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Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I (northeast Coastal Region) 1996

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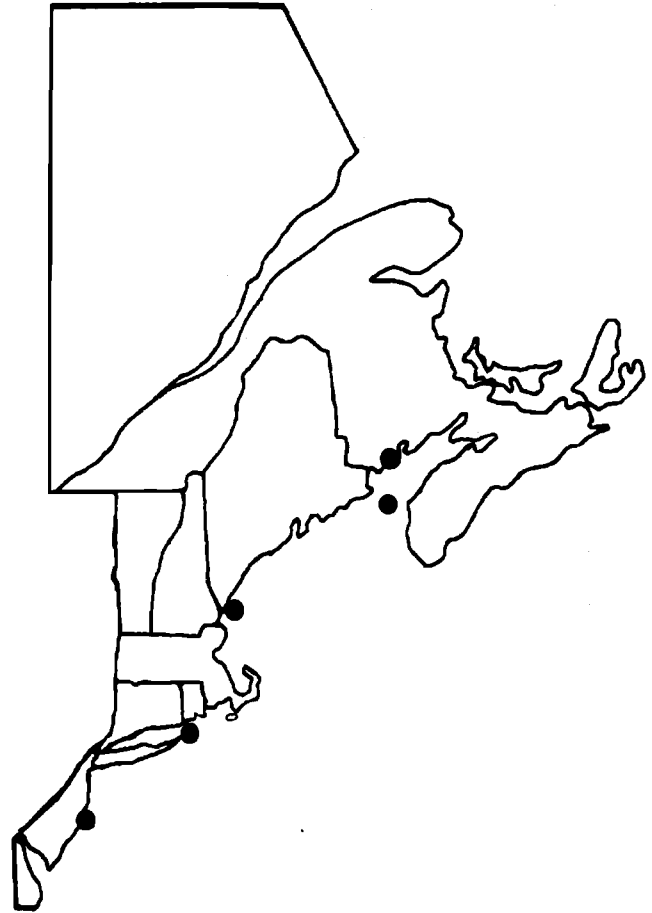
Atlantic Flyway Review:

Region I (Northeast Coastal Region)1996

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Bird migration patterns change every year and so it seems do the stations that contribute to this review. Four stations that reported results in the 1995 article are missing this year. Sadly, Edith Andrews has given up her banding project at Mothball Pines. The woods have disappeared and her net lanes were no longer protected from the wind and sun. Edith has been a long-time contributor to this article, reporting banding results since the 70's. Peter Homann did not return to the Laurentian Mountains, and it seems that trouble with local felines might have got the best of the Birdcraft Station. Brian Dalzell and the Grand Manan Bird Observatory were unable to continue their work on Kent Island but have established a new site at the southern tip of Grand Manan itself. Two new sub-stations have been added this year: Bayrose which is closely associated with Block Island, and Seal Island which is an extension of banding on Bon Portage Island. Welcome to the new stations and thanks to all for your 1996 contributions.

Comments on the 1996 banding seasons varied considerably from north to south in Region 1. The northern stations report the migration moving though on "schedule," while in the southern areas frustration mounted from the lack of birds. "This was the worst season I have ever had... there were more birds in my back yard" sums up the Island Beach State Park results. Their birds per 100 net hours has dropped over the past three years from 183 to 101 this year. This is well above the 53 birds/100 net hours averaged by the Canadian stations, therefore we have little sympathy for those in New Jersey.



It is hard to compare the results from the different stations as the settings are so varied but St. Andrews is the only mainland site and the 72% (see Table 1) of hatch-year birds banded is much lower than the island locations. Hatch-year birds make up 87% - 95% on the islands. This suggests that adult birds may take a different land-based route south.

Myrtle Warblers far outnumber any other species banded in the Northeast Region (Table 2). Common Yellowthroat are a distance second, followed by Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Red-eyed Vireos. Large numbers of Gray Catbirds appear only at the southern banding sites while, Bon Portage remains the only station where Fox Sparrows are a common catch.

