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# Atlantic Flyway Review: Region 1 (Northeast) - Fall 2003 Report

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**Tracey Dean, Coordinator**  
**Huntsman Marine Science Centre**  
**1 Lower Campus Road**  
**St. Andrews, NB, E5B 2L7**

All the regular Northeast Station reports are included here, plus one. I would like to welcome Wing Island back. (Somehow I lost them in 2002. My mistake!). Most stations were able to operate as usual in 2003, though one had to cut the season short due to lack of help, while another was able to extend the netting hours.

The stations are split evenly, with four showing an increase in birds from 2002 to 2003 and four showing a decrease. This trend is reflected, maybe more accurately, in the number of birds/100 net hours (b/100nh), though two stations changed sides. Wing Island banded more birds in 2003 but had fewer b/100nh than in 2002, while Island Beach banded fewer birds in 2003 and had just slightly more b/100nh than in 2002 (see Table 1).

There were some interesting catches—from Blue-winged and Worm-eating warblers in the north, to unexpected long-legged visitors at the middle stations, to an unusual variety of sparrows in the south. Overall, the October flights of migrants failed to materialize, which is reflected in the turnover of most commonly banded species (see Table 2). Some stations did not even catch all of the species they consider as regulars!

Thank you to all the stations for the effort they put into their reports for this article. If somebody else would like to take over compiling the article, I would be happy to turn over the reins!!!!

**SW-Laurentians Mountains**                      **455-0743**  
Wentworth-Nord, Quebec  
**Peter H. Homann, bander**

As in previous years, my netting lanes were located between shrubs and young trees at the shore of a lake and next to an unpaved road in the understory of mixed woods. In contrast to last

year, the weather brought quite a few cloudy days and rain, and it was not as warm. Even so, daytime temperatures rose above 20°C on 42 days of the period covered by this report, but they never reached 30°C.

The disappointingly poor netting success this year was a reflection of a generally low abundance of passerine birds. Multi-species flocks rarely visited the trees and shrubbery near our cottage, and those that did were rather small. Indeed, flocks of roaming chickadees, warblers, nuthatches and vireos appeared to be a rarity this year. This was also noted elsewhere in the region.

For me, this year's rather unusual scenario was exemplified best by my records regarding the Red-eyed Vireo, a species that typically makes the list of my ten most commonly banded species. I captured only three individuals, all of them adults. Of these three, two probably were a resident breeding pair, namely a male banded by me in 2000 and a female banded in 2002, both having been after-hatching-year birds then. The sex of the third bird could not be determined with certainty. My failure to capture any hatching-year individuals possibly can be explained by an early departure of the young birds because of an essentially complete failure of the berry crop in the area. This may also have been the reason for an unusual scarcity of thrushes. On the other hand, a similarly dismal berry supply in 2001 had a much smaller effect on the number of vireos and thrushes captured. One could also invoke a poor breeding season as a reason for the lack of birds were it not for the fact that the overall percentage of captured hatching-year birds was not very different from last year. Hence, other possibilities must be explored to come up with a satisfactory explanation for this year's paucity of birds.

Aside from the at least four-year-old Red-eyed Vireo mentioned above, another noteworthy repeat was a Black-capped Chickadee that I had banded as an after-hatching-year individual in Aug 1999 and captured at least once every year since then.

**Table 1. AFR Region I - Northeast Fall 2003 Summary**

	Laurentians PQ	St. Andrews NB	Bon Portage Is. NS	Seal Island NS	Appledore Is. ME	Wing Island MA	Block Island RI	Island Beach SP NJ
First Day	27 Jul	2 Aug	15 Aug	10 Sep	15 Aug	3 Aug	6 Sep	19 Aug
Last Day	20 Sep	1 Nov	31 Oct	17 Oct	1 Oct	30 Nov	9 Nov	15 Nov
Days Operated	61	62	66	31	40	25	51	46
No. Nets Used	4 - 9	5 - 14	10 - 15	10 - 25	9	13 - 23	3 - 12	2 - 19.5
Total Net Hours	2469	3698	4820	2450	4210	2242	4545	2388
Bands Banded 2002	359	1177	1597	97	1892	937	1104	2875
<b>Birds Banded 2003</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>1409</b>	<b>1452</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>1374</b>	<b>1081</b>	<b>1427</b>	<b>2200</b>
Diff Species 2002	40	60	68	26	79	58	70	79
<b>Diff Species 2003</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>77</b>
Birds/100nh 2002	14	31	37	8	40	68	29	91
<b>Birds/100nh 2003</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>92</b>
Largest Daily Catch	16	77	86	27	na	142	91	188
Date of LDC	29 Jul	10 Oct	8 Sep	2 & 14 Oct	na	14 Oct	1 Oct	6 Oct
% Hatch Year (***)	77%	85%	97%	92%	na	88%	na	93%
% Hatch Year (**)								87%

