

1998

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Ii (north Central) Fall 1997

North American Bird Bander

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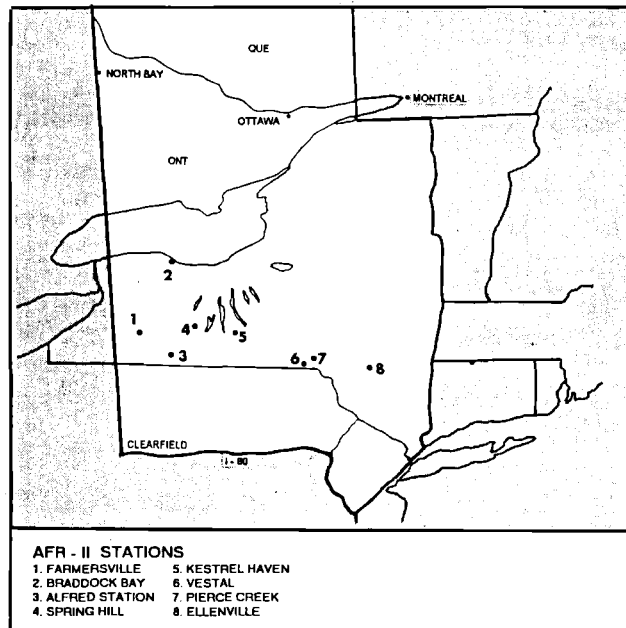
Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) Fall 1997

John A. Gregoire, Coordinator
Kestrel Haven Farm Avian Migration
Observatory
5373 Fitzgerald Rd
Burdett, NY. 14818-9626

This year was the antithesis of last in that the record rains were followed by extremely dry conditions throughout the area. The exception was the Catskill mountains and the area eastward where copious amounts of precipitation fell. Migration was steady throughout the fall with few major fronts. The major exception was a complex storm system which simultaneously consisted of a "Nor'easter" coming up the coast, a surface low moving northeasterly from the Ohio valley and a huge upper level system moving from Alaska to the southeast. This made early October interesting for both migrants and banders as we banded such unusual species as Yellow-breasted Chat, White-eyed Vireo and Gambell's White-crowned Sparrow and birders discovered a host of unusual species along the Lake Ontario littoral.

Following this event, the area along Lake Ontario was also witness to a massive winter finch invasion. Unfortunately, these birds never made it to our more southerly stations and Braddock Bay, along the lakeside, had already closed.

All stations reported a much lower than normal percentage of HY birds in several species. Whether this greater prevalence of adults was a modification of routing or an indicator of reproductive failure remains uncertain until other areas report their HY percentages. The weather situation was certainly different in that the "El Nino" in the Pacific spawned a change in the southern and northern branches of the jet stream which in turn decapitated the Atlantic hurricane season and virtually eliminated the normal cycle of northwest fronts.



We lost three stations this season as Pierce Creek fell victim to a heavy work schedule and both Franklinville Station and Spring Hill Wildlife Sanctuary were unmanned because of medical necessities. We wish Don Clark a speedy recovery from his by-pass surgery and Bob McKinney a quick run back to his nets on his bionic hips!

