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Eastern Regional News Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Ii (north Central) Fall 1998

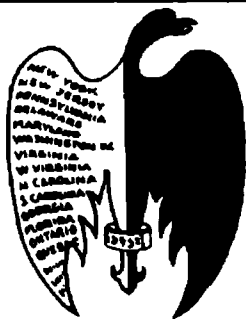
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Eastern Regional News

Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

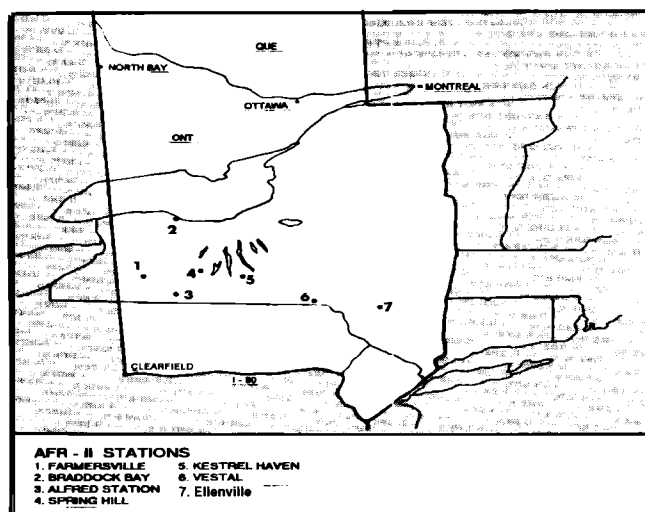
Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) Fall 1998

John A. Gregoire, Coordinator
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This fall saw a return to traditional northwest fronts which brought copious numbers of migrants through our region. Both Braddock Bay and Kestrel Haven banded record numbers while setting other records in many categories. Ellenville experienced a welcome return to good warbler numbers as well as better diversity and numbers banded. Spring Hill returned this fall to good banding and cogent remarks on the effects of the "new Pyle" which are incorporated below. The sole negative was at Vestal which banded slightly fewer than last year; that was somewhat alleviated by the encounter of two species not seen in a decade.

The more traditional weather patterns contributed to a change in migration routing from that observed over the past few years. This was evident in the numbers and species reported as well as returns of birds not seen in several years. In all, the migration started quite early, perhaps as early as mid-June, and continued into November.

Comparisons of age and sex data from this point on with the historical record will be difficult and should be done with caution. This year, the BBM was replaced by the "new Pyle." As a result, we have some banders relying entirely on the new methodology, some using a bit of the old and the



new, and some with their anchors set in tradition during the unspecified transition period. The addition of new aging techniques will be a boon to the accuracy of our data with a much higher percentage of birds reliably aged late in the fall. This is in sharp contrast to those that were routinely aged as unknown after an arbitrary date. As an example, we were able to age kinglets by a combination of plumage and skull well into November, whereas the old methodology would have one age all birds as unknown after 01 October. As banders become more comfortable with the wealth of help presented by the new manual, the data will mature and become more reliable and comparable.

The "new Pyle" also presents a challenge to all banders to check closely the procedures presented and to offer their data, changes, and modifications to what should forever be a "work in progress."

Table 1. AFR II Summary of Operations 1998.

	Braddock Bay	Alfred Sta.	Spring Hill	Kestrel Haven	Vestal	Ellenville
Start	20 Jul	17 Jul	08 Aug	09 Jul	29 Jul	01 Aug
Stop	18 Nov	10 Nov	31 Oct	29 Nov	01 Nov	08 Nov
Total Days	53	80	17	101	74	40
No. Nets Used	1-25	1-7	5.5-12	1-23	4-11	6-8
Net Hours	6034	1366	1101	2044	1435	1035
Best Day	223	15	46	100	45	52
BD Date	29 Sep	03 Nov	08 Aug	22 Sep	10 Oct	09 Oct
Reason BD	33% WTSP	40% SCJU	16 Species	32 Species	31% RCKI	54% RCKI
Best Diversity	25 on 23 Sep	NA	16 on 08 Aug	32 on 22 Sep	13 on 10 Oct	17 on 04 Sep
Banded 1997	2423	255	--	2481	691	622
Banded 1998	3156	185	234	2709	580	666
Species 1997	77	44	--	84	64	53
Species 1998	84	32	48	90	58	62
B/100 nh 1997	67	17	--	128	43	66
B/100 nh 1998	52	14	23	132	40	64
% HY 1997	83%	66%	--	88%	78%	69%
% HY 1998	82%	68%	84%	84%	75%	75%

