

2002

## Eastern Regional News

North American Bird Bander

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### Recommended Citation

North American Bird Bander (2002) "Eastern Regional News," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 27 : Iss. 2 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol27/iss2/7>

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# **ATLANTIC FLYWAY REVIEW:**

## **Northeast Coastal Region I – Fall 2001**

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Tracey Dean – **Regional Coordinator**  
Huntsman Marine Science Centre  
1 Lower Campus Road, St. Andrews,  
New Brunswick E5B 2L7

We would like to welcome two new stations to the report this year: the Wing Island Bird Banding Station at Brewster, MA, with Susan Finnegan on the banding pliers, and Connecticut Audubon Coastal Centre at Milford, CT, jointly operated by Charlotte Weston, Roland Asteling, and Anne Strandberg. We wish them full nets and happy banding for years to come.

It is always difficult to sum up the results from the Northeast Coastal Region and their differences from north to south. On the whole the northern stations reported good to above-average numbers of birds captured, while the more southern stations again lamented the lack of activity around their nets. We all seemed to agree that warbler numbers were down and that we caught more during the latter part of the migration. That is about all we agreed on. The major movement of Black-capped Chickadee that was seen at Bon Portage Island, NS, and St. Andrews, NB, was also as far south as Milford Point, CT. Block Island did not have the usual influx of Myrtle Warblers, but this species tops the list of Island Beach to the south. There was the usual spattering of southern strays, but some of the regular species were absent.

**SW - Laurentian Mountain**                      **455-0743**  
Quebec  
**Peter Homann (bander)**

Only slight adjustments were made to the regular net lanes for 2001. The nets were located between low shrubs and young cedars along a lakeshore, and in shrubbery at roadside edges of the adjacent mixed woods. Unusually warm weather prevailed most of the time, with daytime high temperatures in the mid-twenties (°C) or higher on 27 of the 50 banding days. Because of rain or windy conditions, banding activity had to be curtailed on eight days.

As Table 1 shows, 25% fewer birds were banded in 2001 than during the same period in 2000, and the number of species represented was lower by about the same percentage. Captures of warblers declined drastically after 25 Aug, contrary to what I had expected under the continuing favorable weather conditions. This year, almost 80% of the warblers were captured before that date, while in 2000 it was just a little over 50%. As a consequence, there were low numbers of late migrants like Black-throated Green Warblers, and Black-throated Blue Warblers ended up at the top of the most commonly banded species list. Another factor contributing to this feat was the approximately 50% drop in Red-eyed Vireo captures compared to 1999 and 2000, which I attribute to a remarkably poor berry crop. Noteworthy is the absence of Black-and-White Warbler from the top ten species list. Only five birds of this species were netted, contrasting with 12, 24 and 21 in 1998, 1999 and 2000, respectively. However, such a low count is not unprecedented because I also recorded it in the mid-nineties.

As is usually the case, Black-capped Chickadee was among the top five species banded. The majority of 14 captured AHY chickadees obviously belonged to the local population since half of them had been banded in previous years, and eight were captured at least twice. On the other hand, most of the netted HY birds appeared to have been dispersing individuals because only 20% repeated.



Magnolia Warbler by George West

Table 1. Fall 2001 Region I Summary.

	Laurentians PQ	St. Andrews NB	Bon Portage Is., NS	Seal Island NS	Appledore Is. ME	Wing Island MA	Audubon Coastal, CT	Block Island RI	Island Beach St. Park, NJ
First Day	29 Jul	3 Aug	17 Aug	22 Sep	15 Aug	1 Aug	28 Jul	6 Sep	25 Aug
Last Day	16 Sep	28 Oct	26 Oct	19 Oct	3 Oct	18 Nov	17 Nov	28 Oct	18 Nov
Days Operated	50	53	56	20	52	30	47	50	50
No. Nets Used	4 - 9	5 - 14	10 - 15	10 - 15	5 - 10	12 - 16	2 - 11	3 - 11	3 - 19
Total Net Hrs.	2566	2148	4141	1077	5178	1940	1618	2728	3463
Birds Banded 2000	348	648	1989	247	2310	967	459	2800	4286
<b>Birds Banded 2001</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>1214</b>	<b>2628</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>2565</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>1322</b>	<b>1413</b>	<b>3720</b>
Diff Species 2000	42	51	67	38	74	34	53	70	78
<b>Diff Species 2001</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>79</b>
Birds/100nh 2000	12	60	42	20	47	137	na	62	132
<b>Birds/100nh 2001</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>107</b>
Largest Daily Catch	23	97	180	37	141	94	125	158	532
Date of LDC	11 Aug	27 Sep	3 Sep	9 Oct	29 Sep	19 Oct	13 Oct	9 Oct	28 Oct
% Hatch Year (***)	71%	85%	93%	88%	93%	65%	89%	na	95%
% Hatch Year (**)									90%

(\*\*) - HY% calculated as number of HY/total number of known age birds.