Table 1. Region I Summary, Fall 1996

	St. Andrews NB	Southwest Head NB	Bon Portage Is. NS	Seal Island NS	Appledore Is. ME	Block Island Bluestone RI	Block Island Bayrose RI	Island Beach S.P. NJ
	450-0670	443-0665	432-0654	432-0660	425-0703	411-0713	411-0713	395-0740
First Day	8 August	3 August	2 August	18 August	15 August	26 August	3 October	25 August
Last Day	30 October	31 October	20 October	12 October	30 September	2 November	18 November	10 November
Days Operated	19	39	59	46	47	59	35	42
No. Nets Used	5-14	4-8	8-25	19-22	5-10	4-10	1-10	3-31
Total Net Hours	645	1557	5903	3967	4969.6	4602	1527	2495.5
Birds Banded '95	253	-	1715	-	2673	2183	-	5470
Birds Banded '96	358	1472	2266	995	2017	1431	1367	2531
Diff. Species '95	41	-	70	-	74	75	-	90
Diff. Species '96	45	66	77	77	73	66	53	81
Birds/100 NH '95	45	-	38	-	45	41	-	175
Birds/100 NH '96	55	94	39	25	41	31	90	101
Largest Daily Catch	88	135	131	120	122	125	83	388
Date of LDC	1 October	17 September	12 October	23 September	7 September	15 October	29 October	25 October
% HY Birds	72%	95%	93%	87%	95%	94%	95%	95%

Table 2. Most Commonly Banded Species - Region I, 1996

	St. Andrews NB		Southwest Head NB		Bon Portage Is. NS		Seal Island NS		Appledore Is. ME		Block Island Bluestone RI		Block Island Bayrose RI		Island Beach S.P. NJ	
1	52	MYWA(1)	284	BCCH	264	YWAR(10)	87	REVI	297	REVI (1)	516	MYWA(1)	680	MYWA	364	MYWA(1)
2	27	WTSP(5)	140	MYWA	262	MYWA(1)	74	COYE	166	COYE(3)	150	GRCA(2)	132	HETH	331	GCKI(2)
3	27	COYE(8)	90	AMRE	158	BLPW(3)	72	BLPW	165	NOWA(10)	94	REVI(4)	96	GCKI	241	GRCA(4)
4	23	RCKI(4)	87	COYE	151	AMRE(9)	65	MYWA	141	AMRE(5)	78	HETH(8)	65	SCJU	186	WTSP(3)
5	16	MAWA(7)	83	SCJU	143	COYE(2)	52	NOWA	115	YWAR	64	COYE(7)	62	WTSP	182	COYE(8)
6	15	REVI(5)	68	SOSP	83	YBFL	50	SWTH	88	GRCA(8)	51	GCKI(6)	46	RCKI	143	SCJU(6)
7	15	BCCH(2)	67	WTSP	81	NOWA	44	AMRE	86	BAWW	40	WTSP(3)	31	REVI	122	SOSP(7)
8	13	SCJU	60	GCKI	79	FOSP(5)	37	WTSP	78	CEDW(4)	37	RCKI	31	SOSP	82	BTBW(9)
9	12	HETH	58	BLPW	78	REVI(7)	35	BAWW	78	BLPW	35	BRCR(5)	30	SWSP	81	BRCR(5)
10	11	NAWA	41	BTNW	72	GCKI(4)	35	GCKI	65	SOSP	30	SCJU(9)	28	GRCA	79	AMRE
			41	MAWA												

(# Indicates position on list in 1995.

St. Andrews Banding Station 450-0670
New Brunswick, Canada

Tracey Dean (bander)
Assistant: Kelly Menchenton

The 1996 fall banding season at St. Andrews was average—nothing spectacular. Nets were opened on 19 mornings for a total of 645 hours. This is the second highest number of net hours since the Station began contributing to the Atlantic Flyway Review seven years ago. The extra effort produced the second highest banding totals for the fall of 358 new birds. Yet, the 57 birds per 100 net hours were average. The only exception to this mediocre season was 1 October. On this day 88 birds were banded, 53 of which were caught in two nets on the first round. Thankfully most were warblers, Myrtles, Magnolias and Yellow Palms, which could share bags and were easy to extract. There were no damaged wings or casualties among the birds—only the bander's nerves were strained.

Two new species were banded this year — an HY-M Prairie Warbler caught on 2 September and an HY Orange-crowned Warbler captured on 10 October. The Station's second Sharp-shinned Hawk thrilled students during a banding demonstration on 20 August.