Farmersville Station
Cattaraugus County, NY.
Donald F. Clark

422-0782

This station did not band in 1998 after completing 29 consecutive submissions to the AFR. Don is recovering from heart surgery, is busy maintaining his sanctuary, and hopes to resume banding in 1999.

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

The fourteenth consecutive year of fall banding at the Kaiser-Manitou Beach Banding Station began on 20 Jul and ended on 18 Nov. Banders were David Bonter, Elizabeth Brooks, Robert McKinney, Sharon Skelly and Patricia Stanko.

Banding was conducted on 53 days for a total of 6034 net hours. There were 3156 birds banded of 84 species, with a capture rate of 52.3 birds/100 net hours. Acadian Flycatcher and Lawrence's Warbler were new for the cumulative fall banding

list, which now stands at 112 forms. The best day was 223 birds banded on 29 Sep. Other 100+ days were 30 Jul; 23,24,25,30 Sep; 5,27 Oct. The day with the greatest species diversity was 23 Sep with 25 species banded.

Up to 23 twelve-meter nets and four six-meter nets were used, most in the same locations as in previous years. Nets were identified as being located in one of two habitat types—either “field/edge” or “early successional” growth, and the capture hour and net were recorded for each bird handled. Included in the 23 twelve-meter nets were two sets of aerial nets, one located in each habitat type.

Several injuries and abnormalities were observed including a CEDW with orange retrix tips, a CSWA with a deformed upper mandible (old fracture), a WTSP with a deformed right eyelid, and a WTSP with orange lores. There were 425 recaptures; 19 of these were returns from previous seasons. The eldest return was a DOWO at six years of age. A BAOR and a HOFI were five years old, and the remainder were fourth year or less.

Table 2. AFR II Most Frequently Encountered Species 1998.

Braddock Bay			Alfred Station			Spring Hill		
Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY
WTSP (1)	526	78	BCCH (2)	26	77	BCCH	37	89
GCKI (4)	294	87*	SCJU (1)	23	47	SOSP	26	96
BCCH	290	85	MAWA (3)	22	76	GRCA	19	79
YWAR (6)	257	99	GCKI	20	N/A	OVEN	13	100
RCKI (2)	193	78*	COYE	9	88	MAWA	10	80
MAWA (10)	127	92	SOSP (4)	8	88	WTSP	9	78
SCJU (5)	119	71	BLJA (5)	7	57	TRFL	8	88
HETH (3)	96	92	AMGO (6)	7	33	GCKI	7	100
MYWA	96	69	RBGR	6	80	VEER	7	100
SOSP (8)	92	85	RCKI	6	N/A	REVI	7	86
						RUBL	7	43
% of Total Banded	66%			72%			63%	
Kestrel Haven			Vestal			Ellenville		
AMGO (4)	525	92	SCJU (1)	45	44	SCJU (1)	89	62
SOSP (1)	377	95	WTSP (4)	43	51	RCKI (3)	86	96*
COYE (3)	214	87	GRCA (2)	42	95	GRCA (2)	48	98
GRCA (5)	146	79	REVI (9)	38	79	WTSP (9)	42	60
YWAR	100	83	COYE (3)	38	89	MYWA	41	73
WTSP (9)	86	98	MAWA (7)	33	82	MAWA	33	76
EWCS	84	76	RCKI	31	52	PUFI (8)	33	61
MYWA (6)	84	82	SOSP	29	80	REVI (6)	22	77
CEDW	84	40	OVEN (8)	25	84	GCKI	21	100
ATSP (10)	80	84	BCCH (6)	21	95	COYE (4)	21	67
RBGR	60	80	AMRE (10)	18	72			
% of Total Banded	69%			63%			65%	
NOTES:	(*) Percentages for those where skulling was possible (see intro.) (#) Indicates ranking last fall. (N/A) Not attempted (see intro.)							