(\*\*\*) - HY% calculated as number of HY/total number of captures.

Table 2. Top Ten Species from Each Station, Region I, Fall 2001

	Laurentians PQ	St. Andrews MB	Bon Portage Is. NS	Seal Island NS	Appledore Is. ME	Wing Is. MA	Audubon Coast, CT	Block Island RI	Island Beach SP NJ
1	27 BTBW (9)	270 MAWA (9)	378 YWAR (9)	38 MYWA (8)	277 NOWA (3)	292 MYWA (3)	204 MYWA	363 MYWA (10)	539 MYWA (10)
2	26 BCCH (5)	153 WTSP (1)	186 BCCH	19 SCJU (6)	237 GRCA (4)	183 MYWA	146 SOSP	213 MYWA (1)	443 WTSP (3)
3	25 BTNW (1)	66 COYE (3)	168 BAWW (7)	19 MYWA (4)	197 NOWA (2)	80 SOSP	143 BCCH	99 GCKI (3)	426 GCKI (1)
4	25 MAWA (3)	61 MYWA (7)	168 AMRE	17 SOSP (3)	135 MYWA	53 NOCA	97 SWSP	57 COYE (8)	341 BRGR (10)
5	25 MYWA (4)	57 MAWA (2)	142 COYE (2)	16 BLJA	134 WTSP	52 BCCH	87 COYE	57 WTSP (10)	335 GRCA (5)
6	15 HETH (8)	55 AMGO (8)	138 GCKI (3)	13 SSHA (7)	113 AMRE (3)	49 SWSP	86 GRCA	52 BTBW (52)	295 SCJU (7)
7	14 REVI (2)	48 GCKI (4)	126 BLPW	11 COYE (8)	111 CEDW	40 AMGO	43 AMGO	46 SWSP	183 SOSP (6)
8	13 NAWA	38 NAWA (5)	122 YWAR (9)	11 BLPW	105 BRGR	33 COYE	36 HOFI	38 SOSP (9)	162 COYE (8)
9	9 CAWA (9)	34 SOSP (9)	111 REVI (8)	8 WTSP (2)	96 COYE (5)	21 PAWA	24 SCJU	37 REVI (4)	149 SWSP (9)
10	9 VEER	34 REVI	104 SOSP (6)	8 GRCA	61 GCKI (6)	20 GCKI	24 EAPH	36 BRGR	118 RCKI (4)
				8 BRGR	61 YWAR		18 NOCA		
				8 BOCH					

**St. Andrews Banding Station**      **450-0670**  
New Brunswick  
**Tracey Dean, Santiago Guallar (banders)**

The St. Andrews Banding Station is located on the shores of the St. Croix River on land owned by the Huntsman Marine Science Centre. The nets are set in second growth vegetation, mainly along the edges of regenerating fields. During the fall season, 1214 birds of 58 species were banded. This huge increase in the number of birds banded is due to having a second qualified bander. Santiago Guallar joined the Banding Station in August and stayed throughout the fall season, supported by a grant from the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund and Bird Studies Canada.

Chickadees, chickadees, chickadees. That about sums up the fall season! We banded more Black-capped Chickadees in one day this year than we had in the previous eleven years combined. There was one extremely painful day (23 Sep) when 63 of the 76 birds banded were chickadees. One could literally watch the flocks moving through the netting area. Where were they going? I keep hoping for an exotic foreign recovery.

Otherwise the fall was rather dull. August was clear and dry, with calm winds, few bugs, and even fewer warblers. The most exciting catch was the station's first Northern Cardinal and it was a very young bird. While cardinals are becoming more abundant in St. Andrews, they are still unusual outside the town limits. A Philadelphia Vireo and an early Yellow Palm Warbler were the other highlights of the month.

The nets hung limply for most of September as the winds were quiet, and the clear skies did little to encourage migrants to pause in the St. Andrews area. This was rather disappointing considering we had the staff to open the nets every day. The capture of an adult White-eyed Vireo confirmed the presence of this species in New Brunswick. The station's second Field Sparrow and third American Tree Sparrow were also captured during this month.

