

BANDING ON AN ISLAND

By Mary June Wolcott

Would banding birds on a small island in a lake in eastern Ontario during a three-week period in August give any indication of migration patterns? This was the question we have spent five summers trying to answer.

"Holiday Island" is just less than an acre in size and of an irregular shape. It is located in the northern half of Loughborough Lake (20 miles long) which is about 18 miles north of Kingston, Ontario. There are many islands in the northern half of the lake, so "Holiday Island" is not far from other land in any direction. The island is really a hump of rock, with very little soil, attaining a height of about 30 feet along one ridge, and is covered with trees and bushes of varying heights. The tall trees are white pine and oaks, and mixed in and underneath these are the birch, maple, cedar (both red and white), hemlock, elm, ironwood, aspen, basswood, junberry, juniper, chokecherry, blueberry, willow, and more. On the island also, is a large house and several scattered small cabins, the usual docks, boats, etc. Seemingly, there is nothing special to attract the birds to this spot.

"We" are two teachers from Royal Oak, Michigan (Detroit area) and one set of parents owns the Holiday Island. We could plan our visit to them so we would be catching birds during the first three weeks of August each summer. Certainly most species would be through nesting by this time. Would we see any indications of early migration, late nesting, or other specific trends? Would we find patterns emerging if we kept records over a five-year period?

The accompanying Chart No. 1 shows yearly totals of the species handled. (Chart #2, daily totals, has been omitted for reasons of space. -Ed.)

On August 13, 1964, and on August 17, 1965, we put nets in a field approximately a mile away from Holiday Island. We caught no new species, but did band more birds.

In 1966 and 1967, we did not band, as we were not at the Island during the usual first weeks of August.

We had the following birds return:

Song Sparrow	Banded 8/1/63	Returned 7/3/64
American Goldfinch	" 8/15/63	" 8/10/64
Song Sparrow	" 7/31/64	" 8/4/65
Song Sparrow	" 8/7/65	" 7/31/68

It has been surprising to record 27 different species by netting. At least six species seen, but able to avoid the nets, were Yellow-bellied

CHART NO. 1: Yearly Totals at the Island

Species	AOU	1963	1964	1965	1968	Totals
Hairy Woodpecker	393	1				1
Downy Woodpecker	394	1	1			2
Eastern Kingbird	444		2	1	2	5
Eastern Phoebe	456	1				1
Eastern Wood Pewee	461	2	4	1		7
Brown-headed Cowbird	495	1	2			3
Baltimore Oriole	507	2	4	2		8
American Goldfinch	529	1	5	2		8
Chipping Sparrow	560	2				2
Song Sparrow	581	6	15	7	8	36
Eastern Towhee	587		1			1
Scarlet Tanager	608	1				1
Barn Swallow	613	2	1			3
Tree Swallow	614	1	1			2
Red-eyed Vireo	624	1	2	1		4
Warbling Vireo	627	2	1			3
Black and White Warbler	636		2			2
Yellow Warbler	652	3	6	3	3	15
Myrtle Warbler	655	4	8	1	1	14
Magnolia Warbler	657		1			1
Pine Warbler	671		5			5
Northern Waterthrush	675		1			1
Canada Warbler	686	1				1
American Redstart	687				1	1
Brown Thrasher	705		1			1
House Wren	721			2		2
Black-capped Chickadee	735	1	3	3	5	12
Total Birds		33	66	23	20	142
Number of Species		18	20	10	6	27

Sapsucker, Black-billed Cuckoo, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Robin.

No real conclusions can be reached, as the numbers handled were small and were affected by the weather of any specific day. The number of (HY) young birds about equalled the number of (AHY) adults, thus the young were feeding on their own. Birds were "on the move" to have passed by or through the island, but no species was recorded in great numbers. Certainly the 36 Song Sparrows could mean either a large resident population or a gradual movement into the area. Yellow Warblers do migrate early, in August, and the 15 we banded was only a portion of the numbers passing through the trees. Swallows of all kinds congregated on overhead wires in the area. A few more birds were caught per day after August 1 than in the last days of July.

It has been an interesting project and we are satisfied to cease the banding there now. My parents are more aware of birds both on the island and in the vicinity. Many of the neighboring islanders have learned for the first time about bird banding, and how and why it is done.

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BLACKPOLL WARBLER:
NOTE FROM CHARLES H. BLAKE

Since my note on the Blackpoll Warbler, I've learned that my old friend, Dr. James Baird, is especially working up fall migration of the Blackpoll Warbler. Any members who wish to contribute information should then send it to him at Lincoln, Mass. 01773. He particularly desires estimates of abundance and data on weights, age and sex, and wing lengths.