

2000

## Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Ii (north Central) Fall 1999

North American Bird Bander

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### Recommended Citation

North American Bird Bander (2000) "Atlantic Flyway Review: Region Ii (north Central) Fall 1999," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 25 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol25/iss1/10>

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years of record keeping by the National Weather Service. Precipitation deficits ranged from six to more than 14 inches across the region. By mid-July, severe drought was reported in parts of every state in the Northeast. Despite these conditions, it appears that chickadees and other species thrived.

I will not steal the thunder of our stations. Read their reports that follow. So much happened and in such great numbers that many significant, but smaller, highlights were overcome by events. Some of these follow.

We welcome a new station at Hamlin Beach, NY, which is to the west of Braddock Bay and along the Lake Ontario littoral. Among their many first year accomplishments was the banding of many thrushes. We've long wondered about the routing of thrush migration through our area before they proceeded southerly down the Appalachian ridge. It would seem that this area between Rochester and Niagara Falls is a major thrush corridor. Hamlin Beach is funded through fall of 2000. After that time, it may be abandoned, as Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, the sponsor of this ambitious and fruitful project, is committed to maintaining continuity at Kaiser-Manitou Beach. Of course, we hope someone will find a way to keep Hamlin Beach open.

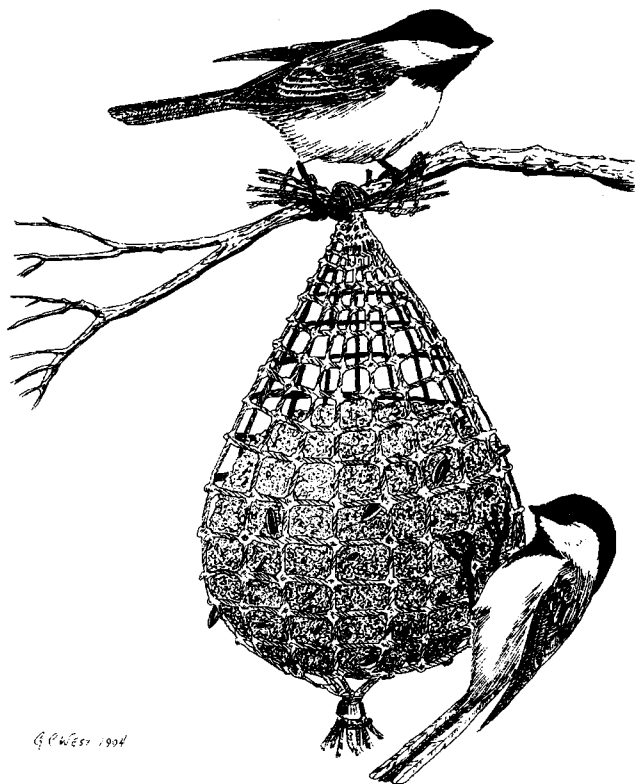
Braddock Bay had a fantastic season. Their banding of over 1000 BCCH overshadowed the three White-eyed Vireos and the Yellow-breasted Chat, two species that are quite rare in this part of New York. Unfortunately, both Farmersville station and Pierce Creek were unable to operate this year.

It appears the strength of the migratory surge moved through Braddock Bay and thence southeasterly through Kestrel Haven, which also set new records by large margins this fall. Alfred to the west and Powderhouse Road and Ellenville stations to the east had good years but did not feel the brunt of the flow.

New stations are always welcome. Many of you operate migration-monitoring stations, which you consider too small to report. Not so; we urge you to join us. It's the only way we can maintain the

geographic coverage needed to understand migration through our area of Quebec, Ontario, New York, and Pennsylvania.

As a final thought, I would appreciate your input as readers and banders on the following questions: Should starlings and House Sparrows be banded? Should we include their numbers in AFR reports? Some stations release these species unbanded, some take draconian measures, while others consider them fair game. Please send your comments by snail or e-mail, and a compiled summary of your comments will be presented in *NABB*.



Black-capped Chickadees by George West

Table 1. AFR II Summary of Operations, 1999.

