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Eastern Regional News

Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region IV-Fall 1996

H. David Leake, Coordinator
Chicahauk Station
113 Poteskeet Trail
Southern Shores, NC 27949

Region IV continues to change. We were sorry to lose Barbara Ross' station at Stevenson, MD. Barbara has been an AFR bander for many years and we hope that she will get back to banding in the future. Thanks, Barbara, for your many years of service. We also lost our station at the Atlanta Zoo due to personnel changes. We hope that station will return in the future. On the positive side, we added two new stations—one in Laurel Grove, MD, and the other on James Island, SC. We now have stations from Maryland to Florida.

The total number of birds banded in Region IV was comparable to last year's results: 13,866 in 1995 and 13,274 in 1996. This was surprising, since five out of ten stations closed down in late October, missing the late migrants. This year did not seem to have many strong cold fronts with the corresponding waves of birds. Back Bay seemed to be the exception, banding 609 Myrtle Warblers on 26 October.

Myrtle Warblers (3669) were the most common bird banded, followed by Common Yellowthroats (2456), Palm Warblers (1083), American Redstarts (875), and Gray Catbirds (509).

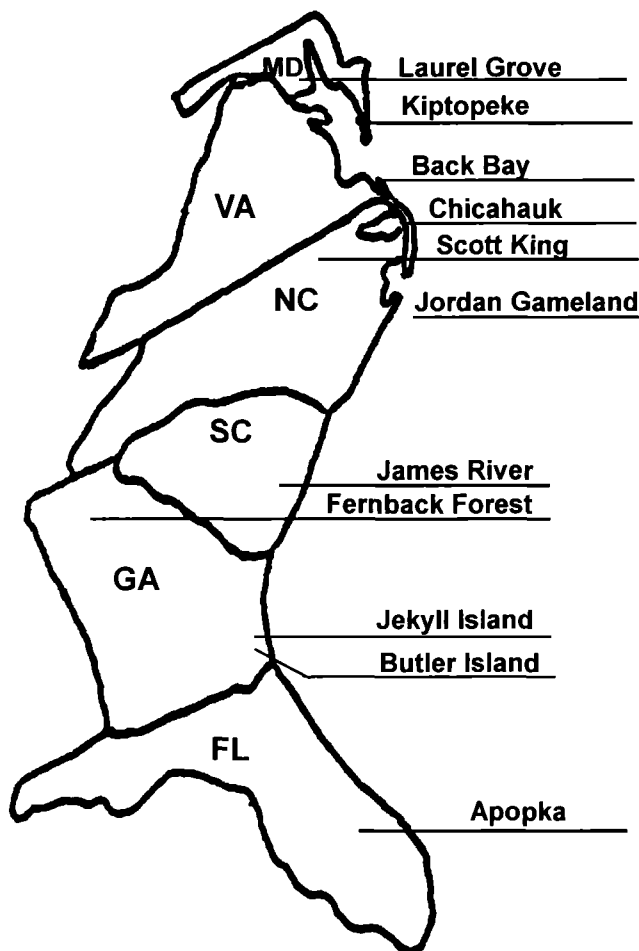


Table 1. Fall 1996 Region IV Summary.

	Laurel Grove MD	Kiptopeke VA	Back Bay VA	Chicahauk NC	S King-J Gameland NC
First day/Last day	1 Sep/24 Nov	1 Sep/25 Oct	26 Sep/3 Nov	21 Aug/17 Oct	14 Aug/3 Nov
Days Operated	20	52	22	26	14
No. Nets Used	2 to 3	22 to 23	1 to 85	2 to 6	1 to 8
Total Net Hours	231.5	N/A	N/A	1114.5	241
Larg. Daily Catch	37	214	609	12	15
Date of LDC	3 Nov	15 Oct	26 Oct	14 Sep & 30 Sep	18 Aug
Birds Banded '95	N/A	3801	3238	216	193
Birds Banded '96	123	3360	2208	137	101
Diff. Species '95	N/A	88	78	35	27
Diff. Species '96	20	83	71	27	23
Birds/100 NH '95	N/A	53	N/A	21.3	73
Birds/100 NH '96	53	44	N/A	12	41.9
% Hatching Year	58%	87%	97.9%	89%	87%

Table 1 (cont'd.)

