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## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I - Fall 1994

North American Bird Bander

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# Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I - Fall 1994

**Tracey Dean, Region I Coordinator**  
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**Brandy Cove Road, New Brunswick, EOG**  
**2X0, Canada**

The AFR Region I now has a solid core of five banding stations that report yearly. Sadly, Margery Plymire has moved again, this time to North Carolina. Hopefully the cats will not follow her.

Overall, the station reports this year are more positive than in 1993, but declines and absences are still noted. Banding totals and birds per 100 net hours are generally up (Table 1) and mild conditions with abundant fruit and cone crops in the north probably delayed the movement of some species, as noted by a few stations. While no one lamented the lack of birds, there seemed to be

fewer rarities being blown around.

It is always interesting to see what other stations catch by looking at "The Most Commonly Banded Species Table" (#2) but hard to draw any conclusions as the stations are so varied. Over the past five years, 23 different species have appeared on the top ten list from St. Andrews and Appledore Island, 19 on Nantucket's and only 14 on Block Island's and Kingston's. The catch at Kingston seems to be the most consistent; six species (White-throated Sparrow, Gray Catbird, Black-capped Chickadee, Common Yellowthroat, Blue-winged Warbler, and American Redstart) have appeared in the top ten every year.

Thank you to all the 1994 contributors. The maps you sent give me a much better understanding of your station and area. Happy banding in 1995.

<b>Table 1. Fall 1994 Region I Summary.</b>					
	<b>St. Andrews NB 450-0670</b>	<b>Appledore Is. ME 425-0703</b>	<b>Kingston RI 412-0713</b>	<b>Nantucket MA 411-0700</b>	<b>Block Island RI 411-0713</b>
First Day	9 August	15 August	7 August	4 September	19 August
Last Day	29 October	7 October	17 December	1 October	31 October
Days Operated	18	52	66	25	60
No. Nets Used	6-14	5-10	1-4	4-11.5	3-10
Total Net Hrs.	601	5804	706	1722	5785
No. Banded '94	260	2672	459	573	1630
No. Banded '93	146	1045	335	620	1356
Diff. Sp. '94	42	81	42	61	67
Diff. Sp. '93	35	66	42	80	73
No/100NH '94	43	46	65	33	28
No/100NH '93	34	33	78	30	26
Lrgst Daily Ctch	54	162	17	47	100
Date of LDC	21 September	2 October	19 October	1 October	11 October
% Hatch Year	71%	91%	81%	96%	91%

Table 2. The Most Commonly Banded Species - 1994

	St. Andrews NB 450-0670	Appledore Is. ME 425-0703	Kingston RI 412-0713	Nantucket MA 411-0700	Block Is RI 411-0713
1	36 MYWA	276 REVI (6)	116 WTSP (1)	77 COYE (2)	392 GRCA (1)
2	30 WTSP (1)	221 NOWA (1)	72 GRCA (2)	72 SOSP (1)	392 MYWA (3)
3	17 COYE (6)	213 AMRE (3)	51 COYE (4)	68 WPWA(10)	126 WTSP (8)
4	16 AMRE	178 COYE (2)	24 BCCH (3)	50 CMWA	89 COYE (4)
5	15 BLPW	148 MYWA	19 NOCA (7)	29 BCCH (8)	60 REVI
6	15 BCCH (2)	97 RCKI	15 BWWA (6)	23 GRCA (3)	48 AMRE (8)
7	12 GCKI(4)	89 YSFL	12 HETH	17 AMRE	42 SCJU(6)
8	11 SOSP(5)	86 BAWW (4)	11 ETTI (8)	16 BLPW	42 EAPH
9	9 NAWA	73 CEDW	11 BAWW (8)	16 AMRO (5)	35 SOSP
10	9 MAWA (4)	73 GCKI	11 AMRE (9)	13 SAVS (10)	33 HETH (7)
	9 HETH		11 RSTO		

( ) POSITION LAST YEAR

**St. Andrews Banding Station 450-0670**  
Tracey Dean, Bander

1994 was an expensive year for the St. Andrews Banding Station. Two nets were ruined by deer and one net was stolen. On a more positive note, the birds were back--mixed flocks of warblers moved through with the fronts and once again banding was enjoyable.

The first wave in August brought high numbers of American Redstarts, Common Yellowthroats, Yellow and Chestnut-sided Warblers. The flycatchers all left during the month and I caught the only Gray Catbird of the year.