	Hamlin	Braddock Bay	Alfred Station	Spring Hill	Kestrel Haven	Vestal	Ellenville
Start	14 Sep	12 Jul	17 Jul	28 Jul	12 Jul	29 Jul	1 Aug
Stop	15 Oct	29 Nov	10 Nov	30 Oct	25 Nov	13 Nov	9 Nov
Total Days	31	83	69	12	103	62	39
No. Nets	10 - 30.5	13 - 31	1 - 7	3 - 12	1 - 20	2 - 12	7 - 8
Net Hours	4601	14,518	1186	687	2772	1263	998
# on Best Day	320	573	31	28	177	40	36
Best Day Date	4 Oct	5 Oct	31 Oct	28 Jul	27 Oct	24 Oct	29 Oct
Reason BD	44% RCKI	47% RCKI	42% AMGO	18% BCCH	65% BCCH	48% CEDW	67% SCJU
Best Diversity	no report	30 on 18 Sep	8 on 4 Sep	14 on 28 Jul	27 on 24 Sep	16 on 10 Oct	11 on 5 Aug
Banded 1998	na	3156	185	234	2709	580	666
Banded 1999	2874	6585	348	121	3622	890	487
Species 1998	na	84	32	48	90	58	62
Species 1999	86	88	44	40	95	61	61
B/100 nh 1998	na	52	14	23	132	40	64
B/100 nh 1999	62.5	45	29	18	131	70.5	49
% HY 1998	na	82%	68%	84%	84%	75%	75%
% HY 1999	78.70%	74.50%	68.50%	89%	84.60%	72%	50%

Table 2. AFR II Most Frequently Encountered Species, 1999.

Hamlin			Braddock Bay			Alfred Station			Spring Hill			Kestrel Haven			Vestal			Ellenville		
Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY
WTSP	573	82	BCCH(3)	1081	91	BCCH(1)	94	78	BCCH(1)	24	96	BCCH	652	99	REVI(4)	115	74	SCJU(1)	85	25
RCKI	550	35*	WTSP(1)	898	83	SCJU(2)	45	57	SOSP(2)	10	90	AMGO(1)	428	82	SCJU(1)	113	55	BCCH	45	62
GCKI	208	69*	RCKI(5)	757	55*	AMGO(8)	40	31	GRCA(3)	5	80	SOSP(2)	388	95	CEDW	71	83	RCKI(2)	43	NA
HETH	163	89	GCKI(2)	556	100*	MYWA	18	67	BWWA	5	80	GRCA(4)	184	84	BCCH(9)	70	83	WTSP(4)	30	48
BOCH	146	87	MAWA(6)	276	79	SOSP(6)	15	80	WTSP(6)	5	80	SCJU	180	67	GRCA(3)	69	91	AMGO	30	66
SWSP	128	92	BLPW	268	47	COYE(5)	12	64	SCJU	5	60	COYE(3)	153	78	WTSP(2)	60	60	REVI(8)	23	52
SWTH	116	89	HETH(8)	261	90	BLJA(7)	11	57	REVI(10)	4	50	AMRO	138	84*	COYE(4)	43	79	MAWA(6)	22	32
GCTH	113	85	SCJU(7)	187	71	RBNU	11	67	CSWA	4	100	HOFI	101	92	SOSP(7)	34	88	GRCA(3)	20	80
COYE	77	56	SWTH	167	89	GCKI(4)	10	NA	BTBW	4	100	RCKI	100	100*	AMGO	26	81	COYE(10)	17	35
WWR	76	77	REVI	142	84	CHSP	10	75	COYE	4	75	CEDW(8)	97	49	MAWA(5)	23	52	GCKI(9)	16	NA
% OF TOTAL	74.8			69.7			76.4			58			66.75			70				68

(\*) Percentages for those where skulling was possible.

(#) Indicates ranking last fall.

(NA) Not attempted.

## Hamlin Beach Station

431-0775

Monroe County, NY.