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

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

**Table 2. Most Commonly Banded Species, AFR Region I - Northeast, Fall 2003**

	Laurentians PQ	St. Andrews NB	Bon Portage Is NS	Seal Island NS	Appledore Is ME	Wing Island MA	Block Island RI	Island Beach SP NJ
1	25 BCCH(4)	209 AMGO(3)	129 MYWA(1)	95 BLPW(2)	185 NOWA(2)	404 MYWA	288 GRCA(1)	334 WTSP(7)
2	23 MYWA(1)	132 WTSP(2)	124 BLPW(8)	29 SOSP(4)	166 YWAR(7)	223 GRCA	149 REVI(4)	290 GCKI(6)
3	20 BTBW(8)	94 SOSP(4)	115 TRFL	26 SSHA(3)	134 COYE(5)	90 SOSP	136 GCKI(3)	181 SCJU(9)
4	15 MAWA(2)	72 BCCH	98 NOWA(10)	18 WTSP	123 GRCA(4)	70 SWSP	66 MYWA(2)	172 GRCA(3)
5	14 BLJA	65 COYE(5)	97 REVI(4)	15 NOWA	84 SOSP(6)	30 AMGO	61 SCJU	166 COYE(5)
6	11 BTNW(5)	64 BLPW	77 BAWW(7)	15 COYE(8)	74 AMRE(3)	25 BCCH	55 SWTH	138 RCKI(1)
7	11 BAWW	59 MYWA(9)	73 AMRE(6)	15 BRRCR(5)	59 CEDW(8)	25 COYE	54 WTSP(6)	115 SOSP
8	10 NAWA(9)	50 MAWA(8)	63 COYE(9)	14 SCJU	58 REVI(1)	23 HOFI	51 HETH(7)	110 MYWA(2)
9	10 WTSP	50 REVI(7)	59 SOSP(5)	13 MYWA(7)	41 RBNU	21 NOCA	49 BRRCR(5)	87 SWSP
10	9 AMRO	47 SCJU	57 YWAR	12 REVI	39 BAWW(10)	19 REVI	45 AMRO	65 BRRCR(4)

**St. Andrews Banding Station**      **450-0670**  
New Brunswick

**Tracey Dean, Lee Jacobs, Madeline Schickel,**  
**banders**

A total of 1409 birds, representing 58 species, were banded during the 2003 fall banding season (Table 1). Fourteen individuals banded in previous years were recaptured, and 19 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were released unbanded.

The largest catch was recorded on 10 Oct when 77 birds representing 19 species were banded. Other days with high diversity included 18 Sep - 35 birds of 19 species and 2 Sep - 31 birds of 19 species. Low diversity was seen on 23 Sep when 39 of the 57 birds captured were American Goldfinch.

Goldfinches were the most commonly banded species in 2003, as flocks of mainly young birds came to feed on the knapweed seeds close to the

net lanes. This is the first time this species has ranked so high, but their numbers have been increasing over the years. White-throated Sparrows ranked second, the same position they held in 2002. Golden-crowned Kinglets, which were the most commonly banded bird in 2002, fell out of the top ten.

A Blue-winged Warbler captured on 10 Oct was a new species for the station. This is a very rare bird in New Brunswick, and mid-Oct, when most of the warblers have gone south, is an odd time of year to capture one. Other highlights included the station's second Fox Sparrow, two Northern Cardinals, an Orange-crowned Warbler, and a Western Palm Warbler.

This year we had two interesting returns. A Gray Catbird, which was banded as an adult in 1993, was recaptured on 3 Sep making it at least 11 years old. A Brown Creeper, one of only four banded in 1998, was recaptured 26 Oct.

The St. Andrews Banding Station has been able to cover the full fall migration for two seasons and contribute data to Bird Studies Canada – Canadian Migration Monitoring Network. While banding has taken place in previous years, coverage was sporadic. The following is a very preliminary comparison showing which species have increased and which decreased between 2002 and 2003 in comparison to the six-year average. Only species with sample sizes over five are included.