Other notes: Flycatcher numbers were down, and even though the number of Alder (n=19) was the same as last year, the added net hours lowered the

catch to 0.9/100nh (birds per 100 net hours). Cedar Waxwing numbers (n=8, 0.4/100nh) were well below last year's record (n=22, 2.0/100nh). All species of warbler per 100nh were down from last year with some of the lowest numbers per unit effort recorded. Black-and-white Warblers (n=4, 0.2/100nh), Northern Parula (n=20, 0.9/100nh), Nashville (n=38, 1.8/100nh) and Black-throated Green (n=15, 0.7/100nh) were particularly scarce. One of the few species to show a dramatic increase in 2001 was Swainson's Thrush — the 33 banded were the highest in 10 years (1.5/100nh).

I hope the station will be able to maintain the level of coverage established this year, thus giving a better picture of the fall migration through St. Andrews.

**Bon Portage Island**      **432-0654**  
**Seal Island**      **432-0660**

Atlantic Bird Observatory (ABO)  
Nova Scotia

**Trina Fitzgerald and Mike Peckford (banders)**  
Assistants: (Volunteers) **Over 1 month:** Lisa Fitzgerald, Pete Goulet, Andreas Wedman. **Three-four weeks:** Kip Campbell, Wanda Fitzgerald, Robert Haup. **Two weeks:** Angela Bond, Joan Czapalay, Jenny Berlow, Anne Pannekoek, Madelon Vanderlann, Vicky Violette. **One week or less:** Brenda Blinn, Dennis Brennan, Ken Burton, Heidi deHaan, Victoria Bailey, Paula Dodaro, Joe Nocera, Emily Turner.

Fall migration monitoring took place on Bon Portage from 17 Aug until 26 Oct. A total of 2628 birds, comprising 76 species, were banded. Migration monitoring on Seal Island started 22 Sep and continued until 19 Oct. During this period, 239 birds, comprising 44 species, were banded.

The Atlantic Bird Observatory broke its "highest number of birds banded in a single-day" record on 3 Sep when 180 individuals (25 species) were banded. Of these, 52 were Black-and-white Warblers.

The Atlantic Bird Observatory experienced several unexpected movements this fall. A large movement of Black-and-white Warblers occurred in early September, resulting in a final seasonal banding total of 168 individuals. There was also a

unique irruption of Black-capped Chickadees (186 banded) on Bon Portage Island in mid/late October. This is a species that is seen rarely on the island. Two large movements of Blue Jays occurred in October on Seal Island, but not on Bon Portage Island.

The regular banding peak that occurs in early October did not occur this season due to poor weather conditions; but the movement of Myrtle Warblers, which usually contribute to these high banding totals, was noted through casual observations and the census.

#### **Shoals Marine Lab Banding Station 425-0703**

Appledore Island, ME

***Sara Morris (in absentia), Anthony Hill, David Holmes, John Munier, Becky Suomala and Mary Wright (banders)***

Band-aides: Alex Chang, Carol Cushing, Dan Hayward, Clif Horrigan, Sharon Jezard, Susan Lee, Garth and Megan McElroy, Fay Melendy, Ginny Mullane, Kathie Palfy, Stephanie Parkinson, Martha Stauffer and Lynn Zeltman

This fall on Appledore provided the bird banders with a truly worthwhile season. Overall numbers were very good (third highest for total banded), weather was appropriate, help was generally adequate, and there were enough oddities in the results that we have quite a bit to think about. We banded two days later than last year for a total of 50 days. No full days were lost to weather, but we did have three days with only 15 to 50 % operating time and five days with lesser showers. Our species count was above average, but we had no new species for the station. The closest to rarities were a White-eyed Vireo, only the second in the fall, and a Belted Kingfisher and Pine Warbler which were the sixth individuals for each since 1981.

The most interesting phenomenon was the number of late-season birds that came through early. We set new high counts for Brown Creeper and White-throated Sparrow and second highs for Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Myrtle Warbler, and Slate-colored Junco. Red-breasted Nuthatch staged a moderate flight (55 banded) in only the second year after their last big flight – often they wait for three years before moving again. Purple Finch also made a moderately good showing with 35 banded.

Numbers of Blue-winged Warbler (2), Tennessee (1), and Cape May Warbler (1) were simply dismal. A new high (55) was set for Wilson's Warbler and the seven Connecticut Warblers represent the second highest total recorded. No Great crested Flycatchers or Wood Thrushes were even seen this season, let alone caught.