	James Island SC	Fernbank Forest GA	Jekyll Island GA	Butter Island GA	Apopka FL
First day/Last day	15 Aug/15 Nov	15 Aug/28 Oct	22 Sep/20 Oct	3 Sep/3 Nov	27 Aug/25 Oct
Days Operated	46	12	26	54	56
No. Nets Used	9 to 29	6 to 10	14 to 15	1 to 12	4 to 11
Total Net Hours	2710	300	1378	2386	2705
Larg. Daily Catch	173	15	395	141	59
Date of LDC	5 Oct	10 Oct	5 Oct	3 Nov	6 Oct
Birds Banded '95	1545	59	3339	1507	699
Birds Banded '96	1826	81	2653	2098	687
Diff. Species '95	52	15	63	47	47
Diff. Species '96	68	22	56	51	49
Birds/100 NH '95	138	23	212	76	31.7
Birds/100 NH '96	67	27	193	88	25.4
% Hatching Year	81%	25%	93%	84%	47%

Table 2. Most Commonly Banded Species - 1996

Laurel Grove MD		Kiptopeke VA		Back Bay VA		Chicahawk NC		S King-J Gameland NC	
49	WTSP	1113	MYWA (1)	1538	MYWA (1)	36	NOCA (1)	23	NOCA (2)
14	AMGO	354	AMRE (5)	73	GCKI	18	CACH (2)	15	MYWA (4)
12	NOCA	253	COYE (3)	53	SCJU	11	BLJA (6)	10	HOFI (5)
8	CACH	208	BTBW (2)	51	GRCA (3)	9	COGR (3)	9	BLJA
7	ETTI	161	GRCA (7)	45	WPWA (6)	8	REVI (5)	8	COGR (7)
6	SCJU	136	WPWA (4)	38	COYE (5)	8	BTBW (7)	7	ETTI (10)
4	CHSP	87	YPWA (8)	28	BRCR	6	BRTH	6	AMGO (1)
4	SOSP	86	REVI (9)	27	WTSP	6	CARW (4)	4	CACH (8)
3	EATO	62	MAWA	26	BLPW	5	MODO	2	BRTH
2	5 dif. sp.	61	BAWW	25	RCKI	5	AMRE (9)	2	AMRE
(#) Position last year.									

Table 2 (cont'd.)

James Island SC		Fernbank Forest GA		Jekyll Island GA		Butler Island GA		Apopka FL	
442	COYE	9	AMRO (4)	1018	COYE (2)	925	MYWA (5)	111	AMRE (6)
219	AMRE	9	WOTH	710	PAWA (1)	600	COYE (1)	110	GRCA (1)
122	GRCA	8	OVEN	157	AMRE (4)	148	NOWA (3)	105	COYE (2)
105	WPWA	7	HOWA	90	PRAW	61	GRCA (2)	75	OVEN (4)
103	INBU	7	CARW (2)	73	BTBW (8)	51	PABU (6)	54	BTBW (5)
90	SWSP	6	VEER	71	TRES	33	INBU (4)	34	VEER (3)
80	REVI	6	ETTI (7)	65	GRCA (3)	27	AMRE	26	WEVI (7)
78	MYWA	5	SWTH (10)	63	INBU (7)	22	HOWR	16	REVI (8)
53	PABU	3	CAWA	47	PABU	21	PRAW	16	HOWR (10)
50	SAVS	3	KEWA	43	HOWR (5)	21	SWSP	14	PRAW
(#) Position last year.									

Laurel Grove
St. Mary's County, MD
Ron and Mark Runkles

382-0764

This is our first report to the AFR. We operate three 10-meter nets. Two net lanes were created in a thicket under power lines to the east of our house. A third net was set in a small woods of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees along the west side of this thicket, next to a bird feeder filled with millet and sunflower seeds. A grass field borders the thicket on the north side, and a dirt lane runs along the south side. The thicket covers an area which is approximately 100 by 100 feet. The thicket contains black locust, white sassafras and sweet gum saplings. Poison ivy, Japanese honeysuckle, red and black raspberry, shining sumac, and wild grapes form the undergrowth.

The passage of a strong cold front preceded our peak banding day, 3 November. Otherwise, the weather had little noticeable impact on banding. Pine Warblers were conspicuous by their absence, both in our banding efforts and per observations during the breeding season. The last time we banded in this specific area, 1991, we captured six Pine Warblers. This year we did not capture any nor see any.

On 9 November, we captured, but did not band, a Chipping Sparrow that had a swelling about the left eye. The symptoms seemed similar to those that have occasionally been found in our local population of House Finches.

Several people from the adjoining county park attended our banding sessions.