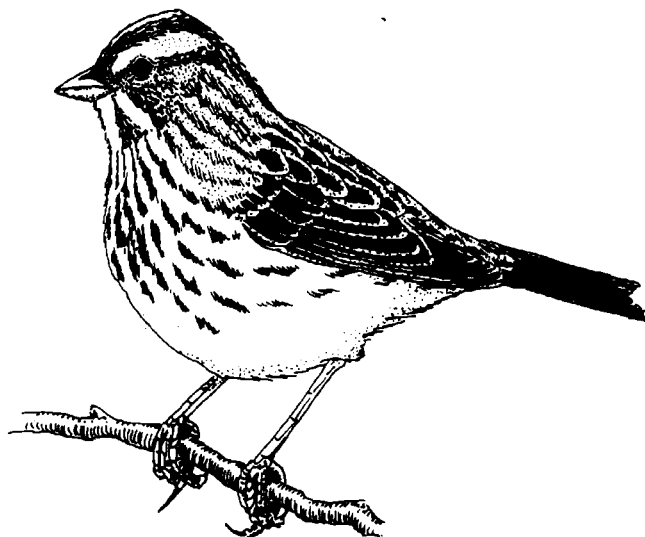


Table 1. AFR II - Summary of Operations - 1997

	Braddock Bay	Alfred Station	Kestrel Haven	Vestal	Ellenville
Start	21 JUL	20 JUL	11 JUL	27 JUL	02 AUG
Stop	11 OCT	07 NOV	30 NOV	11 NOV	03 NOV
Total Days	37	85	97	82	38
Nets Used	8-23	1-7	1-23	2-11	7-8
Net Hours	3621	1523	1938	1592	949
Best Day (BD)	336	26	97	36	44
BD Date	02 OCT	05 NOV	25 JUL	13 SEPT	30 OCT
Reason for BD	29% RCKI 31 Species	88% SCJU	25% SOSP 25 Species	27% REVI 25% MAWA	82% SCJU
Best Diversity	31 on 02 OCT	5 on 07 SEPT	32 on 17 SEPT	N/A	14 on 03 AUG
Banded 1996	1724	499	2255	630	288
Banded 1997	2423	255	2481	691	622
Species 1996	70	53	78	58	45
Species 1997	77	44	84	64	53
B/100 NH 1996	59	24	111	53	N/A
B/100 NH 1997	67	17	128	43	66
% HY 1996	88%	82%	89%	69%	64%
% HY 1997	83%	66%	87%	98%	69%

Table 2. AFR II - Most Frequently Encountered Species - 1997

Braddock Bay 431-0774			Alfred Station			Kestrel Haven 422-0764			Vestal 420-0775			Ellenville 414-0742		
Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY
WTSP(1)	715	96	SCJU(1)	85	53	SOSP(1)	505	95	SCJU(6)	102	70	SCJU(1)	134	47
RCKI(2)	193	na	BCCH(2)	23	76	SCJU(8)	182	81	GRCA(3)	65	95	GRCA(3)	58	93
HETH(3)	178	97	MAWA(3)	13	69	COYE(3)	159	86	COYE(2)	60	83	RCKI(9)	51	na
GCKI(4)	165	na	SOSP(7)	11	60	AMGO(4)	134	80	WTSP(1)	52	62	COYE(4)	38	89
SCJU	113	79	BLJA(6)	8	86	GRCA(5)	131	81	AMGO	38	82	BCCH(5)	35	89
YWAR(8)	88	84	AMGO	8	75	MYWA(2)	103	94	BCCH	31	73	REVI(10)	35	66
GRCA	75	90	BWWA	7	57	AMRO	95	85*	MAWA	28	96	AMGO(6)	28	50
SOSP(9)	75	72	MYWA(4)	7	43	BCCH(10)	89	100	OVEN(7)	24	83	PUFI(8)	25	84
SWTH	65	61	SCTA	7	100	WTSP(7)	84	98	REVI(8)	23	61	WTSP(2)	23	65
MAWA	57	65	OVEN	6	100	ATSP	80	100	AMRE(10)	22	68	AMRE(11)	15	40
			PUFI	6	67									
% of Total Banded:														
	71%			71%			63%			64%			71%	

NOTES: (*) Percentages for those where skulling was possible.
 (#) Indicates ranking last fall.
 (na) Not attempted.

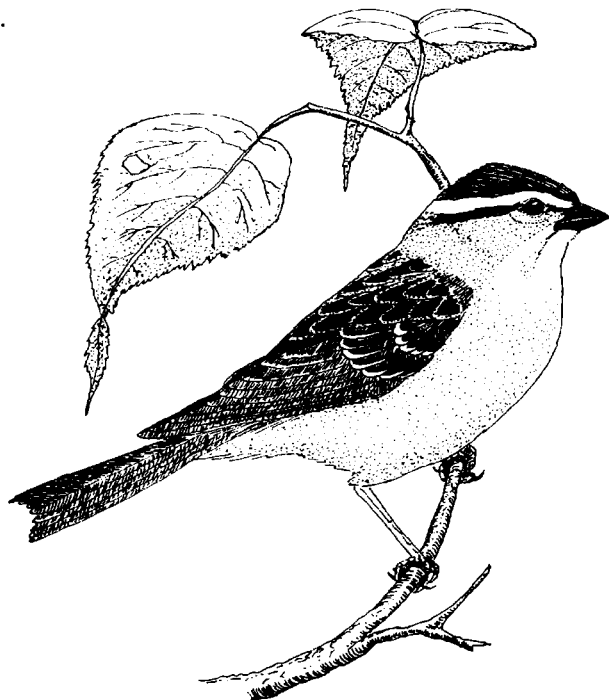
Farmersville Station
Cattaraugus County, NY.
Donald F. Clark

422-0782

This is the 29th report for the Atlantic Flyway Review. Thirty-six birds of 14 species were banded, weighed and measured. This is by far the lowest numbers banded in all 29 years. Some were due to poor weather during September but most to my being hospitalized after the middle of that month.