Fall 1998 was a season of superlatives! We banded the highest number of birds ever, with the most species represented, during the second highest number of net hours, on the most days ever. Bob McKinney was able to give us particularly good coverage between 20 Jul and 15 Sep, when the intensive banding period began, and after 16 Oct, a period when there was no banding done last year. As a result of the increased coverage before 15 Sep, we banded a record number of BWWA, NOPA, YWAR, CSWA, MAWA, BTBW, MYWA, BLPW, AMRE, NOWA, CONW, COYE, and WIWA. We also set new high

records for WIWR, GCKI, GCTH, CEDW, EUST, ATSP, FISP, WCSP and SCJU.

The only negative was RBNU which was banded in eight of the past 12 years, but was missing in 1998.

We had unacceptable levels of predation this fall with birds killed by deer, long-tailed weasel, a young SSHA, opossum, and raccoon. But, the real culprit was a single, feral calico cat. We kept traps set all season and shut down portions of our net lanes on several days until the problems were solved.

SUNY Brockport students Karla Balent, Amy Kershaw and Sue Smith completed independent research studies at the banding station. Appreciation to Chris Norment for the use of an anemometer. Many individuals visited the banding station, including over 60 individuals attending the 50th anniversary meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs.

As usual, our volunteers made the season a success with their efforts in clearing net lanes, coping with our new "clothespin-net i.d." protocol, scribing, mending nets, and keeping us well fed with pumpkin fry cakes, hot blueberry muffins and home-baked cookies. Appreciation to Gene Albanese, Mark Belcker, Cynthia Brewster, Pat Cocinski, Mark Conti, Frances Cushing, Jon Dombrowski, Luke Donius, Bob Dows, Melanie Driscoll, Jack Duvall, Jim Goetz, Myrt Harding, Rafael Herrera-Herrera, Peter Jones, John Lehr, Gary Lloyd, Cindy Marino, Jessica Matthews, Chita McKinney, Keith Murphy, Dan Niven, Marybeth and Dick O'Hara, Annie Phillipone, Bruce Pitcher, David Semple, Greg Shriver, Jean Skelly, Doug and Lois Smith, Maura Steed, Dave Tetlow, Mary Jean and Paul Weld and Martha Zettel. Special thanks to Genesee Land Trust for their interest and support, to Bob and Charlene Reed for housing, and to Bill and June Kaiser for permission to band on their land.

Alfred Station
Allegany County, NY
Elizabeth W. Brooks

421-0774

The 21st year of fall banding at Alfred Station began on 17 Jul and ended on 10 Nov 1998. On 80 days, from one to seven nets were used, in the same locations as previous years, for a total of 1366 net hours (down 35% from the 20-year mean). A total of 185 birds of 32 species was banded (13.5/100 nh).

There was essentially no banding done from mid-September to mid-October because this period is devoted to banding at Braddock Bay. Because of the changed habitat, migration activity at the Alfred site continues to decline. The peak day occurred on 3 Nov when 15 birds were banded. There were 107 repeats and 21 returns, the eldest of which was a seven-year-old BCCH. A SCJU at five

years was the next oldest; returns were from four species.

Hypoboscids were found on eight birds of three species. There were no injuries observed. A SCJU had prominent white greater covert tips, a NAWA had white crown feathers, and an AHY-F RBGR had both salmon and yellow wing linings.

