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# *Eastern Regional News*

***Eastern Bird Banding Association***

***Founded 1923***

## ***Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) Fall 2000***

**John A. Gregoire, Coordinator  
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We welcome a new station this season and say farewell to another. We are glad to see Bob Pantle join the ranks of fall passerine banders as he moves into welcome retirement. His station, Northview Sanctuary, benefits from the many years of observations he has recorded at that site.

Sadly, the two-year experiment at Hamlin Beach is over. The station's numbers and diversity were equally rich, making their departure an even greater loss to the analytic effort. We wish them success and a fond hope that they will return in the near future. Farmersville station and Pierce Creek were unable to operate this year, while Powderhouse Road had poor weather and few migrants in late season.

Northview Sanctuary fills a gap between Kestrel Haven and Powderhouse Road stations in our transect of New York state and will surely help us quantify the movement and timing of migration. Bob Pantle's comments on "meteorological dams" as they affect stopover and routing for inland stations in this part of the world reflect our observations over the last 15 years.

This season was particularly affected by weather. Braddock Bay and Hamlin Beach experienced

slow movement until the late-September through early October frontal passages. Both stations are on the Lake Ontario southern littoral and benefit from the imposing barrier created by that body of water. Once the northwest fronts started, both stations had excellent results. Kestrel Haven, located between the southern ends of the two main Finger Lakes (Seneca and Cayuga), experienced rich movement prior to October when northwest frontal movement was minimal. Without the usual blocking front to our south, the October birds tended to depart the Ontario shore and overfly our three inland stations (Kestrel Haven, Northview and Powderhouse Road). Had Spring Hill and Alfred Station been open during this period we may have been able to better define the extent of the stopover and width of the migratory corridor that appeared to shift westward. In the east, Ellenville enjoyed a normal season.

The same switch in migration routing is reflected in comments on the paucity of American Goldfinches at most stations except Kestrel Haven, where they were abundant. Many returns at that station were initial re-encounters of birds banded three or more years ago, suggesting a routing change for at least that species.

Weather this year was markedly different at every station. Very dry conditions at Kestrel Haven were bracketed by unusually heavy precipitation reported at Spring Hill and Northview. Ellenville was by far the wettest as its weather is affected by coastal systems as well as the proximity of the Catskill Mountains.

Finally, last season I asked for the readership's opinion on the banding of House Sparrows and starlings. Two responses and one query were received giving the impression that this is not exactly a hot issue in the community. For the record, results were evenly split between band and not band. As a result, we began to accept data on

both species with this fall's reports. The argument for banding was basically facing the reality that these species are with us and do move around, while the opposite view cited the non-native, non-protected, and parasitic nature of the species as well as a concern for denying raptor stations their bait.

**Table 1. AFR II Summary of Operations - Fall 2000.**

	<b>Hamlin</b>	<b>Braddock Bay</b>	<b>Alfred Station</b>	<b>Spring Hill</b>	<b>Kestrel Haven</b>	<b>Northview</b>	<b>Ellenville</b>
Start	5 Sep	6 Jul	17 Jul	5 Aug	5 Jul	20 Jul	4 Aug
Stop	13 Oct	6 Nov	14 Nov	1 Nov	10 Nov	15 Oct	9 Nov
Total Days	38	58	63	13	84	62	43
No. Nets	2 to 42	up to 42.5	1 to 7	7 to 12	1 to 20	1 to 7	5 to 8
Net Hours	6476	10,162	790	658	2153	1485	1129
Best Day	393	383	12	23	133	24	44
BD Date	25 Sep	5 Oct	25 Aug	2 Sep	25 Sep	14 Aug	4 Oct
Reason BD	38% GCKI	27.4% WTSP	75% BCCH	30% GRCA	60% AMGO	29% GRCA	68% AMGO
B Diversity	31 on 25 Sep	31 on 28 Sep	5 on 27 Oct	12 on 2 Sep	26 on 26 Sep	13 on 14 Aug	17 on 28 Aug
Banded 1999	2874	6585	348	121	3622	n/a	487
Banded 2000	3174	4795	132	127	2323	477	576
Species 1999	86	88	44	40	95	n/a	61
Species 2000	68	88	30	26	83	53	58
B/100 nh '99	62.5	45	29	18	131	n/a	49
B/200 nh '00	49	47.2	17.7	19.3	92.7	32	51
% HY 1999	79%	75%	69%	89%	85%	n/a	50%
% HY 2000	81%	86%	76%	84%	86%	85%	73%

**Hamlin Beach Station**  
Monroe County, NY  
**David Bonter**

**431-0775**

The final season of migration research at Hamlin Beach State Park concluded on 13 Oct with a total of 3174 birds banded. In general, we experienced rather low migration volumes in September and large volumes of birds during the first two weeks of October. Season highlights include a Whip-poor-will captured just before sunrise on 2 Oct and a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow captured in the Yanty Creek marsh on 30 Sep. Warbler highlights included ten Orange-crowned and four Connecticut warblers, three of which were captured in the same net check on the morning of 14 Sep. We also captured two Cape May Warblers, a HY male and a HY female found side by side in the same net. Cedar Waxwings and American Goldfinches were conspicuously absent from the site this fall.