**Group 1** - Species showing an increase in b/100nh from 2002 to 2003 and above the six-year average in 2003 include Least Flycatcher; American Goldfinch; Slate-colored Junco; Lincoln's and Swamp sparrows; Red-eyed Vireo; Black-throated Blue, Blackpoll and Black-throated Green warblers; Northern Waterthrush.

**Group 2** - Species showing an increase in b/100nh from 2002 to 2003 and below the six-year average in 2003 include Alder Flycatcher; Purple Finch; White-throated Sparrow; Cedar Waxwing; Blue-headed Vireo; Northern Parula; Myrtle, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided and Canada warblers; Ovenbird; American Redstart; Gray Catbird; Black-capped Chickadee; Swainson's Thrush; American Robin.

**Group 3** - Species showing a decrease in b/100nh from 2002 to 2003 and above the six-year average in 2003 include Song Sparrow and Brown Creeper.

**Group 4** - Species showing a decrease in b/100nh from 2002 to 2003 and below the six-year average in 2003 include Black-&-White, Nashville and Yellow warblers; Common Yellowthroat; Golden and Ruby-crowned kinglets; Hermit Thrush.

While it appears that there are more ups than downs, in this preliminary comparison, a disturbing downward trend is seen for the seven species in Group 4. Are other stations noting the same declines or is this a more localized occurrence?

Finally, I would like to thank The New Brunswick Wildlife Council for providing major financial support for the volunteers, their training and supervision of the whole project; and The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund for providing funds for data entry.

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

Atlantic Bird Observatory (ABO)  
Nova Scotia

**Trina Fitzgerald, and Mike Peckford, banders**  
(Volunteers) **Over 1 month:** Adrian George, Andrea Flowers, Jason Wade, Peter Phillips, Sarah Wells, Stella Walsh Tina Leonard **Three to four weeks:** Brie Drummonds, Diane Clapp, James Siddle, Katie Dalley. **Two weeks:** Joseph Krawczyk, Joe Nocera, Wanda Fitzgerald. **One week or less:** Emily Turner-Brannen, Dave Shutler, Paula Dodaro, Pete Goulet

Fall migration monitoring began on Bon Portage Island 15 Aug. A total of 1,452 birds were banded on Bon Portage, comprising 69 species, and 332 birds on Seal Island, comprising 42 species. The large movement of Yellow-rumped Warblers commonly observed in October did not occur. The low numbers were likely due to fine weather coinciding with their peak migratory period. Blackpoll Warbler bandings on Seal Island were higher than previous years due to deployment of additional nets in dense coniferous habitat.

**Shoals Lab Banding Station**      **425-0703**  
**Appledore Island, ME**  
**Anthony Hill, David W. Holmes, Sara R.**  
**Morris, Rebecca Suomala, and Mary Wright,**  
**banders**

Band-aides: Liz Burton, Miranda Ertel. Maren Gimpel, Carol Hartel, Lindsay Herlihy, Marin Junco, Kaite Mattern, Martha Stauffer, Cricket and Emily Tupper, and Lynn Zeltman.

Fall on Appledore Island was remarkable in several ways. We had a fantastic number of Yellow Warblers. We had two "first bandings" for the station. We had the lowest individual "high count day" for any season ever. We had the fewest banding days since 1993, and we had our first memorial service for one of our own.

First, the good stuff: This season's total of 166 Yellow Warblers topped the previous high of 115 recorded in 1989 and again in 1996. A Solitary Sandpiper flew over our heads in the net lanes and dropped down into the end of net 4. The neatest part was watching the bird walk around inside our flat-bottomed, mesh-sided holding bag. We banded a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. This happened because Sara Morris had attended one of Bob Sargent's hummingbird banding workshops in West Virginia last summer and came back with all sorts of knowledge, equipment, and enthusiasm.

The less-than-good stuff starts with the lack of paying Shoals Lab participants. The Lab had to shut down early and we lost about 10 days off our regular season. This had serious consequences for both species count and numbers. This is the first year since 1993 that we have caught fewer than 1600 birds. In spite of adequate (or better) rainfall during the summer for the first time since 1999, there were few fronts and they were timed poorly. Our best day was 16 Aug with only 68 birds. This is the first year ever that we have not had at least one day with over 100. And then there were the wiggles. The fall webworms returned with a vengeance. By the time I left Appledore on 8 Sep, the whole island was brown. The lack of food surely did not help our September totals. The last negative was help. I do not think we missed any

birds from this, but David was on the Island solo for eight days this season. This is worrisome for the continued health of the station.