The second wave in September consisted mainly of Myrtles, Blackpolls, Nashvilles, and Northern Parulas. Blackpolls were the highlight of the season, even though all the captures were clustered into the last two weeks of September. I banded 15 in all and was fascinated on 30 September to catch a "butterball" Blackpoll. It weighed 27.5 gram, more than twice as much as earlier birds (11.5 - 13 grams). This individual was

obviously ready to migrate. A Black-billed Cuckoo, caught on 22 September, was also rolling in fat. The only other cuckoo I have to compare it with was one caught on 13 June 1991--it weighed 50 grams as opposed to the 80 grams of this fall bird.

By October, most of the warblers had gone, leaving the White-throated and Song Sparrows, juncos, Hermit Thrushes, kinglets and banded chickadees. Most of the chickadees banded earlier in the fall came back to see who could get really tangled this time around. Only two of 15 individuals recaptured were from previous years; one from the fall of 1992 and the other from the fall of 1993.

It was almost a shame to take the nets down this year.

**Extra note:** On 21 August I startled a young deer from a netline. When I approached the net, I found a huge hole, surrounded by soggy ripped mesh with wet feathers stuck around the edges. A bird's leg hung in amongst the mess. The deer had

obviously been "chewing" on the trapped bird, but I could find no trace of the bird's body. Had the deer eaten it? It seems rather odd and I would be interested to hear from anyone who has had a similar occurrence at their banding station.

**Appledore Island, Maine 425-0703**

**Sara Morris**, Bander

Assistants: Dorothy Fitch, Phyllis Hatch, David Holmes, Rozzie Holt, Brent Jackson, Betsy Janeway, Marilyn McKenna, Charlie Muise, John Munier, Bobby Reeve, Mary Wright.

This year, the 20th of fall banding on Appledore Island, there are two parts to the report. The first part is the standard season comparison, 14 August to 20 September, as we have done since 1990. The second part will tell you what happened in the extra 2-1/2 weeks we were able to stay open this year.

In the spring, Sara added four nets to our core five which makes our regular comparisons difficult. The combination of this change and our longer season meant that we could not run our outlying nets this year. I do not know what this means to our results, but our Song Sparrows and overall return totals were very low (last year's were low). I am sure that the net change was most of the reason.

Anyway, direct date comparison from 1993 to 1994 (mid-August to about 20 September):

	1993	1994
Total Birds	1045	1460
Net Hours	3180	4152
Birds/NH	0.33	0.35
Species	66	73
Returns	8	6
Days Under 30 Birds	30	13
Days Over 75 Birds	0	5 (0 over 100)

Weather patterns were more like old times with semi-regular cold fronts throughout the period.

A Dickcissel was the only new species for the station, and a female Common Yellowthroat banded as a HY-U on 5 September 1986 with the notation "flew poorly" is now our oldest return. We also received informal notice of our first recovery of a bird on its wintering grounds. A Northern Waterthrush that we banded as a hatching year on 23 August 1992, became the first "foreign" recapture at the Rancho Grande Banding Station in Henri Pittier National Park, Venezuela (October 1994).

Part two: The time from 21 September to 7 October was fascinating for us. We enjoyed five 100+ bird days and added eight species to our yearly list, including a Blue Grosbeak on 27 September which was new for the station. Myrtles, flickers and both kinglets are new to our top ten list because they normally move after we have left. Red-eyed Vireos would have been in fourth place instead of first if we had closed as usual.

My feeling was that the migration ran late even though that would be hard to justify with numbers. Golden-crowned Kinglets, Veerys, Philadelphia Vireos, Myrtles, Blackpolls, Wilson's, Swamp Sparrows, and juncos all arrived at least a week later than usual. Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Swainson's Thrush and White-throated Sparrow all rated the comment "low-late:" for our regular time comparison. I was surprised by the high numbers of Red-eyed Vireos, Scarlet Tanagers, and Black-throated Greens we saw after 20 September. We did not catch any Great Crested Flycatchers or Purple Finches.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Thrasher, and Pine Warbler were caught for only the second year, while Hooded Warbler appeared for the third time.

Sara Morris' first major publication on our Appledore work appears in the December 1994 issue of *Wilson Bulletin*.

**Kingston, Rhode Island**  
**Doug Kraus**, Bander

**412-0713**

Four nets were operated during the first three hours after sunrise, except in colder weather, when fewer nets were opened for shorter hours. Banding was done on 15 days in August, 19 in September, 23 in October, 7 in November and only 2 in December.

August was dry with no cold fronts and none of the usual migrants. In September, vireos, thrushes, and warblers moved through on schedule but in very small numbers. The cold fronts were weak. October brought stronger cold fronts, but not many birds to my nets, other than White-throated Sparrows, some of which winter here.

There were 36 returns, 86 repeats, and no recoveries.