Nets were used on seven days and traps on three days. There were three returns and no repeats. During the time I could still band, there was very little indication of migration. No flocks of birds were even observed in the woods and fields around the banding site. Even the bird feeders were not frequented by many birds.

There were no thrush and even WTSPs failed to appear at the feeders. The PUF1 left by the middle of the month and no HOF1 appeared at all.



Braddock Bay Bird Observatory 431-0774
Monroe County, NY
Elizabeth W. Brooks, Compiler

The thirteenth year of fall passerine banding began on 21 July and ended on 11 October. Banders include Robert McKinney, Sharon Skelly, Patricia Stanko and myself. Banding was conducted on 37 days resulting in the banding of 2432

birds of 79 forms during 3621 net hours of operation. The best day was 2 October when 336 birds were banded. Other good days were 3 October (226), 7 October (208) and 1 October (167). The day with the highest species diversity was also 2 October with 31 species banded.

From one to 23 nets were employed in the same locations as in previous years. Included in that total were two aerial net assemblies. Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush, a species designation given those thrushes that are either GCTH or BITH but whose wing chord falls into the overlap measurement, is a new form for the cumulative fall list which now stands at 105.

There were 15 returns and over 209 repeats. The eldest return was a five year old BCCH while a total of six were in excess of three years old. Injuries and abnormalities were observed on eleven individuals of four species. Yellow lores were on two SWSP while old fractures and growths were seen on SWTH, WTSP and SCJU.

Fall 1997 banding totals (2423) were the second highest ever (average total 1987-1996 is 1360); only 1995 saw higher captures (2721). The birds per 100 net hours ratio at 67.2 is almost exactly equal to the ten-year average of 67.1/100 net hours. It was the highest ever for ETTI (13) and HOWR (22) both up 4 SD; SCJU (113) was up 3 SD while WIWR (49), GCKI (165), BLPW (30), COYE (51), WTSP (715), and EWCS were all up 2 SD. Ten other species were up 1 SD from the 10 year averages.

There were few negatives. BCCH (46) and RUBL(1) were down 1 SD. Two species captured at least seven of the past ten years, RBGR and ATSP, were missing in 1997. The latter can probably be explained by the fact that banding operations usually continue on a sporadic basis well into early November, but this year all banding ceased on 11 October.

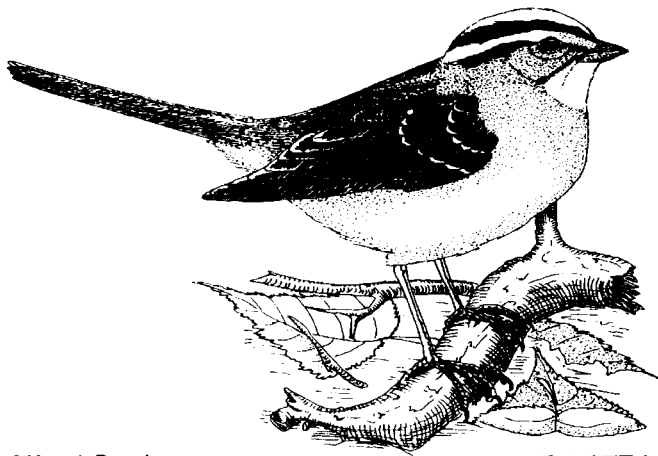
We had serious problems with a cat which proved impossible to trap. On many days we had to close several nets; and for much of the season, we had to set a section of our net lane higher than usual to provide less temptation for the cat. This cat appeared to be a stray being fed by one of the neighbors in the area. We will have to solve this problem before we begin banding next spring. We captured and released a beautiful Big Brown Bat early one morning. Another morning a SWTH caught in the bottom bag of a net was stung to

death by yellowjackets. Afterwards, we found and destroyed the nest which was just two feet from where the thrush had been caught.

A banding demonstration was given for a reporter for the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, resulting in an excellent article in that newspaper.

We would like to thank all those who assisted or contributed to the operation of the banding station: David Bonter, Mark Conti, Bob Dows, Jason Franz, Myrt Harding, Mike Lanzone, John Lehr, Carol McFarlin, Chita McKinney, Tom Muller, Dan Niven, Dick O'Hara, David Semple, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne Skelly, Doug and Lois Smith, Lloyd Swart, Chris Webber, and Martha Zettel.

A special vote of thanks to Bob and Charlene Reed for housing and to Bill and June Kaiser for their support and permission to band on their land.