**David Bonter**

Fall migration monitoring was conducted at Hamlin Beach State Park from 14 September to 15 October near Yanty Creek at the east end of the park. We banded 2874 birds of 75 species, a substantial increase over our spring totals of 1737 birds of 72 species. Thirty-one net lanes were established in four habitat types: the Yanty Creek marsh, a shrubby field, an alder-dominated patch of secondary growth, and a beech/maple/hemlock woods. Many of the season highlights were captured in the marsh habitat, including two Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows on 18 September and 6 October. Braddock Bay Bird Observatory (BBBO) personnel have banded this species on only one other occasion.

Sparrows headlined the season's highlight list. In addition to the Nelson's, we captured a Clay-colored Sparrow, five Fox Sparrows, and four Savannah Sparrows among the 817 sparrows of 11 species. Our most common species was the White-throated, with 573 banded.

Marsh habitat nets were largely responsible for capturing 128 Swamp Sparrows, which seem to exhibit strong habitat selection during migration. All of the Marsh Wrens, Savannah Sparrows, and most of the Lincoln's Sparrows were also captured in marsh nets. Surprisingly, species that are not normally associated with marsh habitat were captured there as well, including Blackpoll Warblers and large numbers of both kinglet species.

A Bicknell's Thrush, captured on 25 September, was another season highlight. As with the sparrows, we experienced an impressive fall thrush migration. Hermit Thrush was our most common, with 163 topping our list of 429 thrushes banded.

While the marsh nets contributed interesting species to our totals, the field and secondary growth habitats were the most productive. The woods habitat nets were somewhat more productive than in the spring; however, we will likely discontinue sampling in that habitat due to low species diversity and capture rates. Observa-

tional data indicate that ground-level mist nets are inadequate for sampling in the woods habitat, as most birds are seen in the canopy.

Despite a large invasion of winter finches, BBBO staff captured only one Pine Siskin this year, on 4 October in the field at Hamlin. Warbler totals were expectedly low as monitoring began after the bulk of warblers had already migrated. Warbler highlights included two Orange-crowned, four Western Palm, and a very late Northern Waterthrush captured 1 October. The latest record for the species in this county is 4 October.

Owls also captured our attention this fall, with several Great Horned and Eastern Screech owls calling during station setup. Two owls were captured in nets opened early, a Northern Saw-whet and a screech. Another saw-whet was captured with the assistance of tape playback.

Without the help of the following volunteers and staff, the season could not have been a success. Our volunteers included Jessie, Katie, Liz and Jim Barry; Kristen Beuchi; Melanie Driscoll; Jon Dombrowski; Kathy Fleming; Cindy Friers-Patterson; James Goetz; Mark Gregorie; Myrt Harding; Raphael Herrera-Herrera; Mary Marlhant; David Porter; Jeanne Skelly; and Carol and Peter Vandenberg. Our intern and source of valuable advice was Daniel DeRoos. Thanks to you and to all of the passers-by that we drafted into service on busy days.

Thank you Hamlin Beach State Park Manager Jim Slusarczyk, and the New York State Parks for providing permission to operate our field station on park property; to Betsy Brooks and the Board of Directors at Braddock Bay Bird Observatory; Dr. Terry Donovan of the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry; Dr. Christopher Norment of the SUNY College at Brockport, and Dr. Sidney Gauthreaux Jr. of Clemson University.

Licensed banders David Bonter, Terri Donovan, Peter Jones and David Semple operated the station. Funding for this research was provided by a grant from the Great Lakes Research Consortium and a grant from the Great Lakes national Program Office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to Terri Donovan and David Bonter.

**Braddock Bay Bird Observatory 431-0774**  
Kaiser-Manitou Beach Station  
Monroe County, NY  
**Elizabeth W Brooks**, Compiler

The fifteenth consecutive year of fall banding began on 12 July and ended on 29 November 1999. Banding was done by licensed banders David Bonter, Elizabeth Brooks, Peter Jones, Robert McKinney, David Semple, Sharon Skelly, and Martha Zettel.

Banding was done on 83 days. There were 6585 birds banded of 88 species. Northern Mockingbird was a new species for the cumulative fall banding list, which now stands at 108 forms, the best day was 573 birds banded on 5 October. Other 200+ days were 4, 7, 11, 12, and 13 October with 215, 238, 381, 416, and 235 birds banded respectively.