Due to high lake levels, we were forced to relocate our marsh nets to higher ground. In limited sampling this fall, we did manage to capture almost 200 birds in the marsh.

Licensed banders this fall included David Bonter, Elizabeth Brooks, Daniel deRoos, Peter Jones and David Semple. Once again, the assistance of Jessie and Liz Barry was priceless. Research assistants Suzanne Cardinal, Caleb Speigel, and Andrew Vitz provided invaluable help. We appreciate the assistance of Marya Bakermans, Miriam Hulst and Dominic Sherony. We'd like to thank Marilyn Guenther for warm coffee, new bird bags, and tireless scribing on our busiest days.

In the past four seasons (*two spring and two fall—ed.*) we banded over 10,400 birds of 100 species. We now enter the next stage of the project, which involves analyzing the data collected. In the next year we plan to submit articles detailing our results.

**Table 2. AFR II - Most Frequently Encountered Species - Fall 2000**

Hamlin			Braddock Bay			Alfred Station			Spring Hill			Kestrel Haven			Northview			Ellenville		
Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY
RCKI (2)	594	65	WTSP(2)	1183	87	BOCH(1)	29	83	GRCA(3)	31	94	AMGO(2)	551	86	GRCA	106	87	SCJU(1)	85	58
WTSP(1)	537	87	GCKI(4)	814	99	BLJA(7)	15	80	SCJU(6)	18	67	SOSP(3)	378	97	SOSP	75	85	GRCA(8)	52	83
GCKI(3)	449	91	RCKI(3)	492	90	COYE(6)	13	87	BOCH(1)	17	82	COYE(6)	138	91	COYE	43	81	WTSP(4)	50	78
MAWA	156	80	MAWA(5)	265	86	SCJU(1)	13	71	MAWA	9	88	GRCA(4)	130	87	WTSP	32	100	AMGO(5)	43	86
HETH(4)	134	94	HETH(7)	216	95	RBNJ(8)	6	83	SWTH	8	62	HOF(8)	92	85	RTHU	16	87	MAWA(7)	43	60
SWTH(7)	117	91	WWR	155	96	HOWR	6	67	COYE(10)	7	100	CEDW(10)	85	28	BOCH	16	94	RCKI(3)	36	NA
WWR(10)	106	87	SWTH(9)	119	78	NAWA	5	100	SOSP(1)	6	100	CHSP	71	99	COGR	13	80*	REVI(6)	289	79
COYE(9)	86	81	BLPW(6)	96	74	MAWA	5	100	BTBW(9)	3	100	AMRO(7)	56	71	AMRO	13	100*	BOCH(2)	25	92
GRCA	67	91	SOSP	92	89	SOSP(5)	5	60	OVEN	3	33	YWAR	55	85	OVEN	12	100	COYE(9)	22	64
NAWA	65	80	GCTH	87	77	several			BLJA	3	66	RBGR	53	78	FISP	12	50	GCKI(10)	18	NA
									HOWA	3	100									
% of Total banded	71.8%		73.4%			n/a			83%			69.2%			70.8%			70%		

We thank the Great Lakes Research Consortium, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes Program, the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, the University of Vermont, the members of Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, and Hamlin Beach State Park for contributions making this project possible.

**Braddock Bay Bird Observatory 431-0774**

Kaiser-Manitou Beach Station

Monroe County, NY

**Elizabeth W. Brooks**, Compiler

The sixteenth consecutive year of fall banding began on 6 Jul and ended on 6 Nov. Licensed banders were David Bonter, Elizabeth Brooks, Peter Jones, Robert McKinney, David Semple, Sue Smith, and Martha Zettel. Banding assistants were Jessie Barry, Katherine Clemens, Jon Dombrowski, Luke Donius, and Cindy Marino.