Our 11 returns were scant, but our same season retrap rate of 17.9% is on the high side. We caught no foreign birds and I am unaware of any recoveries since the last report.

As always, demonstrations for classes, visiting groups, and assorted walk-bys were a frequent part of life on the Island. For beginner banders, we offered two one-week classes under the name "Dangle, Tangle, and Drudge."

We remain totally grateful to the staff of Shoals Marine Lab for providing us with a quality workspace and helpful support in many ways (including some help with costs of staying at the Lab) and to our amazingly faithful banders and band-aides.

#### **Wing Island Bird Banding Station 414-0700**

Brewster, MA

***Susan Finnegan (bander)***

Volunteers: Bill Finnegan, Diane Silverstein, Beth Bierbower, Liz Bradfield, Tom Higgins, Anthony Hill, Jean Schwartz, Lisa Sette, Lynn Stanley

This was the first full year of banding for the Wing Island Bird Banding Station, which first opened on 30 Sep 2000. Nets were open on 30 days between 1 Aug and 18 Nov for a total of 1940 hours; 982 birds of 55 species being caught, resulting in 55 birds/100 nh. Highlights included two Bay-breasted Warblers, three Winter Wrens, three Yellow-breasted Chats, one Tennessee and one Orange-crowned warbler. Eluding us were a number of species that we had captured last year including Philadelphia Vireo, Eastern Phoebe; Lincoln's, American Tree and Fox sparrows.

Winds were mainly from the southwest this year, which is not the best for Wing Island's location. Our largest daily catch was 94 birds on 19 Oct, well down from 2000's big day of 443 birds on 15 Oct. Myrtle Warbler numbers dropped from 606 last year to only 190 this year. Our most commonly banded bird this year was Gray Catbird with 292.

A number of banding demonstrations were held for the public, and we also enlisted the help of some of the museum's camp kids. The young children, especially, were thrilled with the whole experience; and it is always exciting to watch their faces light up when they see the birds close up.

Thank-you to all the volunteers who put in so much time to help me this year. Your enthusiasm, energy, and quest for learning make the whole process much more enjoyable.

**Connecticut Audubon 411-0730**  
**Coastal Centre**  
Milford Point, CT  
**Charlotte Weston, Roland Asteling, Anne Strandberg (banders)**

The Connecticut Audubon Coastal Center (CACC) is an educational and research facility located at Milford Point, CT. Our banding site is located on eight acres between a barrier beach and the 880-acre Charles Wheeler Salt Marsh. The Housatonic River forms the western border of our site and a small beach community is on our eastern edge. The Connecticut Audubon Society maintains the site that is owned by the state of Connecticut and the Department of the Interior (as part of the Stewart McKinney NWR).

The variety of habitats at the facility range from salt marsh to dune to grassy field to deciduous grove and cedar grove. Our banding station has been in operation for five years; we started with two nets and have expanded to our present permanent set-up of ten nets. We occasionally run one more net if the tide is right. We have also started a separate shorebird banding program this fall in which we run six nets on the sandbars off our beach and will start a color banding program in the spring of 2002.

Our station regularly operates two days per week; though during September we were able to open six days per week, then in October it was back to our regular two-day schedule.

Highlights included eight Yellow-breasted Chats, we had previously banded only two (1998 and 1999); an invasion of Black-capped Chickadees with 143 banded vs. a total of 41 in the previous

four years. We also added 23 new species to our banding totals which, I believe, may be a result of our additional nets in different habitats.

We have also included in our totals birds banded during a demonstration at Killingworth, CT (412-0723) and those captured at the Bayer corporate headquarters in West Haven, CT (411-0725), as part of an on-going census of riparian habitat.

**Block Island Banding Station 411-0713**  
Block Island, RI  
**Scott Comings, Kim Gaffett, Elise Lapham (banders)**  
Assistants: Penny Anderson, Charlie Schnel

What a difference a year makes! Before getting too concerned about the totals being low, it is important to note that our net hours for 2001 were the lowest in the past ten years. Generally, the fall banding schedule had the nets open most mornings, closed mid-day, and reopened in the late afternoon. We had only three 100+ bird days, in contrast to nine in 2000. The peak of migration spanned the four-day period between 7 and 10 Oct, with 135, 134, 153 and 98 birds banded, respectively.