Up to 29 12-meter nets and four six-meter nets were used, most in the same locations as in previous years. Nets were numbered and identified as to their habitat site and the capture time (hour after sunrise to the nearest half-hour) and net number was recorded for each bird handled. An addition this fall to our net protocol were three aerial nets, making five aerial nets total, located in each of several habitat types.

There were over 1285 birds recaptured and they were all measured, fat-scored and re-weighed. Twenty-two of these birds were returns from previous seasons. The eldest return was a nine-year-old Yellow Warbler followed by a Sharp-shinned Hawk, a Northern Cardinal, and a Gray Catbird at six years of age. A Downy Woodpecker returned in its fifth year and the remainders were four years old or less. A Black-capped Chickadee banded at K-MB on 28 April 1998 was recaptured by John Miles at Selkirk Provincial Park in Ontario on 22 October 1999. A second chickadee banded here on 10 October 1998 was recaptured also at Selkirk on 28 October 1999. The Selkirk banding station is approximately 123 miles WSW of Braddock Bay.

Injuries and abnormalities encountered included several crown feather variations in both kinglets, tumors and injuries on several species, a House Finch with a bad right eye (*mycoplasma?* ed.), a

Myrtle Warbler still molting primaries on 16 August, and an American Redstart with its upper mandible crossed to the left.

This was a season of superlatives! It was our best fall ever and many individual species' records were broken, some of them in a single day alone. For example, more Blackpoll Warblers (55) were banded on 20 September than the total banded in any one previous fall! There were 269 Ruby-crowned Kinglets banded on 5 October, which is more than any one season's total in all but one year. And the number banded in each of our top ten species was greater in every case than in any of the previous 13 years. Nine species were up 3 Standard Deviations (SD); five were up 4 SD; six were up 5 SD; eight were up 6 SD; five (Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Magnolia Warbler, and American Tree Sparrow) were up 7 SD; two (Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Chestnut-sided Warbler) were up 9 SD; Cape May Warbler was up 13 SD; House Finch was up 17 SD; and Blackpoll Warbler was up 22 SD.

Our total net hours increased dramatically because, for the first year ever we conducted daily banding from 20 August to 1 November. The net hour total for the entire season was more than double the 1998 total and 5.8 times the 13-year average. The efficiency ratio for the entire season was 45.4 birds/100 net hours. The ratio for just the mid-September to mid-October period, which was formerly our intensive banding period, was 4560 birds banded in 7655 net hours or 59.6 birds/100 net hours.

Record high totals were recorded for 51 species including four flycatcher species, four vireo species, both kinglets, four thrush species, and 22 warbler species! The single negative was that Scarlet Tanager was missing after being banded in six of the past 13 falls.

Bill Evans installed a microphone and made nightly recordings of the vocalizations of birds migrating over the boathouse. Eventually, our banding data and the bird movement he recorded will be compared. Four Northern Saw-whet Owls were captured on the evening of 14 October. Because they were caught using audio-lure tapes, these birds were not counted in our totals. Six Ruby-

throated Hummingbirds were removed from the nets and released unbanded. Banding demonstrations were held for several scout troops, A SUNY ESF class, a group from AIDS Rochester, and many informal groups.

Highlights included sharing the boathouse with a long-tailed weasel, a coyote on the back trail, catching the four saw-whets, frantic calls between K-MB and Hamlin Beach on fallout days, and the cute little "trogon" in the banding box!

Appreciation to the many individuals who made the fall 1999 season so successful by scribing, tending net lanes, baking treats, repairing and lending us equipment, and coping with the "clothespin" protocol. Thanks to Cindy Muller for the delicious cider and doughnuts from her Girl Scouts. Nazareth College student Katherine Clemens and SUNY Brockport graduate student Susan Smith conducted research projects at the banding station.

Special appreciation to Jon Dombrowski and Jessie Barry who assisted with banding, and to Pat Lovallo for not only her banding assistance but also her education programs. Many thanks to Dan DeRoos for helping us redesign and construct the new aerial nets.

