

2016

Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I (Northeast)- Fall 2015-Appledore Island Migration Station

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Recommended Citation

Morris, Sara (2016) "Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I (Northeast)- Fall 2015-Appledore Island Migration Station," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 41 : Iss. 2 , Article 11.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol41/iss2/11>

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St. Andrews Bird Banding Station 450-0670

New Brunswick, Canada

Bander: **Tracey Dean** (complier)

Assistants: Willow English, Sebastian Orue Herrera

The St. Andrews Bird Banding Station continues to follow the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) protocol and open the mist nets daily during the fall migration. The 2015 fall banding season started on 27 Aug and ended 17 Oct. Few full days were lost to rain or wind.

The vegetation in both banding areas continues to fill in and create a thick understory. The grassy open areas in HMa are almost gone, shaded out by mature spruce trees. The willow, alder, buckthorn and aspen around the HMb area are now taller than the nets. There have also been major human-made changes that have fragmented and isolated the banding areas. A road now cuts right through the old hedgerow that funneled the birds into the HMa and the forest behind HMb has been cleared. Deer are a huge and expensive problem! Most of the nets have holes in the bottom shelf due to a deer passing through.

Warbler numbers were well down from 2014 and few made the top ten. Only 9 Black and white, 9 Magnolia, and 10 Black-throated Green Warblers, 3 Ovenbird and 7 Northern Waterthrushes were banded. Large active flocks of goldfinch took advantage of the good knapweed seed crop and 99 were captured. Extending the banding into October increased the number of late migrants captured, such as the kinglets (see top ten list).

Here are some highlights and lowlights from 2015:

- A total of 468 birds of 46 species were banded – highest since 2010.
- The 19.3 b/100nh - highest since 2011!
- A Nelson's Sparrow captured on 4 Oct was a surprise new species for the station. This species is not expected in the net area habitat.
- Two Yellow-billed Cuckoos were also unusual catches.
- Ten Red-breasted Nuthatches were banded. This is the most since 2004. Usually they are at the tops of the trees, but this year they seemed active lower than usual.

- After a couple of year's absence, Cedar Waxwings were present in and around the nets. One pair still had young in the nest in mid-September!
- No Northern Cardinals were banded for the first time in nine years. This species was rarely heard in the banding area this year. In previous years males could be heard singing most days in both net areas.
- There were neither Purple Finches nor Chestnut-sided Warblers.

Thank you to volunteers Willow English and Sebastian Orue for their dedication to the banding process and commitment to the Station's protocol, and to the **Huntsman Marine Science Centre** for all the in-kind support. Thank you to the **New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund** for providing financial support without which the Station would not be able to operate.

Appledore Island Migration Station 425-0703

Appledore Island, York County, ME

Coordinator: **Sara Morris**

Banders: Peg Ackerson, Liz Burton, Lindsay Herlihy, Anthony Hill, David Holmes

Assistants: Solomon Bixby, Eleanor Bolker, Bill Clark, Kathryn Gunther, Mark Hopey, Lauren Kras, Jan Lathrop, Rebecca Loeb, Sally Mack, Peggy Maslow, Jeff Ott, Cora Payne, Martha Stauffer, Andy Thiede, Kiah Walker, Kathy Whittier, Ninfa Yong, Zooey Zullo

The number of birds banded this fall rebounded a bit to 854 from last fall's 765, but is still well below our average of 1590 ± 579 birds/season and is the second lowest total since 1982. Similarly, the number of species rebounded slightly (from 57 to 59) but is also well below the average of 70.3 ± 9.3 . Finally, we recorded the second-lowest number of birds per hundred net-hours in our history: 22.0 b/100nh (second only to last fall's 21.6 b/100nh). This value is well below our average of 37.4 ± 9.8 b/100nh. Weather was not a major factor in our captures this year, as we did not lose any whole days of banding, and only lost a few hours on two days due to rain. The early fall shutdown of the Shoals Marine Lab continues to have the biggest impact on our fall statistics.