Kiptopeke Banding Station
Townsend, VA
Donald Schwab

370-0755

Operations were conducted from 1 September through 25 October 1996. Seven banders spent 651 hours during 52 days of operation banding 3360 birds of 83 species. These numbers are down from last year by 22% and 6% respectively. Of the birds banded, 87% were HY birds and only 13% were AHY. As usual, the ever-present Myrtle Warbler was the most commonly banded bird, representing 33% of the total number of birds banded.

The 22% difference in the number of banded birds from 1995 to 1996 may seem dramatic; however, it probably is not cause for concern. In recent years there have been considerable fluctuations with no discernible trend in the number of songbirds banded. Totals since 1989 range from a low of 2463 to a high of 4517.

One partial explanation for the different totals for 1995 and 1996 is that we missed the sparrow migration in 1996. Hundreds of sparrows were seen at the net sites the week after the songbird banding station closed, while the numbers of sparrows banded this year were low. For example, this fall we banded 1 Savannah Sparrow, 29 Song Sparrows, and 17 Field Sparrows. Corresponding numbers for 1995 were 194, 71, and 56.

We have long known that by closing the songbird operation in late October we fail to capture information on the late short-distance migrants. Next fall, with the addition of two new banders, we hope to extend the season by at least a week.

Bay Back
Sandbridge, VA
Rob Simpson

363-0755

Our main purpose is teaching natural resources students how to do bird banding, sexing, aging, identification, and handling birds. Our secondary purpose is to actually involve the students in a field project. We are trying to determine habitat use of Neotropical migrants along the coast. Our one site has many habitats and has been in operation a long time. For the past three years (both spring and fall) we sampled a site in a pine forest and a thick deciduous swamp. Both sites caught very few birds. This past fall we tried a new habitat consisting of sand dune, scrubby live oak, and found it to be surprisingly productive. These three habitat types are not at our main site.

The 609 birds banded on 26 October is the largest daily total we have ever caught. We had to close our nets by 0900. They were mostly Myrtle Warblers and followed a strong north front.

We were visited by several schools including two of our sister community colleges. Student participation in the demonstrations helps with their visi-

tor interpretation skills. Bill Brabson, Ramon Sealove, and Helene Bichell, representing the Virginia Association of Biological Educators, also came to visit. We were so busy that day that we put our three biologists to work.

Chicahauk
Kitty Hawk, NC
H. David Leake

360-0754

Both the number of birds banded and the number of different species declined since last year. These declines could have been due to the loss of suitable habitat in my banding area due to continued housing development. In addition, there were no strong cold fronts during my banding. This year, while I banded only two days less than last year, I did stop banding on 17 October, thus missing the late migrants.

I did have one interesting return: a Red-bellied Woodpecker banded 1 June 1989 was retrapped on 26 Aug 1996.

Scott King-Jordan Gameland
Durham, NC
Liz Pullman

355-0785

It was not a great year inland, either. I had nets that rarely caught anything during the summer. By being in a MAPS program, I couldn't move anything to more advantageous locations. Of course that might have done nothing, but the try might have been encouraging to the bander.

By combining sight records and bandings, I was able to pull out some data this fall. The very first trickles of migrants seem to have started around 24 August with Black-and-white Warblers and American Redstarts showing up. A few of the following were present each day the following week: Chestnut-sided, Prothonotary, Northern Parula warblers, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Summer Tanager, as well as the two species mentioned before. Nothing appeared between 30 August and 3 September when a few more migrants started to show up. This was all pre-hurricane. In the early morning hours of 6 September, *Fran* caused a great deal of havoc in the local bird population and in the habitat in my birding area. Nevertheless, a "wave" of birds, mostly warblers, arrived on 10, 11, 12 Sep-

tember and again on 17 and 18 September. The best of this series was a Worm-eating Warbler on 17 September. After that it was quiet until 30 September. There were a few migrants coming through on 3, 4, 6, 15, 16, and 17 October, but nothing that would constitute a wave. Our wintering species showed up as follows: Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 15 October; Myrtle Warblers, 17 October; Golden-crowned Kinglets, 28 October; Slate-colored Juncos and Hermit Thrushes, 29 October; Brown Creeper and White-throated Sparrow on 30 October.

We were trapped in our local area by high water and downed trees for about 24 hours after *Fran* passed through, but one interesting bird observation was the large number of nighthawks we saw on 6 September. After three months, we have some indication of which species were hardest hit by the storm; but the full story will probably not be apparent until next breeding season.

James Island
Charleston, SC
William Post

323-0795

This station was operated for the three previous years. The habitat is coastal scrub. It consists of live oak, wax-myrtle, red cedar, and groundsel (*Baccharis*). The vegetation is pruned to the height of 2 to 4 meters to keep it at the same height over the years. The station is on the Stono River and is 5 km inland from the ocean.