More fun stuff: We set new highs with five American Robins and 13 American Goldfinches. A Yellow-throated Vireo was only the third for the station (previous bandings were 1988 and 1997). A Worm-eating Warbler was the first fall bird since 1990. Red-breasted Nuthatches staged a modest flight and a few Purple Finches came through. Most other species appeared in lowish to low-average numbers, which is not surprising given our closing date and weather patterns.

A Common Yellowthroat provided a stunning return. The bird was first banded as a Second Year on 31 May 1996, then recaptured and color banded on 3 Sep 1997. A Song Sparrow that was banded on 9 Jun 1999 returning on the first of Aug 2002 was certainly welcomed, but the Eastern Kingbird banded in fall 2001 that came back twice was truly unexpected. We think she was in the net with offspring on at least one occasion. I have received no word of recoveries from other places and we did not capture any foreign birds this season.

**Wing Island Banding Station**      **414-0700**  
**Cape Cod Museum of Natural History**  
**MA**

**Susan Finnegan and Gretchen Putone, banders**  
Assistants: Carolyn Kennedy, Judith Bruce, Bill Finnegan, Judy Keller, Anthony Hill, Judy Olsen, Diane Silverstein, Tom Higgins, Eileen and Christian Ricardi.

The Wing Island Banding Station is located on the grounds of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History. Nets are placed in shrubby thickets and in the salt marsh on a 50-ac parcel of salt marsh and upland habitat. The island abuts Cape Cod Bay to the north with Paines Creek and Stony Brook running by the eastern side and Quivett Creek running to the west.

Our fourth fall season began 3 Aug and continued through to 30 Nov. We banded a total of 1081 birds of 58 species; 88 % of those being HY birds. Our top species was Myrtle Warbler – 404 in all for the fall.

Nets were open for a total of 2242 hours for a capture rate of 48 new b/100nh; 13 - 23 nets were used. Our largest daily catch was on 14 Oct with a total of 142 birds of 23 species. New species for the station this fall included Swainson's Thrush, Veery, Yellow-throated Vireo, Purple Finch; Clay-colored and Chipping sparrow. Two other exciting new species we found in our nets were a Virginia Rail and Sora. We banded only 18 species of warbler this fall but many regular species were missing including Northern Waterthrush, Ovenbird; Bay-breasted, Tennessee, Cerulean, Mourning or Connecticut warbler. Also absent this fall were Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Philadelphia Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Winter Wren and four species of sparrow – Field, Fox, White-crowned and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed.

We held a number of banding programs for the museum, including two for the Brookline Bird Club. Joining us was Pete Thayer of Thayer Birding Software, who enjoyed releasing a few birds.

Many thanks to Chief Banding Assistant, bander Gretchen Putonen for all her time and effort this fall. Many thanks also to those assistants mentioned above for all their help. This station could not be run without the financial support of the French Foundation, Eastern Mountain Sports, and the helpful support of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History.

**Block Island Banding Station 411-0740 RI**

**Scott Comings, Kim Gaffett, Elise Lapham, banders**

Assistants – Erica Anderson, Penny Anderson, Charlie Schnell, Rick Wetzel

There is only one sure thing about the fall banding season, and that is: the thrill and curiosity of the season it produced by both expected and unexpected events. We normally expect lots of Myrtle Warblers on Block Island, and if we are lucky, one or two unexpected species. This fall unexpected observations mostly came in the form of unusual numbers.

As you can see from Table 2, the number of Myrtle Warblers has been very low the past few years. In

fact this year's total of only 66 is the second lowest ever at the station. Usually the numbers are in the hundreds and often many are released unbanded

Gray-cheeked Thrushes, on the other hand, showed a big increase over recent years, with 33 banded. This is the highest number since 1983 and the fifth highest ever (see table below)

No. of Gray-cheeked Thrushes Banded Since 1967				
Years	Range of Birds Banded Annually	Avg. No. of Birds Banded	Year	Total No. of GCTH Banded
1967-1977	8 - 71	48	1968	171
			1970	160
			1976	62
1978-1989	5 - 71	13	1983	71
1990-2002	1 - 10	4	1991	10
			2003	33

Overall, there were few warblers and no *Empidonax* flycatchers to challenge our identification skills. Generally, it was a lacklustre year. However, there were a couple of noteworthy observations: First, we were delighted with a Whip-poor-will on 1 Oct, only the fifth for the station and the first since 1990. Second, we captured a non-Block Island Saw-whet Owl on 26 Oct.