Banding was done on 58 days. This was down from 83 days in 1999, but the difference occurred prior to 1 Sep and after 15 Oct. The coverage during the intensive banding period remained the same as in previous years. There were 4795 birds banded of 88 species. Four Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were released unbanded. American Woodcock, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Willow Flycatcher were new species for the cumulative fall list that now stands at 112 forms. (*The WIFL was identified by voice as it flew into the net—ed.*) The best day was 5 Oct, with 383 birds banded. Other 200+ days were 9 Oct (335), 10 Oct (267), 8 Oct (248), 11 Oct (229), 25 Sep (213), and 9 Sep (206). The day with the most species diversity was 28 Sep, with 31 species banded.

Up to 40 twelve-meter nets and 5 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. We added one more aerial net assembly this fall, making six aerial nets total, located in each of several habitat types.

A tick was removed from a Swainson's Thrush while hypoboscids were found on two Golden-crowned Kinglets and nine White-throated

Sparrows. There was a very high incidence of avian pox. Lesions were observed on nine species. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a Hermit Thrush had crossed bills, a Cedar Waxwing had an orange tail band, and a White-throated Sparrow had orange lores. Several White-throated Sparrows were found with leg-joint injuries, and one displayed symptoms of conjunctivitis.

There were over 850 birds recaptured and they were all measured, fat-scored, and re-weighed. Twelve of these were returns from a previous fall season. The eldest return was an American Robin at six years old and a Yellow Warbler at five years of age. A Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Common Yellowthroat were four years old and the remainders were three years of age or less. No birds were exchanged with the Hamlin Beach site, and we are awaiting word on several birds banded elsewhere that were recaptured at Braddock Bay this fall.

Migratory movement before 22 Sep was very slow with no major cold fronts pushing through the area. But, on 23 Sep there was an abrupt change with winds from the northwest and showers, which grounded many birds. During the period from 23 Sep to 13 Oct, there was a nicely spaced progression of cold fronts, and 68.2% of the fall total was captured during this period.

Eight species were banded in record numbers but with too few numbers for meaningful analysis. Nine species showed significant statistical increases. (Numbers are banded in 2000/14-year average): Brown Creeper (83/25), Winter Wren (155/29), Golden-crowned Kinglet (814/126), Nashville Warbler (64/7), Black-throated Green Warbler (28/4), American Redstart (81/18), Wilson's Warbler (65/10), White-throated Sparrow (1183/385), and Eastern White-crowned Sparrow (31/13). On the negative side, Fox Sparrow was missing this year after being banded in nine of the previous 13 years, and Baltimore Oriole was missing after being banded in six of the past 13 years.

Highlights of the season were the Sharp-shinned Hawk (banded in fall 1999 at Main Blind) caught in a net side-by-side with its freshly plucked, ready-to-eat Blackpoll Warbler; the Red Bat caught in the aerial net (Dominic Sherony's 100<sup>th</sup> life mammal!);

the endless bags of wood chips and sawdust brought by Pat Lovallo and Jeanne Skelly; home-baked treats from Myrt Harding, Monica Sherony and Mary Jane Weld; nets lovingly mended by Greta Stephany; Myrt Harding's extraordinary chauffeur service; Carol Southby's habitat-management advice and traditional lunch; the miracle Winter Wren that survived seven hours inside a jacket lining; the Northern Shrike that, after calmly posing for a dozen photographs, took its revenge on Betsy's hand! We held an open house for our Manitou Beach neighbors on 23 Sep, and gave an education program to students from the Quest School in Hilton. Many individuals visited the banding station on an informal basis.

Our fall interns were Suzanne Cardinal, Caleb Spiegel, and Andrew Vitz. Nazareth College student Katherine Clemens conducted research on census techniques. Thanks to census takers Don Cowley, Eldon Remy, Dominic Sherony, Dave Tetlow and Matt Victoria. Thanks to Tom Muller for mowing paths and to Jim Gillette for mowing the field. Appreciation to the following who helped scribe, tended net lanes, or assisted with our educational or banding operation: Don Cowley, Mark Deutschlander, Jack Duvall, John Lehr, Pat Lovallo, Katie Marino, Chita McKinney, Dan Niven, Dick O'Hara, Debbie Reed, Jeanne Skelly, Doug Smith, Lois Smith and Chris Villone. We are indebted to Debbie Reed for security, Bob and Charlene Reed for providing housing during the season, to Bill and June Kaiser for permission to use their land, and to Genesee Land Trust for their continuing interest and support.

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

**421-0774**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> year of fall banding at Alfred Station (1435 Waterwells Road in the Town of Alfred) began on 17 Jul and ended on 14 Nov. From one to seven nets were used in the same locations as previous years, on 63 days, for a total of 790 net hours. A total of 132 birds of 30 species were banded (17.7/100 net hours). The peak day occurred on 25 Aug when 12 birds were banded.