Migration this year was characterized by a late start for warblers and vireos, a lack of pronounced waves except for American Redstarts and late arrival of winter residents, mainly sparrows.

A few rare birds for South Carolina were caught. These included the Mourning Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Fernwood Science Center
Atlanta, GA
Georgann Schmalz

334-0841

We are still netting and banding in the forest. Our numbers are very low in this habitat. Our banding efforts are important at the Science Center since we educate the public concerning the valuable data

that banding provides biologists about the health of bird populations.

We began our first year of MAPS. It's a lot of work, but I have about four dedicated bandaides that help each time. We use this primarily as an education experience for those people interested in birds. One grandfather and his grandson came out five times. He appreciated it so much that he bought us a new net to replace one that had been damaged. What a nice surprise!

Jekyll Island
Brunswick, GA
Don Cohrs

310-0812

This was a strange year. The birds came in big clumps. We were either too busy or we were bored. Our total was a bit low. The cause was a lack of Western Palm Warblers. They were off 600 birds from last year's total. Do not sound the alarm yet, We operate on the south end of a barrier island. The foredunes moved further out and on the inner dunes the Wax Myrtles (*Myrica cerifera*) had grown taller. The Western Palm Warblers were where we were not. They were just off the beach in heavy numbers and we were 1/4 mile inland.

We operated during the joint meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists and the Georgia Ornithological Society. We had many distinguished visitors as well as a fair number of birds.

Our thanks to Lydia Thompson, master bander; new subpermites Nancy Gobris and Chris Pitman; bandaides Jan Pitman and Roger Atchison; and interns Andy Gutterman and Kelly Stewart

Butler Island
Auxiliary Station (BIAS)
Darien, GA
Doris Cohrs

312-0812

BIAS had an "interesting" year: tidal fluctuations under more than half of our nets, possibilities of hurricanes, rain, high winds, all topped off by the early arrival of hordes of Myrtle Warblers!

Our net sites were basically the same as in 1995, with some minor adjustments. The tidal effect under the nets was caused by a slightly damaged

water control gate that allowed water to enter one part of the banding area from the tidal Butler River whenever there was a strong northeast wind.

In general, the migration pattern seemed askew, both at BIAS and at JIBS. There were more flycatchers than usually expected. This seemed to indicate a late migration. Yet, as mentioned before, the Myrtles were early. The expected cold fronts of this time of year were either absent or too weak to bring a flood of birds.

We caught ten new species for the station this year: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Carolina Chickadee, Hermit Thrush, Hooded Warbler, and White-throated Sparrow. The kingfishers were truly a surprise and quite a handful. They have very sharp-edged bills and very strong jaw muscles! These new species bring BIAS's total bird list to 63 over a three-year period.

Perhaps the most exciting event this year was finding out that a Northern Waterthrush banded at BIAS on 15 September was captured 19 days later by a bander in Venezuela. We also had a remarkable number of returns, some of which were obviously residents, but others, such as a Yellow Warbler, were not. Several Myrtle Warblers banded at this site last winter returned. Another unusual occurrence was catching a warbler we could not identify. Many photos and measurements were taken and sent to the BBL. The bird was then released unbanded.

BIAS had more visitors this year than previously. Terry Johnson, head of the Non-game Endangered Wildlife Program of Georgia's Department of Natural Resources paid us a visit. Several other DNR people also dropped by. We were also the site of a workshop field trip put on by The Nature Conservancy for Georgia Pacific foresters.

All in all, it was either feast or famine with daily totals ranging from 0 to 141 birds. Many thanks to Keith Tassin, Don Cohrs, Mary Nevil, David Edwards, Trish McMillan, and others whose help made this station work. Special thanks to Gordon Hight for his assistance, advice, and gifts of equipment.

Wekiva Basin GEPark
Apopka, FL
Parks Small

284-0812

We still need to keep deer from running through our nets. Any suggestions would be appreciated. We are looking forward to next fall with some planned changes at the station.

Thanks go to Richard Poole, Erik Egensteiner, Rosi Mulholland, and Cyndi Meketa.

Our second full season was enjoyed by a larger group of volunteers than the 1995 season. Nine new species were captured: Prothonotary Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Blackburnian Warbler, Northern Mockingbird (not banded), Swainson's Warbler, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Blue-winged Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Bachman's Sparrow. These species brought our station species total to 56. We had six Ovenbird returns from 1995 and one House Wren, giving a grand total of 129 recaptures for this season.