After more than eight years of work by a legion of volunteers, with the expert help of Megan Whitman and coordinated by Steve Rinert, the 37 years of banding records have been computerized and are available to anyone who would like to use the data for research. Likewise, we are delighted and dependent on the extra hands at peak banding times provide by Penny Lapham, Charlie Schnell, Erica Anderson, and Rick Wetzel.

We look forward to seeing you on Block Island and in the meantime we wish you all a healthy 2005 and happy birding

**Island Beach State Park 305-0740 NJ**

**Mary Doscher, Robert McKinney, Robert Pantle, Nick Pulcinella and Robert Yunick, banders**

Assistants - Chita McKinney and Jennifer Hanley

During the fall 2003 banding season, five banders operated banding stations at four locations at

Island Beach State Park, between 19 Aug and 16 Nov. One or more of those stations was in operation on 46 days during that 90-day period; there were three banding days in Aug, ten in Sep, 24 in Oct, and nine in Nov. There were two days with three of the stations in operation simultaneously, five days with two stations active and the remaining 39 days with only a single station active.

In the discussion that follows, when referring to "prior-years data," prior-year averages are based on the 16-year period 1987-2002.

Once again our recent history of below-average numbers of birds banded continues. Our 2200 total birds banded was only 37.5% of the long-term average and was the lowest total in the comparison period. Our 0.92 b/nh was 57.9% of average and barely exceeded last years 0.91 b/nh making these the only two years we recorded less than 1 b/nh.

Especially conspicuous was that the big October flights, for which Island Beach is famous, never materialized for the second consecutive year. The two species banded in the greatest number over the years were Golden-crowned Kinglet and Myrtle Warbler, with long-term averages of 1191 and 627 individuals banded per season. This year they came in with totals of 290 and 110—38% and 27% of average! Sparrows fared better this year with the "big 4" – Song, Swamp, White-throated, and Junco – each coming in at between 75% and 100% of long-term average. In raw numbers, warblers were low this season, but that may well be merely a result of poor coverage in September (only 10 days compared to an average of 18.5 days).

Species of note this year included single individuals of Louisiana Waterthrush and Grasshopper, Saltmarsh and Nelson's Sharp-tailed sparrow.

Summary of the Best Days of the Season				
Date (# Stations Operating)	# Species	# Birds	# Birds/NH	Comments
6 Oct ( 1)	33	188	1.44	highest species total and # banded
16 Oct ( 1)	11	125	8.93	highest capture rate ( tie)
19 Oct ( 1)	17	125	8.93	highest capture rate ( tie)
2 Nov ( 1)	10	129	3.91	unusually high flight for November!

## ATLANTIC FLYWAY REVIEW: SPRING 2004

**Elizabeth W. Brooks, Coordinator**  
**1435 Waterwells Road**  
**Alfred Station, NY 14803**  
**ebrooks@bbbo.org**

We welcome a new station to this, the seventh AFR Spring report - West Hill Banding Station, located along the Blackstone River corridor near Northbridge, MA. Greenwell, Northview, and Bedford Valley Stations did not operate during spring 2004. John Miles earns the award for the longest season, opening nets on 29 Feb and closing on 14 Jun, despite a broken foot.

Overall, 28,340 birds were banded, up 3124 birds from spring 2003. The "best day" ranged from as early as 28 Apr at Occoquan Bay, VA., to as late as 23 May at Appledore, ME, but it fell between 9-12

May at eight stations, with five stations reporting their best day on 10 May.

Results were mixed at the 15 reporting stations: eight stations' totals were up from the previous spring, while seven stations reported totals down. Birds /100 nhs were also just about evenly split.

As usual, the station narratives make interesting reading, from Crown Point's educational video "Journey North," to dragonfly studies at Kestrel Haven, to the ongoing research at Braddock Bay and Appledore, to the King Rail at Rock Point and much more!

We continue to solicit reports for the spring report from new reporting stations, and thank all of the current participants—from banders-in-charge to volunteers and assistants at all the stations—for their effort.