Alfred Station
Allegany County, NY
Elizabeth W. Brooks

421-0774

The 20th year of fall banding at Alfred Station began on 20 July and ended on 7 November 1997. On 85 days, from one to seven nets were used, in the same locations as previous years, for a total of 1523 net hours. A total of 255 birds of 44 species was banded. Yellow Palm Warbler was a new species for the cumulative list which now stands at 101.

There was essentially no banding done between 15 September and 10 October because this period is devoted entirely to banding at Braddock Bay. Because of the changed habitat, migration activity at the Alfred site continues to decline. The peak day occurred on 5 November when 26 birds, mostly juncos, were banded. There were 85 repeats and 34 returns. Of 14 returning

BCCH, the eldest were five and six years old while 13 were above two years old overall.

Hypoboscids were found on eight birds of six species. Four juncos had prominent white tips on their greater coverts. Only two birds had injuries: a HOWR had a 3mm hole in its scalp and a SCJU had a recent head wound of unknown origin.

The decline in activity at this Alfred banding site along with the increase in time spent at Braddock Bay makes the value of the data and the future of this location questionable. Although there was no banding done when I was banding at Braddock Bay, there still was daily coverage before and after that period. Yet, the birds/100 net hour ratio has declined to 16.7, the lowest since 1981. Birds usually captured but missing entirely this year were: LEFL, GCKI, RCKI, BTGN, BLPW, BAWW and AMRE. SOSP at minus 2 SD was at an all time low. MAWA and RBGR were both minus 2 SD and GRCA and COYE were both at minus 1 SD. Only one GCTH and one SWTH were captured and VEER and HETH were non-existent. Despite the promising late fall influx of winter finches in the western New York area, none were captured here. The single positive note was the high count of SCTA; the seven birds banded were a 4.5 SD increase.

A banding demonstration was held at Foster Lake and education programs were given for the Alfred University Women's Club and the Hornell Garden Club.

Kestrel Haven Farm
Avian Migration Observatory
Burdett, Schuyler County, NY
John and Sue Gregoire

422-0764

We enjoyed a long, steady migration with few weather induced surges which led to our second highest fall total. For the first time in years we were able to band into November. We added Pine Warbler, Lawrence's Warbler, Gambell's White-crowned Sparrow and an Eastern/Gambell's Intergrade to bring the station cumulative to 116 species.

We banded 2481 individuals of 84 species during 338 hours of operation on 97 days (station high). We also had 642 repeats, a record 105 returns from previous years and 212 birds not banded for a total of 3439 netted. Our measure of efficiency

was our highest at 128 birds banded per hundred net hours for newly banded birds and 178/100nh overall. Species not banded included our first encounter with a Northern Bobwhite, an unidentifiable *Ammodramus* sparrow and a host of HOSP, EUST and RTHUs. The latter were at a new high of 125. The quail was our first in eleven years and, although pleasant to hear and see, was most likely stocked by local hunters.

Returns were fantastic. We received word of an October 1996 banded AMRO (U-U) which was recovered in April 1997 in Darien, NY which is 80 miles northwest. Of the locally generated returns, 22 were over three years old and included AMGOs at 7+, 6+, 6, 5 and 4 years old, a CHSP at 6+ years, GRCA's at 6+, 5 and 4 years, a DOWO at 5+ years, an ATSP at 5 years, YWARs at 5, 3+ and 3 years, BCCHs at 4 years, INBUs at 4 and 3+ years, an OVEN at 3+ years and an EAKI at 3+ years of age.

Weather once again played a major role in the timing and routing of migrants. In the days surrounding the early October storm system described in the introduction, we encountered the Gambell's. Other than that event, we had a slow but steady stream of birds throughout the period with no remarkably big days. On 13 September, we banded a record high of 32 species.

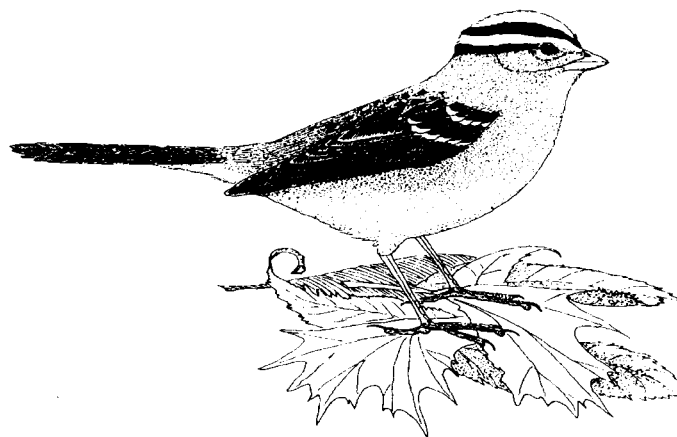
Gambell's are extremely rare visitors in this flyway. A specimen in the Cornell collection taken in Ithaca, NY. by Fuertes on 30 April 1898 was judged by Ken Parkes to be an intergrade between the nominate *leucophrys* and *gambelii*. The previous, and first, record of an adult *gambelii* in New York was an individual banded by Lauro and Schaeffer at Tobay Sanctuary, Nassau County on 5 October 1969.

