as compared with about 28% in the previous 24 years). New high numbers were recorded for several species (Magnolia and Black-throated Blue) and others were near their highs for this station (Black-throated Green, American Redstart, and Canada). The only years in which higher numbers of warblers were banded were 1970, 1972, 1976, and 1989.

The top eight species made up over half the birds banded. Gray Catbird led the list with 63 individuals, over twice the number of each of the previous two seasons and near the 24-year average. Magnolia Warbler was on the list of most common species for only the fourth time since 1970. Sparrows continue to be caught in lower numbers than in the early years. Only one House Finch was banded, the lowest number since the early 1980s. There were no recoveries or abnormal birds captured.

Two community college students (Joan Visconti and Sue Tsoi) learned about the techniques of bird banding by regularly assisting in most banding sessions, and 15 other people visited the station one or more times.

Birdcraft Banding Station **410-0731**
Fairfield, Fairfield County, CT
Carl J. Trichka

Our 15th year of banding at Birdcraft began rather slowly with balmy weather and a lack of cold fronts passing over the area. On 12 September, we had our first "wave" consisting of 49 individuals. From that point on into October, banding was steady but no more "waves" until 4 October when our first net check yielded 76 individuals. With a large group of school children expected that morning, we decided to close nets. I am sure, had we left the nets open, our catch would have been large, as the sanctuary was full of migrants.

We banded another Yellow-breasted Chat this year, along with Nashville, Black-throated Green, and Black-throated Blue Warblers, and three Solitary Vireos, which is unusual. There were no foreign recoveries this fall.

Thanks to the entire banding staff for their scheduling and hard work during the season. Principal assistants were Alison Olivieri, Barbara Manicattide, and Judy Richardson.

Island Beach State Park **395-0740**
South Seaside Park, Ocean County, NJ
Eileen A. Mahler, Compiler

Nine banders operated six stations over 54 days of operation at IBSP. Totals were much higher than in the recent past, with 9318 birds banded. Major flights occurred on 1 and 11 October, with large numbers also reported on the 2nd, 3rd, 16th, and 17th. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Black-throated Green and Black-throated Blue Warblers, Solitary Vireo, Winter Wren, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet were more numerous than in previous years. White-throated Sparrows arrived in record numbers while Swamp Sparrows and Lincoln's Sparrows were present in significantly high numbers. The Song Sparrow total was unusually low, as were Brown Creeper and Myrtle Warbler. Carolina Wren and Red-breasted Nuthatch were almost non-existent.

Bob Yunick banded a chickadee that appeared to be a Carolina X Black-capped hybrid. After studying measurements and plumage, and comparing it with other known Carolina individuals, he determined the bird in question to possess plumage characteristics of a Carolina but the size of a Black-capped. (*The station reported a total of 22 CACH and no BCCH banded...J.G.*)

Informal banding demonstrations were presented during the season, and Bob McKinney contributed Ovenbird data to a University of Missouri study. Banders participating this season were Bruce Adams, Mary Doscher, Eileen and Glenn Mahler, Robert McKinney, John Miller, Lawrence Pharo, Nick Pulcinella, and Robert Yunick.