Special thanks to Don Barry, Liz and Jim Barry, Susan Bayley, Mark Becker, Mark Conti, Luke Donius, Terri Donovan, Melanie Driscoll, Jack Duvall, Julie Eberhart, Rick Foster, Jim Goetz, Myrt Harding, Rafael Herrera-Herrera, Mike Lanzone, John Lehr, Cindy and Katie Marino, Chita McKinney, Trish Miller, Phil Munson, Dan Niven, Dick and Mary-Beth O'Hara, Cindy Patterson, David Porter Debbie Reed, Evie Rieger, Eldon Remy, Jeanne Skelly, Marlene Slocum, Doug Smith, Lois Smith, Paul Weld, Chris Webber, and Ryan Witte.

Thanks to Bob and Charlene Reed for the use of their cottage for housing, to Bill and June Kaiser for permission to use part of their land, and to the board of the Genesee Land Trust for their cooperation and support.

**Alfred Station**  
Allegany County, NY.  
**Elizabeth W Brooks**

**421-0774**

The 22nd year of fall banding at Alfred Station (1435 Waterwells Road in the Town of Alfred) began on 17 July and ended on 10 November 1999. From one to seven nets were used, in the same locations as previous years, on 69 days (11 fewer days than in 1998), for a total of 1186 net hours. A total of 348 birds of 44 species were banded (29.3/100 net hours).

Despite the reduction in banding days, fall 1999 bandings nearly doubled from 1998 totals. Birds/100 net hours (29.3) was well above the 21-year average of 20.8. Overall hatching-year percent was 68.5. The peak day was on 31 October when 31 birds were banded. There were 132 repeats and 77 returns. Nest returns were a Blue Jay and a Song Sparrow, both in their fifth year. A Magnolia Warbler that returned after three years was most likely a local breeder.

Hypoboscids were found on three birds; a junco had 3 mm tumors on two toes of its right foot; and a Veery exhibited a pale rose color on feathers from upper breast to undertail coverts. Three White-throated Sparrows had salmon-orange lores and two juncos had prominent white greater covert tips.

Because essentially no banding was done between 13 September and 15 October, when I band at Braddock Bay, the passage of many species was missed. This is the primary reason why 21 species banded in at least nine of the past sixteen years were missing in 1999. Species banded in record high numbers this year were Black-capped Chickadee and Hooded Warbler. Although 13 warbler species were banded, only two species (Myrtle Warbler and Common Yellowthroat) were represented by more than five individuals.

For the second year, a pair of Sharp-shinned Hawks nested nearby and brought two very vocal young into the banding area. During the period from mid-July until 9 August, before the young hawks dispersed, passerines vacated the area!

Highlights of the season were an adult Broad-winged Hawk captured in a 30 mm mist net, and a beautiful Yellow Palm Warbler banded on 24 October. A bird banding demonstration was held at Foster Lake on 4 September.

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

The year 1999 was the seventh year of operation of this AFR station with just twelve days of operation from 28 July through 30 October. 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 2000 feet. It consists of open fields, overgrown hedgerows, brushy areas and woodlots. It was apparently a very good year for bird nesting in our vicinity with no sustained cold or wet periods and very few hard rains.

During the part of the year that we do MAPS banding, we had one of our best seasons ever. The first two AFR sessions were also MAPS sessions and were the best of the season. However, that did not continue into migration as our busy schedule of travel prevented us from achieving as many days of operation as usual. I banded much of this time at Braddock Bay and Island Beach, NJ, and was thus absent from this station during the heaviest of the irruption of Black-capped Chickadees and other species.

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

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

Thanks to a fantastic irruption of Black-capped Chickadees, American Goldfinches, Blackpoll Warblers, and Slate-colored Juncos, as well as record numbers of several other species, we were able to establish significant new records in all categories in this, our 14<sup>th</sup> fall AFR season. We were able to band on only a few days in November, as winds became unsafe for netting. We added Bicknell's Thrush to bring the station cumulative to 120 species and four forms.