There were 80 repeats and 13 returns. The best return was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in its 6<sup>th</sup>

year. Four Black-capped Chickadees were three years of age and the remainders were two years old or less. Hypoboscids flies were found on four birds of three species.

The Alfred Station made it into the new millennium, but continued development and loss of habitat makes the future uncertain. Because essentially no banding was done between 11 Sep and 13 Oct, when I band at Braddock Bay, the passage of many species was missed. The totals were the lowest ever as were the number of species banded. There were 18 species missing this fall that had been banded in at least 11 of the past 22 years. Noteworthy among these were American Goldfinch (captured in 22 of the past 22 years), White-throated Sparrow (21 of the past 22 years), and Rose-breasted Grosbeak (20 of the past 22 years). For the third year, a pair of Sharp-shinned Hawks nested in the vicinity, which may have affected the number of birds in the area in late July and early August.

A banding demonstration was held at Foster Lake on 9 Sep, and a program on banding given to the Amandine Club on 2 Nov. Appreciation to Luke Donius for his banding assistance.

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

The year 2000 was the eighth year of operation of this AFR station with banding from 5 Aug through 1 Nov. The banding station is on a north-facing slope near the top of a hill at an elevation of about 2,000 feet in the Finger Lakes hill country of New York. It consists of open fields, overgrown hedgerows, brushy areas, and woodlots.

Through most of the summer, when we were also conducting MAPS banding sessions, there was rain most of the time, often with rain four days out of five or three days out of four which prevented doing as many banding sessions as we would have liked. Also, much of the time it was very hard rain, which was devastating to nesting birds. As a result, there were relatively few fledglings banded until late in the summer when the rains slackened and the birds apparently re-nested. We caught many birds late in the season with juvenile plumage and in full body molt.

Thanks to 584 American Goldfinch, we were able to salvage our 15<sup>th</sup> fall AFR season. A very large number of birds prevailed from late July through the end of September at which time we were on a record-breaking pace. Come October, the birds evaporated and the weather turned too windy to band safely on most days. November was equally dismal, resulting in the lowest totals ever for those two months. The station cumulative banded list stands at 123 species.

We banded 2323 individuals of 83 species during 84 days of operation. We also had 588 repeats, 88 returns, and 137 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds not banded, for a total of 3048 birds netted. Our measure of efficiency was 92.7 birds/100 net hours for birds newly banded, and 141.5/100 net hours overall.

Returns were marvelous. We captured an American Goldfinch (ASY-M) on 10 Sep that had been banded by R.C. Daniels in Mehoopany, Pennsylvania, on 27 Nov 1999—a distance of some 75 miles southeast. A Slate-colored Junco (HY) banded here on 27 Oct 1999 was captured and released by Audrey Heagy on 25 Apr 2000 some 295 miles northwest in Georgian Bay Islands National Park, Ontario, Canada. The slimy, unidentifiable remains of a bird with a badly chewed band was found in a net on 29 Sep (rabid raccoon suspected) and identified by the BBL as a Rose-breasted Grosbeak (SY-F) banded here on 23 Aug 1999.

Of the 86 local returns of 23 species, the eldest was an eight-year-old Gray Catbird followed by a seven-year-old of the same species. An American Goldfinch, two Red-winged Blackbirds and a Downy Woodpecker were at least 6+ years of age, while an American Goldfinch and a Common Yellowthroat were six years old. Two goldfinches and an Eastern Phoebe were 5+ years old. A Field Sparrow, a Northern Cardinal, a Red-winged Blackbird, a Yellow Warbler and a Song Sparrow were five years of age. The remainder were from two to 4+ years old with the greatest cluster at 3+ years. Interestingly, many of these birds had not been encountered in the past three years.

A Yellow-shafted Flicker presented with two red-shafted central primaries on each wing. We

originally banded this as a cross, but later investigation at the Cornell skin collection revealed a large number of flickers with similar appearance. These were collected in the central New York area over the last few years. Perhaps we are seeing a regional phenomenon where the shaft color is related to diet as a true hybrid appears unlikely.

We again banded several adult and juvenile Cedar Waxwings with orange tail bands. In one case, same-age rectrices were alternately banded in yellow and orange. Again this year we encountered a juvenile that presented with several waxy tips on each wing, which would tend to discount the ageing proposal presented in Pyle.

Parasites were light, with hypoboscids present on most species in the early season when dampness was still a factor. Conditions became very dry in July and continued that way through November. We encountered several abnormalities on twelve species, ranging from deformed intertarsal joints to missing toes. A Veery had a very pink belly, a junco had a speckled eye-ring, and a Yellow Warbler was extremely red-tinged. One American Goldfinch and two House Finches presented with probable *Mycoplasma conjunctivitis*.