Weather, as always, plays a crucial role in migrations and the northwest cold fronts we did have were not strong and simply did not coincide well with expected migration times. While Gray Catbirds had a very strong showing, the overall numbers of warblers, both individuals and species, were off, especially Myrtle Warbler. The exception to this trend is the 52 Black-throated Blue Warblers, which is the second highest fall total for the station – the highest being 62 banded in the fall of 1981.

Other high numbers include: 46 Swamp Sparrows, which were well above the ten-year average of 38; 14 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, the most since 1981; and four Brown Thrashers, the highest number in ten years. While the lone Lincoln's Sparrow ties the low total of 1982.

We were thrilled to net three Sharp-shinned Hawks and three Northern Saw-whet Owls.

As always, a gigantic thanks goes to Scott Comings for his enthusiastic willingness to help keep the Station going. We simply could not

maintain the net hours, band all the birds that come our way, or have as much fun without him. In addition, Penny Anderson and Charlie Schnell continue to be great sources of help during the peak migration periods.

All in all it was another wonderful fall of bird banding, with each day bringing the potential of a surprise. We wish you good health and spectacular birding in 2002.

# **Island Beach State Park 395-0740**

Island Beach, NJ

**Mary Doscher, Doris McGovern, Robert McKinney, John Miller, Robert Pantle, Nick Pulcinella, Robert Yunist (banders)**

Assistants: Sharon Gardo, Chita McKinney

During the fall 2001 banding season, seven banders operated six banding stations at Island Beach State Park, between 25 Aug and 18 Nov. One or more of these stations were in operation on 50 days during the 86-day season. There were two banding days in Aug, 17 in Sep, 23 in Oct, and eight in Nov. Three stations were open simultaneously on three days, two stations were active on 22 days, and the remaining 25 days saw only a single station active.

In the discussion that follows, "prior years data" refers to the 14-year time period between 1987 and 2000.

Once again our recent history of below-average numbers of birds banded continues. Our total of 3720 birds banded is the lowest since 1997. This year's 1.07 birds/nh was the lowest since 1996 and the second lowest in the comparison period. Both figures represent results at only 65.5% of the long-term average. The following table summarizes the best days of the season:

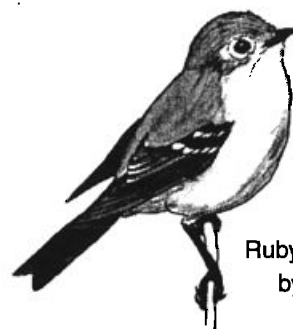
Date (# stations operating)	# Species	# Birds	#Birds/ net-hour
2 Oct (3)	30	218	1.3
9 Oct (1)	22	295	2.2
16 Oct (2)	19	241	7.3
21 Oct (2)	17	202	2.6
23 Oct (2)	20	216	1.8
28 Oct (3)	24	532	8.7
29 Oct (1)	18	152	6.1

All of the major flight days this year occurred in October. The September results were extremely "flat" with only four of 17 days at or above 1.0 birds/nh. The results for the entire month of September reflected a monthly birds/nh of just 0.56. There was a rather poor movement of warblers through September with a daily maximum of eight species (on three different days) and a monthly average of 5.8 warbler species per day. The three days of highest warbler diversity were all in October with 11 species on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10 species on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 13 species on the 7<sup>th</sup>, suggesting a rather late movement this year.

Highlights this season were two separate Whip-poor-wills – one on 23 Sep and one on 3 Oct.

Only three of the 33 species that we catch regularly enough to make comparisons had above-average capture rates this year – Swamp Sparrow (128% of average), Brown Creeper (124%), and Hermit Thrush (132%). Thirteen of the same 33 species had capture rates less than half of average – Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker (45%), Eastern Phoebe (42%), Blue-headed Vireo (44%), Ruby- and Golden-crowned kinglets (43% and 35%), Veery (10%), Swainson's Thrush (34%), Black-and-white Warbler (24%), Magnolia Warbler (40%), Black-throated Green Warbler (33%), Palm Warbler (36%), Ovenbird (27%) and American Redstart (36%).

Several banders reported interesting recoveries of Island Beach birds. A Gray Catbird banded on 3 Oct this fall by Bob McKinney was found dead one month later in Hobe Sound, Florida. Another Gray Catbird banded 6 Oct last year (2000) by John Miller was recaptured two weeks later on 20 Oct at Bon Secur NWR, Alabama. Finally, a Gray Catbird captured by Nick Pulcinella on 5 May turned out to have been banded on 13 May 1984 (!) in Towson, MD, as a HY —a new age record of 17 years 11 months for this species.



Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
by George West