Most migrant species show a continual decline at my station. The *Empidonax* Flycatchers are a good example. Below are tabulated the number banded per 100 net hours for five year intervals, beginning with 1960-4:

1960-4	1965-9	1970-4	1975-9	1980-4	1985-9	1990-4
2.14	1.30	2.17	1.17	.70	.47	.08

A gradual decline occurs in the eighties, followed by a dramatic drop in the nineties. During this interval of time, the surroundings where the nets are located has changed markedly. Brushy fields have grown into young forests of 20 foot trees, older trees are now much taller and open fields are greatly reduced. These changes may account for some or even all of the decrease noted.

**Nantucket, Massachusetts**  
**Edith Andrews**, Bander

**411-0700**

Assistants: Max Leenhouts, Penny Wilbur, Pauline Theriault, Ellen Smith, Bill Toombs, Jared Figurski, Sue VanWinkle.

In spite of many more trees having been cut down, the Mothball Pines still attracts migrants. Twenty-five species of warblers were banded, some in good numbers; i.e., Western Palm and Cape May Warblers. This year we operated fewer nets for fewer days but had more birds/100 net hours,

probably due to more cold fronts reaching us. The wind and sun presented a problem with so many trees gone and we had to keep shifting the nets to find sheltered, shady spots. Many birds bounced out of the nets without being caught, including a Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

We had exciting hawk activity with Peregrines and Northern Harriers zipping around. One day we spotted a Merlin sitting on top of a dead stump with its kill; all we could see was a wing now and then. When the Merlin flew off leaving its prey behind, one of my young assistants climbed the tree and tossed a Red-eyed Vireo down. There was hardly a mark on the victim. He put the vireo back and within a half an hour, the Merlin returned to the stump and proceeded to eat. Another day we caught a Sharp-shinned Hawk, a species that we haven't banded in years; but alas this one escaped while we were taking measurements to determine its band size.

Three new species in our nets were Tree, Bank, and Barn Swallows. No Red-breasted Nuthatches or Golden-crowned Kinglets were captured this year.

Another interesting event was the flight of Monarch Butterflies. Hundreds came in off the ocean from the southeast, along with several dozen big dragonflies, to land on the beach goldenrod, grass, and dead pines. We helped band the butterflies as part of the Monarch Tagging Project conducted by Orley T. Taylor of the University of Kansas.

A nice surprise was a beautiful Red Bat. We caught it as the sky clouded over around 1600 and a strong wind from the northwest picked up.

All in all, it was a busy, productive season.

**Block Island Banding Station** **411-0713**  
**Elise & Helen Lapham, Kim Gaffett**, Banders

Assistants: Susan, Mark and Sarah Carr; Carol and Ron Schmidt; Stanley Perlo.

The fall of 1994 was spectacularly beautiful with day after day of blue skies and soft winds, but this weather was not particularly conducive to bringing migratory birds to Block Island.

The first good northwest wind coincided with the annual visit of the Rhode Island Audubon Club in October. The group had their best bird-watching in over ten years. Unfortunately, the wind did not last long enough to produce outstanding netting results for us, then or later.

The fall did not reflect the good banding we had this spring; actually the minuses outweighed the pluses. Though about 300 more birds were processed than in the fall of 1993, species numbers dropped from 73 to 67; and for the first time in our 27 years of banding, no Gray-cheeked Thrushes were caught (once we would band over 100 a fall), or any Red-breasted Nuthatches. Even though we ran the nets through to the end of October, we banded no unusual species--no woodcock, no Saw-whet Owls, no Sharp-shinned Hawks.

It is interesting to note the ten most common species banded and compare them with those of 1993:

1993			1994		
1	Gray Catbird	315	1	Gray Catbird	392
2	Gol-cr.Kinglet	110	2	Myrtle Warbler	392
3	MyrtleWarbler	107	3	White-thr.Spar	126
4	Com.Yellowthr.	64	4	Com.Yellowth	89
5	Ruby-cr.Kinglet	60	5	Red-ey.Vireo	60
6	Slate-col.Junco	52	6	Am.Redstart	48
7	Hermit Thrush	41	7	Eastern Phoebe	42
8	Brown Creeper	40	8	Slate-col.Junco	42
9	White-thr.Sparr	40	9	Song Sparrow	35
10	Am.Redstart	40	10	Hermit Thrush	33

Neither kinglet made this list for the first time since 1983. Phoebes were back with the highest count since we started banding in 1967, and white-throats also increased.

We did have two recoveries: a Red-eyed Vireo banded 25 September 1994 was caught a month later at Jekyll Island, Georgia; and a Gray Catbird banded 14 May 1994 was recaptured at Fort Morgan, Alabama, on 6 October 1994.

We had as many human visitors as usual and continued to enjoy their excitement with birds close-up and personal. For the second year in a row, a Gyrfalcon passed over our nets, this time a white phase adult. Who knows what 1995 will bring?