Although our station has been active since 1986, we have operated only in a true standardized "constant effort" manner since 1992. Consequently, we have opted to base our statistical comparisons to the last six seasons for greater accuracy. Most species were within norms; SCJUs were 3 SDs above the mean and YBFLs and DOWOs were at 2 SDs above. Several species of warbler were not present this season while WPWAs were 3 SDs below the mean and WOTH, HOWR and EAPH were banded in very low numbers.

Parasites were few this fall probably due to the drought we experienced most of the year. Likewise, injuries and abnormalities were few. Unfor-

tunately, we encountered mycoplasma infection in HOFI for the second year and had a 6+ year old AMGO return with conjunctivitis fully developed in both eyes.

We are indebted to the Watkins Glen/Montour Falls Lions for their enthusiastic support and to the following for much needed and appreciated grants of equipment, advice and assistance: Bird-watchers Digest, Nielsen-Kellerman Co. of Chester, Pa. who provided a "Kestrel" anemometer to assist in weather data collection, Stillman's Greenhouse of Montour Falls, Pine Tree Farms of Interlaken and Ted and Lorraine Gregoire.



Powderhouse Road Station
Vestal, Broome Cty., NY
Gail Kirch

420-0755

The summer and fall of 1997 were characterized by extreme lack of rain (as contrasted with the more than average rainfall of 1996). As of 10 November, the area was 5.5 inches of rain below normal for the year. As a result of the dryness, fruit on the field shrubs, especially *C. racemosa*, shriveled and dropped before ripening.

Banding was done on a modified basis during the week. Four nets were set at dawn and furled at 0715. Late afternoon banding was experimented with and results were mixed. Weekend banding was as in past years, dawn to 0900. Compared to past years, more net hours were logged but the birds/100 net hours was the lowest ever at 43. Characteristic of the season was a steady trickle of birds instead of migrating waves of birds. The best day, 13 September, saw only 36 birds banded. October sparrows were a disappointment. The White-throated Sparrows never arrived in their usually large numbers.

While this location is usually a "sparrow" station, warblers in 1997 are worth mentioning. Compared to 1990-1996 results the following all showed increases of 1 to 2 SD: MAWA, CSWA, COYE and AMRE.

The highlight of the season was the first sighting and capture of a Yellow-breasted Chat. This record dates back to 1961. Another highlight was that we banded two Golden-winged Warblers, the only records of that species for the 1990s. Harriet Marsi once again helped with the banding.

Ellenville Station
Ellenville, Ulster Cty., NY
Valerie M. Freer

414-0742

The fall of 1997 was an excellent banding season, producing the highest numbers of new birds netted since 1976 (622). The number of species (53) was good, but below the 28-year average of 57 per season at this station. The season average of 16.4 birds per day was the fourth highest since 1970 (twice the average of 8 birds per day in the very poor 1996 season). Over 20 new birds were banded on each of 14 days, and on each of three days over 30 new birds were banded. The number of birds/100 net hours for 1977 (65.5)

was the highest recorded at this station. As has been common in recent years, the top five species comprised over half the station total.

The weather was near normal throughout the season, although most of the precipitation for September fell in one day, and October was a bit cooler and drier than usual.

Juncos dominated the season with 134 banded (21% of the station total). Their numbers swelled the monthly total of all birds in October to the highest ever. Juncos were only the third species to exceed 100 individuals banded in a season at this station. (The previous two were MYWA and BLPW in 1972).

While no new species were caught, five EATOs were banded, the first since 1988. (Numbers of Towhees had dramatically declined since the first year of operation in 1970 when 45 were banded.) The only species whose 1997 numbers exceeded every other year was PUF1 (25) which usually totals fewer than 10 per season. HOF1 (12) remained well below their peak of 76 banded in 1985.

Sullivan County Community College student Leif Thronsen assisted on 18 days for an independent study on the techniques of banding birds.