The decline in activity along with the increased time spent at Braddock Bay continue to make the future of Alfred Station debatable. Several species normally banded were missed this year. A family of recently fledged SSHAs spent most of July and early August in the vicinity of my banding site. I did manage to net two of the young, one leaving a freshly plucked AMGO behind in the net and the other refusing to loosen its grip on a vole. During the period, the very vocal family hung around the neighborhood; netting was poor as resident birds were very quiet and almost indiscernible.

A banding demonstration was held at Foster Lake on 12-13 Sep.

Spring Hill Wildlife Sanctuary 423-0772
Steuben County, NY
Robert McKinney

This was the sixth year of operation for this AFR station with 17 days from 8 Aug through 31 Oct. The banding station is located on a north-facing slope near the top of a hill in the western Finger Lakes country at an elevation of 2,000 feet. It consists of open fields, overgrown hedgerows, brushy areas and woodlots. We have an ongoing program to control plant succession to try to keep the habitats as consistent as possible with the passage of time.

We banded 234 birds of 48 species. The days of operation and net hours of effort were a bit higher than the average of the five previous years, but the number of individuals and species banded were below average.

In our portion of the Finger Lakes hill country, the early part of the nesting season experienced numerous hard thunderstorms with a lot of rain which, I feel, was probably devastating to many species with open cup nests. The fact that we

caught so many recently fledged young later than normal in the season points to probable successful renesting of these birds.

I wish to express appreciation to my wife Chita for assistance throughout the season.

Kestrel Haven Farm 422-0764
Avian Migration Observatory
Burdett, Schuyler County, NY
John and Sue Gregoire

We enjoyed a long migration with a few classic fronts and enough strange activity to establish our highest fall totals for birds banded, days open, and bands per hundred net hours. We were able to band on only a few days in November due to unsafe winds which were prevalent throughout the month. We added Cerulean and Prairie warblers and Orchard Oriole to bring the station cumulative to 119 species and four forms.

We banded 2709 individuals of 90 species during 101 days of operation. We also had 718 repeats, 98 returns from previous years, and 230 birds not banded, for a total of 3657 birds netted. Our measure of efficiency became our highest at 132.5 birds banded per hundred net hours for newly banded birds, and 178/100 nh overall. Species not banded were HOSPs, EUSTs and RTHUs; the latter set a new high of 183 netted.

Returns were of 13 species with 15 over four years of age. The eldest were SOSPs at seven and five years, three GRCAs at five years, AMGOs at seven and five years, a COYE at five plus years, DOWOs at six plus and five years, and several BCCH at five years of age. Others were fourth year or less with several paying their first call in several years. This last point may be indicative of a shift in migration routing from the pattern observed in the last few years to that associated with a "normal" migration period assisted by traditional northwest frontal systems.

We had two major surprises. We thought last fall's Gambel's White-crowned Sparrows a nifty aberration and were tickled to band an adult again this fall (third documented adult *gambelii* in New York). SOSPs have always outdistanced other species by several hundred birds. This fall, they

were over 100 below mean (non-significant) and overcome by AMGOs, which came in a steady stream all fall, finishing at 525 birds (+3 SD). Other than noting a large presence of AMGOs in the Finger Lakes this summer, we've no explanation for this season's number one species.

Other significant departures include ACFL (-2SD). This species has bred here for the last five years and the decrease may be indicative of reproductive failure due to a very wet spring followed by an increasing drought through year's end. Breeding warblers never arrived this spring, which may account for decreases in BTNW and MOWA. We banded only half the norm of HETH and missed SWTH for the first time. Also missed were GRSP and VESP, while SCJU and BCCH were at cyclic lows.

On the upbeat side were significant increases in WIWA (+3 SD), PUFI (+2 SD) and EWCS (+2 SD). The white-crowns had their longest stopover period (23 Sep through 3 Nov), allowing us to band 84 plus the Gambel's. TEWA, TRFL, SCTA and BAOR also showed increases.