We banded 3622 individuals of 95 species during 103 days of operation. We also had 1017 repeats, 115 returns from previous years, and 249 birds not banded, for a total of 5002 birds netted. Our measure of efficiency was 130.6 birds/100 net hours for birds newly banded and 180.4/100 net hours overall. Species not banded were House Sparrows (104), European Starlings (2) and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (143).

Returns were of 18 species with 25 over five years of age. The eldest were a Song Sparrow and a Hairy Woodpecker at 8 years, a 7+ year old Downy Woodpecker and a 7 year old Gray Catbird. Six-year-old birds included Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Common Yellowthroat and Gray Catbird. Three American Goldfinches, a Song Sparrow, a Chipping Sparrow, and a Common Yellowthroat were 5+ years of age. Five chickadees, 2 Baltimore Orioles, 2 Yellow Warblers, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak and an American Goldfinch were five years old. A Slate-colored Junco banded as HY in October 1997 was recovered in October 1999 after being killed by a cat in an area southeast of Ithaca, NY, and approximately 20 miles from us.

The chickadee irruption came to us a few days after it slowed at Braddock Bay. During the last ten days of October, we banded more Black-capped Chickadees than we had in aggregate over the last 13 fall seasons! Over 600 chickadees were banded in October and all were HY! American Goldfinch was again present in large numbers, which pushed our usual number one species, the Song Sparrow to third place. This is the second year of Song Sparrow numbers in the negative one to two Standard Deviation (SD) range which may be a signal of breeding trouble for that species.

Nine species were present in record high numbers but only four were truly significant: Black-capped Chickadee (+4SD), Downy Woodpecker, Slate-colored Junco and Blackpoll Warbler (+3 SD). Other high species have an insufficient number banded in the past 13 years to compute significance. However, it was nice to see House Wren and Nashville Warbler numbers increasing after a lull of several years.



Parasites were light with hypoboscids present on most species in the early season when dampness was still a factor. Once the drought set in, the parasite of choice became feather mite. A very determined short-tailed weasel that caused us to maintain two prime nets several feet off the ground frustrated us. It would pop up under the net as we extracted birds and was undeterred by humans; in fact, it was quite curious.

A Golden-crowned Kinglet presented with a white sub-terminal tail band 3 mm wide and 8 mm from the feather tips. This bird also had a third wing bar which was white, 4 mm wide and 14 mm from the primary tips. We banded our third Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow X Eastern White-crowned Sparrow (*leucophrys*) and had two House Finches present with advanced cases of conjunctivitis, presumably caused by *mycoplasma* infection.

Once again Cedar Waxwings exhibited a variety of tail color combinations. Interestingly, three HY birds displayed waxy tips; one had 8 bilateral, the second 6 right and 7 left, and the third had a single waxy tip. Several birds had a combination of orange and yellow tips on newly molted feathers.

We wish to thank Dorothy Dorney, Bob, Kathy and Lauren Fabia and the Watkins Glen-Montour Falls Lions for their generous support as well as several others who contributed equipment, advice, and assistance. These include Stillman's Greenhouse, Ducks Unlimited, Bird Watcher's Digest, Don and Margaret Donald (those carrying boxes and nets keep the legacy of Adventure Banding Station alive!) Ed Smith, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and Dr. Pat Fitzgerald.

**Powderhouse Road Station**                      **420-0775**  
Vestal, Broome County, NY.  
**Gail Kirch**

The fall of 1999 was long (no frost until November), produced no new birds, no "big" day, but was successful. We banded 890 new birds of 61 species and had 70.5 birds/100 net hours. The big day was not the day we had the most birds (24 October; 40 birds) but 20 September. I set five nets at 0630 and went to clear them at 0715. The nets were loaded with birds and I needed to leave for work at 0730! I cleared the nets in fifteen minutes,

called Harriet Marsi and told her I had a "mess" of birds and could she come over immediately and band. Then, I left for work - late! She banded 33 birds of 9 species. Thirty-three birds in five nets for 45 minutes equals 880 birds/100 net hours! Exciting by any standard.

Red-eyed Vireos were our bird of the fall. We banded 53 in August (29 were HY); 61 in September (52 HY) and 1 in October for a total of 115. The 1989-1998 average is 26 per season. The berry crop was good but much was not ripe in August. In previous years, the majority of Red-eyed Vireos have been caught in September, so to have so many in August was unexpected.