No "controls" were captured but I did receive word from the Banding Office that a Yellow Palm Warbler I had banded on 30 September 1994 was recaptured by Mary Doscher at Island Beach State Park, New Jersey, on 30 April 1995. This is the first banding link I have had with another Northeast Region contributor.

The number of days that nets were opened at St. Andrews continues to increase, but daily coverage is still a few years away. An expanded fall operation would provide a better, more interesting comparison to the large established stations to the south that also contribute to this review. Hopefully more "links" can be established in the future.

Southwest Head 443-0665
Migration Monitoring Station
Grand Manan Island,
New Brunswick, Canada

Brian Dalzell (bander)
Assistants: Tom Bartlett, Bruce Simpson, Chris Kusch, Dorothy McFarlane, Stuart Tingley, Jim Wilson and David Sargeant.

Southwest Head is located at the extreme southern tip of Grand Manan in a wilderness setting. This site was selected after long-term permission to use nearby Kent Island (see 1995 AFR report) could not be obtained. Vegetation is mostly open heath (*Potentilla* scrub) changing abruptly to alder and *krummholz* of stunted and deformed balsam fir and white spruce. Further into the woods there are scattered white birch and tamarack, but the area is essentially more typical of that found in Newfoundland and Labrador. To the immediate south of the site, 300-foot cliffs rise from the sea. The land is owned by Transport Canada and Maria Barbour of Owensboro, Kentucky, to whom I am grateful for permission to cut banding lanes and set up my nets. Next season I plan to open more nets lanes in deep cover hopefully to reduce the effects of wind, as the site is very exposed.

Although I expected problems with White-tailed Deer, none materialized. My largest problem came from Little Brown Bats, especially during their migration in late September and October. Their little teeth are very sharp, and setting up nets in the pre-dawn usually resulted in strange holes in my nets. It wasn't until I found one chewing its way out that I realized what was causing all the ragged-edged holes. Other than that, problems were few.

The biggest surprise was the number of Black-capped Chickadees banded. Up until late September, only a few local birds had been caught. However, October turned into a veritable cavalcade of chickadees. Other than testing my patience and extraction skills to the limit, the best part was the occasional Boreal Chickadee that accompanied these roving flocks. This was apparently a local phenomenon, as I have already received three local recoveries.

Migration came in definite waves, and the hardest lesson I learned was the need for more volunteers. Most assistants came in August and their participation was appreciated; but I could have used more in September, especially on the 17th when 112 birds were released unbanded. I feel this site has good potential; and with up to 20 nets and full-time assistants, no less than 2500 birds could be banded, probably more.

Interesting captures included two Yellow-breasted Chats, a Prairie Warbler, a Dickcissel, an Indigo Bunting, two Field Sparrows, seven Northern Saw-whet Owls, a Rusty Blackbird and an American Tree Sparrow.

The Atlantic Bird Observatory

Bon Portage Island,
Nova Scotia, Canada 432-0654

Seal Island,
Nova Scotia, Canada 432-0660

Andrews Davis & Clavin Brennan (banders)
Assistants: Brett Walker, Kathryn Warner, Phil Taylor, Susan Montonen, Ian Jones, Peter Jones, Shauna Baillie, Melanie Massaro.

This field season was the first for the Atlantic Bird Observatory. Members of Acadia University and the Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network (ACWERN) are hoping to set up a series of migration monitoring stations across the Maritime provinces. Seal Island, off the southwestern corner of Nova Scotia, is the latest addition to the Observatory's network.

Bon Portage Island

The fall banding season on Bon Portage Island started a week earlier than last year and this is reflected in the large number of early migrants captured. Yellow Warblers, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, and Northern Waterthrushes were much more abundant in 1996. The early start also resulted in the capture of a greater number of locally bred birds; 93% of all birds banded this year were hatch-year's compared to 79% last year.

Rare birds banded and photographed included a Blue-winged Warbler, three Golden-winged

Warblers, one LeConte's Sparrow, a Summer Tanager, a Prothonotary Warbler, one White-eyed Vireo, six Warbling Vireos and a Western Wood-Pewee.

As Hurricanes Edward and Hortense, as well as Tropical Storm Bertha all hit the island, 1996 will also be remembered for its storms. Many of the breeding storm-petrels were flooded out of their burrows and the storms may have been responsible for the lower-than-expected banding totals.