We banded our fifth Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow and were pleased to see a resurgence of Chipping Sparrow numbers to levels not seen since the late 1980s. Two Pine Siskin juveniles were banded in July/August, pointing to an uncommon local nesting of that species. On 22, 26 and 27 Sep we banded over a hundred birds each day for a total of 571; the high winds on the 23<sup>rd</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup> were a harbinger of conditions to come in October. So many species were missed or banded in very low numbers that statistical presentation would be nauseating. It would appear that the migration route changed at the end of September and, as a result, we failed to capture many species usually banded in October. A strong frontal movement during the first half of October failed to bring birds to central New York. In fact, the majority either went east, west, or over us.

Perhaps the highlight of the season was the Scaled Quail that casually walked up our driveway on one particularly windy day. Although a most probable escapee, that would have been a fun bird to catch! We watched it waddle away to the southwest, never flying despite our efforts to get close.

We thank Dorothy Dorney, A.L. Donahue, Pat and Robin Fitzgerald, and Tom McGrath for their

generous support, as well as several others who contributed equipment, advice, and assistance. These include Stillman's Greenhouse, Ducks Unlimited, *Bird Watchers Digest*, K-feeders, Droll Yankee, Spidertech, Pine Tree Farms, *Natural New England*, and Bill Ostrander.

**Northview Sanctuary**  
Candor, Tioga County, NY  
**Robert J. Pantle**

**421-0762**

This being the first report for this station, a brief description of its location and habitat follows. Northview Sanctuary is at an elevation of 1350 feet and approximately 18 miles south of the southern tip of Cayuga Lake, in south-central New York. Banding is carried out on a three-acre plot consisting of overgrown meadows and small woodlots with multiflora rose and autumn olive being the dominant plants. Trees are white pine, maple, spruce and the remains of an old apple orchard.

Statistics for my efforts this fall are as follows: newly banded birds were 477 of 53 species over 62 days of operation comprising 1485 net hours, for a total of 32 birds/100 net hours for new bandings. Adding the 69 birds that were repeats and returns to my new bandings, my netting efficiency was 36 birds/100 net hours. Of the 69 recaptures, only 11 were classified as returns, the oldest being two years old. These 11 returns consisted of only four species: Gray Catbird, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, and Black-capped Chickadee.

On 24 Aug I captured and banded a HY Gray Catbird. Approximately one month later, while gardening, a neighbor, who lives one-half mile away, discovered a small pile of catbird feathers and a complete right tarsus with a band on it. My August 24 catbird! Among the catbird remains were two Sharp-shinned Hawk breast feathers. Living in the country with no close neighbors, this is a remarkable recovery.

Weatherwise, the temperatures through the time span when banding averaged cooler than normal: July 64.6° F; August, 65; September, 57.7; and October, 49.7. Precipitation total prior to July was record breaking, with a whopping total of 32.25 inches, when normally we get about 43 inches total for a whole year.

Overall, it was a rather unexciting fall migration with very few frontal systems from the northwest. Based on past autumnal migration banding, this

inland station experiences large numbers of migrants in the fall when a stationary front builds just to the south. This sets up a meteorological dam that tends to filter birds into this banding station.

During this first reporting year, I used rectrix shape in conjunction with skulling for ageing birds. Using only rectrix shape, when it is possible during busy periods, affords the bander quicker release time and causes less stress on the birds.

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

A forced absence of the principal bander closed the station from August through most of September. October banding was so poor—the worst in a decade—as to make a report meaningless. We will be back next year.

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

Fall 2000 was not among the best banding seasons at this station, but the results were above the 30-year average in each of the categories shown elsewhere in this report. None represented new highs.

The top five species banded made up 47% of the total, a typical proportion in recent years. Happily, catbird numbers came back to normal after a very poor 1999. Twenty-five Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were netted (but not banded) between 6 Aug and 12 Sep. Seventeen species of warblers (131 individuals) made up 23% of the total catch. The percentage of HY birds rebounded from the 30-year low of 50% in 1999 to a more normal 73% this year. Over 20 birds were banded on each of eight days, and over 40 birds were banded on two days. No new species were banded.

The weather during the banding period was cooler and wetter than normal, following a very wet spring. (The temperature reached 80° F on only a couple of days all summer.) The good numbers of birds netted may have been attracted to the many fruits on the net lane shrubs (arrow wood, multiflora rose and silky dogwood), or possibly to the unusual numbers of gnats annoying the banders as they tended the nets.