The second bird of the season was Black-capped Chickadee. During June and July MAPS banding, I banded the largest number of HY chickadees in the ten years I have been doing MAPS (27). During August and September, there were 16 more HY birds, but in October, we banded 42 HY and 8 AHY birds. My MAPS banding showed extremely good nesting success and the influx of birds from other areas suggests that breeding was probably successful for this species, one possible reason for the irruption.

Numbers of nets and net locations were the same as in the past. We have five nets that produce over 60% of our birds. These are the nets I set on weekday mornings. Either Harriet Marsi comes and clears them at 0815 or I clear and furl them at 0715.

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

Banding during the fall of 1999 was not as exciting as during the previous two fall seasons when higher numbers of birds were netted. When the totals were added up, 1999 turned out to be quite an average year, but there were some interesting highlights. One very exciting new species was added, Northern Shrike, bringing the 30-year cumulative fall banding total for this back yard station to 104 species. And, remarkably, the number of species of birds (61) banded was the second highest number since 1981, exceeded

only by the 62 species of 1998, even though far fewer birds were caught this year.

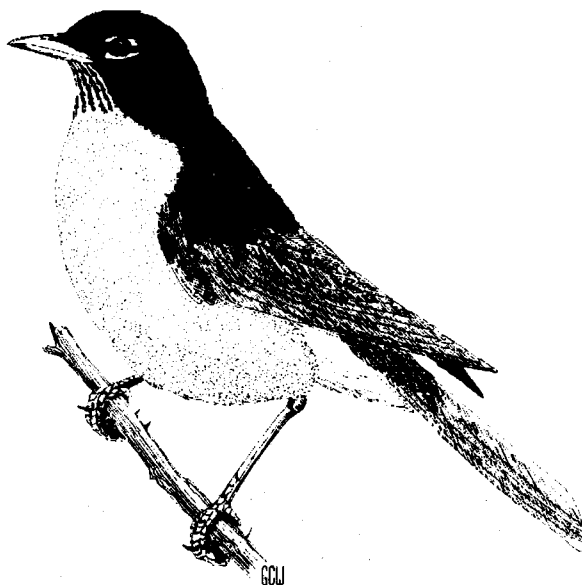
Precipitation across New York State in June, July, and August was only 74% of normal. All that changed in September, when I measured over 10 inches of rain in my yard, mostly connected with Hurricane Floyd. In some areas of the state, September had nearly double normal precipitation, and was the second wettest on record. (Other areas remained below normal showing the great diversity of weather and the effects of two mountain ranges on precipitation. Western NY remained quite dry as did areas of the Adirondacks-*ed.*) October weather was more nearly normal, with measurable rain on six dates, and the first frost on my nets on 8 October. Wind was not a frequent problem this fall.

An average of 12.5 new birds were banded per day, as compared with 16.7 last year. Over 20 new birds were banded on only four days, and on two of those days over 30 were netted.

Catbirds were caught in their lowest ever numbers. This species has been in the top five at this station

every year since 1970 (#1 or #2 more than half those years), but not so this year, when only 20 were banded. Only half the number of warblers of 1998 (198) were banded in 1999 (96). Warblers made up 20% of all birds banded as compared with 30% a year ago. Black-capped Chickadees, apparently in the midst of an irruption, were captured in good numbers (exceeded by only three other years), and few showed a remarkable amount of fat.

The most remarkable feature of the season was the large number of adult birds banded—fully half of the birds captured this fall. (Usually three-quarters or more of the birds captured are young of the year.) Only 25% of 85 Juncos in 1999 were HY, as were only half of White-throated Sparrows and Red-eyed Vireos. Although the numbers netted were smaller, only 32% of Magnolia Warblers and 35% of Common Yellowthroats were HY. Some scientists think that fall banding is not a good indicator of the success of the breeding season. An alternative explanation for these unusual ratios could be that they were due to the influence of unusual weather patterns on migration routes. We have a lot yet to learn.



American Robin by George West