Seal Island is situated approximately ten kilometres off the southwestern tip of Nova Scotia and is heavily forested with Black Spruce and Balsam Fir. It is well known as a birding "hot spot." This was the banding station's first year of operation and highlights included a Lawrence's Warbler, a Worm-eating Warbler, and a Blue Grosbeak. Other rarities seen but not caught were a Yellow-throated Vireo, a Sedge Wren, a Summer Tanager, and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Shoals Lab Banding Station 425-0703
Appledore Island, Maine

Sara Morris, David Holmes. Mac McKenna, Mary Wright (banders)

Assistants: Andre Breton, Carol Cushing. Dorothy Fitch, Aimee Fox, Terry Goodhue, Clif Horrigan, Betsy Janeway, John Munier, Jan Paepke, Bobby Reeve, Debra Simon, Martha Stauffer.

The Shoals Lab Banding Station enjoyed a productive season but it was one of those seasons which gives us the experience to be able to recognize excitement. Nothing truly unusual happened this year. There was very little frontal activity, the tropical storm threats ended up being mostly fizzles, and we enjoyed more calm or nearly calm nights than we have had in years. So, the birds performed accordingly. Our daily totals were unusually consistent with only two days of under 20 individuals until our final week and one of those days followed a storm which left us shortly after dawn. The lack of westerly winds meant that the possibilities for interesting species were greatly reduced and the lack of fronts meant that we had no really high number days. However, we enjoyed

new high counts for five species; Golden-winged Warbler (5), Prairie Warbler (14), Blackpoll Warbler (78), Kentucky Warbler (3), and Baltimore Oriole (51), and tied previous high counts for five more: Yellow-billed Cuckoo (5), Brown Thrasher (2), Yellow Warbler (115), Brown-headed Cowbird (2), and American Goldfinch (2). Only Swainson's Thrush (3 birds) registered a new low; although three Veerys and one Red-breasted Nuthatch were second lows and the four Bay-breasted Warblers tied its record of next to low. A Belted Kingfisher was an unexpected new species for the Station since our nets are about as far from water as we can get them on a small island. We caught no foreign birds.

The early part of the migration was right on. The later end of the migration seemed to be late and we missed it. We had to leave the island a week earlier than usual so our numbers look low for kinglets, juncos, etc., and we also missed a large part of the Red-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Blue, and Blackpoll migration.

Publications from Shoals Lab Banding data have appeared in the *Wilson Bulletin* and the *Journal of Infectious Diseases* during the past year.

As always, great thanks go to all our banders, band-aides, and Shoals Lab staff for helping us have such a successful season. We are really looking forward to working with the Lab's new directors for many seasons to come.

Block Island Banding Station 411-0713 Rhode Island

In October, Elise Lapham's new sub-permittees, Mark and Sue Carr, started banding at Bayrose, only a mile away from the original Block Island Bluestone banding site. Separate reports have been submitted this year, in order that comparisons can still be made from Bluestone's 30-year-old data base.

Bluestone

Elise Lapham, Helen Lapham, Kim Gaffett
(banders)

Assistants - Michael Wagner, Stanley Perlo

This fall's migration was another poor one, though in other years we have banded fewer birds and averaged fewer birds per 100 net hours. September weather showed no improvement from the rainy, cloudy summer; and after banding 21 days with 1,465 net hours, we totalled only 337 birds. Thanks to an October influx of Yellow-rumped Warblers, our total was raised to 1431. On 15 October we banded over 100 birds, for the only time the entire fall. Even the top ten species of 1996 are half or less of the 1995 numbers. The only changed species being Ruby-crowned Kinglets which replaces Black-throated Blue Warblers. Seventy-eight Hermit Thrushes was the most since 1972 when we had a record year of 92. Only 34 were banded in 1994 so it was nice to see them make a comeback.

Four events made 1996 a memorable fall. We had two unusual bird sightings: three American White Pelicans visited Block Island for over a week and two Gyrfalcons (one a gray and one white phase) circled the station for some time. The Carrs started banding in an area used by graduate students for the past five years (see following report). Finally, Stephen Reinhart of Rhode Island has voluntarily set up a simple computer program to enter all our banding data from the last 30 years. He enlisted volunteers to help enter the data and we are excited about making it all available for future study.