Parasites were light, with hypoboscids flies present on only 14 species; most of these were in late July. There was no evidence of mycoplasma infection this year. Several abnormalities were noted including foot pox, tumors, and genetic aberrations. An EAKI breeding female, netted as she departed her nest after feeding young, presented no crown patch. An AMGO banded on 23 Aug was found completely skeletonized on 31 Aug (busy little beetles?). We removed an 8 x 6 mm tumor from an AMRO's gape, allowing the bill to close normally. Someone, somewhere, beat us to a SOSP as it presented with secondaries 2,3, and 4 snipped cleanly in half; as this bird was previously unbanded, it makes one wonder.

While low in overall numbers, CEDWs were high in tail band permutations. Of 84 banded, three adults had orange tails, one adult had a mixed yellow and orange tail (feathers of the same age), and 10 young had orange tails. One HY presented with an orange tail and six small waxy tips on each wing! The color variations are interesting in that during their extended stopover, the CEDWs fed primarily on European mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

and European buckthorn (*Rhamus cathartica*). Loniceras were absent from this site when we began in 1986 but many bird-sown bushes have since developed which we have tentatively keyed as mostly tartarian (*L. tartarica*) and a few amur (*L. maakii*); we do not know if these contain the same chemical makeup ascribed to morrow honey-suckle (*L. morrowii*) which is theorized to be a cause of orange pigmentation.

We wish to thank Dorothy Dorney for her generous support as well as Stillman's Greenhouse of Montour Falls and *Bird Watchers Digest*.

John's special thanks goes to Sue. All of the work at this station is normally accomplished by just the two of us. Although the chickadees were particularly pleased with the new target of the bandages necessitated by John's early October loss of a fingertip to a pair of pruning shears, the bandages got hung up in the mesh and made bird handling nearly impossible. Sue kept us going by doing all the net work and banding.

Powderhouse Road Station 420-0755
Vestal, Broome Cty., NY
Gail Kirch

The fall 1998 banding at this station was uneventful. There were no strong fronts and, as a result, the birds were sparse and spread out. August, with only 28.3 birds/100 net hours, was the lowest this decade (mean 43.8). There was a significant drop in numbers of catbirds which stood at 43 compared to the 1989-97 mean of 79.8 (-2 SD). A comparison of MAPS data (31 May to 9 Aug) for GRCA in 1997 and 1998 showed no decline in either numbers of resident adults (20 and 22 respectively) nor in HY birds (16 and 14). In contrast, GCKIs at 16 were a 10-year high (+4 SD). RCKIs, at 31, were also at a high for this decade (+3 SD).

There were two highlights: a young YTVI on 9 Aug and an adult female CONW on 29 Aug. These were the first bandings of these species in nine years.

The eldest returns were: GRCA banded as AHY-F in Aug 1993; SWTH banded as AHY-M in Sep

1994; YWAR banded as AHY-F in Jun '95, and three OVEN banded in Jul '95 (1 AHY, 2 HY).

Harriet Marsi assisted with weekday banding during September and October.

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

For the second consecutive year good numbers and a good variety of birds were banded at this small back yard station. The 666 birds banded was the highest since 1980, the number of species (62) was highest since 1981, and birds per 100 net hours was near the peak for this station. The season average of 16.7 new birds per day was the third highest since 1970; over 20 new birds were banded on each of 11 days, and on three of those days, over 40 were netted. One new species was added, a Red-shouldered Hawk, bringing the station total to 103.

The weather averaged much drier and a couple of degrees warmer than normal throughout the season. Only about half of normal precipitation fell in August, and September was about an inch below normal. While October had close to normal rainfall, a few days were too windy to open nets.

Warblers provided the highlight of the season. We banded 198 warblers of 21 species which made up 30% of all birds banded. In many recent years, warblers comprised only about 15% of the total.

PUFIs, RCKIs, MAWAs and BTBWAs were caught in their highest numbers, each exceeding 2 SD above the 28-year mean. HOFIs remained well below their highs of 1985-91. All in all, the 1997 and 1998 seasons were reminiscent of those of the 1970s, stirring hope that many birds are doing better.

Thanks to Sullivan County Community College student Stephanie Paradise, who assisted on 24 days for an independent study on the techniques of banding birds.