With more than 30 years of banding and with recent shorter seasons, most species have highly variable numbers of captures across years, so most of our

captures were within normal ranges. Exceptions included a much higher-than-normal number of Downy Woodpeckers (2015: 18; average 5.5 ± 4.5) and a higher-than-normal number of Swamp Sparrows (2015: 8; average 2.6 ± 2.5). There were no species with numbers below normal ranges, but there was a large number captured in numbers less than half of their averages: Red-eyed Vireo (2015: 68; average: 164.5 ± 102.6), Common Yellowthroat (2015: 59; average: 119.2 ± 38.9), Yellow Warbler (2015: 21; average: 53.2 ± 34.8), Red-breasted Nuthatch (2015: 5; average: 42.2 ± 46.8), Blackpoll Warbler (2015: 12; average: 41.2 ± 29.0), Traill's Flycatcher (2015: 14; average: 32.4 ± 16.0), Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (2015: 9; average: 31.9 ± 12.4), Wilson's Warbler (2015: 9; average: 31.6 ± 13.1), Magnolia Warbler (2015: 6; average: 30.0 ± 15.3), Black-throated Blue Warbler (2015: 5; average: 23.8 ± 23.7), Nashville Warbler (2015: 8; average: 20.8 ± 14.6), Philadelphia Vireo (2015: 5; average: 19.7 ± 11.2), Least Flycatcher (2015: 7; average: 18.8 ± 7.0), and Canada Warbler (2015: ; average: 15.4 ± 7.9). Finally, no Carolina Wrens (average: 5.2 ± 5.4) were banded this fall. Though within normal ranges, this represents a major change from recent fall seasons and no doubt reflects the severe 2014-15 winter. Our most exciting captures were a Brewster's Warbler, a Dickcissel, and the station's first fall record for Field Sparrow.

We had a number of groups visit the station including Marine Immersion students from the Shoals Marine Lab, groups from the University of New Hampshire, University of Massachusetts, and Cornell University, from the Star Island conference center, and other visitors to Appledore Island.

We are extremely grateful to our team of dedicated volunteers who generously give of their time and financial support. We are also fortunate to have substantial financial support from the Shoals Marine Lab, Canisius College, and a very generous anonymous donor.

Austin Banding Station

415-0695

Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
Wellfleet, MA

Bander: **James Junda** (compiler)

Assistant: Daniel Lipp

The fall of 2015 was the second year of the reopening of Austin Banding Station on Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. Weather was good with only a few storms in the fall preventing us from opening the majority of nets. The biggest change was the number of Blue Jays, with our total of 47 far out pacing the fall 2014 total of 16. We had one single foreign recapture: a Song Sparrow banded as a HY several weeks earlier by Sue Finnegan at Wing Island. Our station is around the nature center at the main sanctuary. Nets are in a mix of dense mature riparian forest (7), beach side heath and open field (7), dense black-locust/black cherry forest (3) and saltmarsh edge (2). The Station was run by two dedicated banders: James Junda and Daniel Lipp.

Wing Island Banding Station

414-0700

Cape Cod Museum of Natural History
Brewster, MA

Bander: **Susan Finnegan** (compiler)

Assistants: Col Lazeau, Donna Kucia, Gretchen Putonen, Claire Revekant, Alex Cook, Matt Rothrock, Judith Bruce, Bradford Bower, Ronald Kielb, Christina Baal, Carrie Hisaoka, Keenan Yakola, Maddie Nobili, and others who came for a day

Our 16th fall season began 1 Aug and continued through 12 Nov. A total of 2,576 birds were banded of 73 species and 91% of those were HY birds. We were fortunate this year to no longer have a fox issue, but due to our issues last year and not knowing the situation ahead of time, I opted for using fewer nets this fall.

Net hours totaled 5,600 for a capture rate of 68 b/100nh (netted birds). Our largest daily catch was on 21 Oct with a total of 192 birds. The highest species diversity of 28 species was on 7 Oct. No new species were added this year. We captured no Rufous Hummingbirds this year for the first time since monitoring hummingbirds in 2006, but it was exciting to band a Black-chinned Hummingbird in December. We had no lower numbers of species compared to our average, but had higher numbers in numerous species: American Goldfinch (242) with an average of 86.9 ± 112.17 ; Blue-headed Vireo (12) – average of 4.1 ± 6.27 ; Blue Jay (23) – average 8.1 ± 11.7 ; Downy Woodpecker (25) – average 10.6 ± 12.75 ; Ovenbird (18) – average 4.8 ± 9.66 and Tufted Titmouse (77) – average 27.6 ± 42 .