Bayrose

Mark & Sue Carr (banders)

There were several reasons we started banding at Bayrose this year. One was to continue the database established by Jefferson Parish's four years of work. Secondly, although the habitat is somewhat similar to that at Bluestone, there are significant differences in vegetation and terrain. At Bayrose, bayberry, multiflora roses, and dense shrubs surround two small ponds. It is our desire to document the difference in the numbers and types of birds found in this habitat. Preliminary work shows interesting contrasts with Bluestone.

We did not start banding until 3 October but managed to open the nets for at least part of 35 days, sometimes closing early for rain but more often due to wind. Net hours totalled 1527 before

the season ended 18 November. We banded 1367 birds comprising 53 species. A whopping 2556 Yellow-rumped Warblers were released unbanded. We also handled 85 repeats and 35 strangers (later identified as birds of J.Parish, C. Dwyer and Bluestone station).

**Island Beach State Park
New Jersey**

395-0740

Mary Doscher, Eileen & Glenn Mahler, Robert McKinney, John Miller, Nick Pulcinella, Robert Yunick (banders)

During the fall 1996 banding season, eight banders operated banding stations at six locations at Island Beach State Park between 25 August and 10 November. One or more of these stations was in operation on 42 days during that 78-day period; there were four banding days in August, 14 in September, 21 in October, and three in November. Only on 25 October were five stations in operation simultaneously; there were 16 days with two stations active, and 25 days with only a single station operating.

Results for the season were exceedingly poor. The 2531 birds banded this season is the lowest in the nine-year period (1987-95) and 67% below normal. We averaged only one bird per net hour, down 42% from the recent average. Total net hours for the season (2495.5) were down 40%; however, the number of banding coverage days was down only slightly (20%). The difference between these two numbers can be attributed to the fact that there was only one day in which more than two banding stations were in operation, and the nets were often closed earlier in the day than usual because of the lack of migrants.

Comments from the banders included:

- "This was the worst season I have ever had. There were more birds in my back yard."
- "I had a nice but unproductive time at Island Beach this fall... there were easterly winds most of the time with, of course, very few birds."
- "... a rather disastrous week due to weather - my second worst for October.. in 32 years at IB."

There were no outstanding days reported this season. Peak flights occurred as follows.

Date*	# Birds	# Birds/nh
Sept. 12 (1)	66	1.8
Sept. 21 (1)	54	1.8
Oct. 4 (2)	219	1.4
Oct. 11 (1)	50	5.6
Oct. 12 (2)	253	5.2
Oct. 15 (1)	141	7.8
Oct. 25 (5)	388	2.5
Oct. 26 (1)	173	6.2
*() Indicates number of stations operating.		

The "bread-and-butter" species (those averaging over 200 individuals per year) were all down, some significantly, as shown in the following table. Only the Common Yellowthroat is close to average.

Species	# in '96 (ave.)	#/100nh (ave.) [%below ave.]
GCKI	331 (1606)	13.3 (37.5) [65%]
MYWA	346 (803)	13.9 (19.3) [28%]
WTSP	186 (663)	7.5 (14.8) [50%]
GRCA	241 (613)	9.7 (13.5) [28%]
SCJU	143 (484)	5.7 (11.1) [48%]
BRCH	81 (352)	3.3 (8.3) [61%]
RCKI	86 (345)	3.4 (8.4) [59%]
COYE	182 (334)	7.3 (7.4) [1%]
SOSP	122 (313)	4.9 (6.6) [25%]
AMRE	79 (205)	3.2 (4.4) [28%]

By categories, on a per-100-net-hour basis, flycatchers and vireos were close to average. Warblers were down 20% from an average of 44 to 35. Thrushes dropped by approximately 50% from an average of 4.6 to 2.4 and sparrows were down more than a third from an average of 37 to 22. This is only a snapshot of the migration from a single location, but it is a frightening look at what kind of breeding season it might have been, since 95% of our captures were HY birds.

"Highlight" birds of the season included a Merlin, two Eastern Meadowlarks (our first in over ten years), an Orange-crowned Warbler, and a Clay-colored Sparrow. One interesting inter-station recapture was a Golden-crowned Kinglet. It was banded on 25 October at 8:30 am by Glenn Mahler and recaptured less than an hour later by Larry Pharo over two miles **north**.