

# ATLANTIC FLYWAY REVIEW: Region IV Piedmont—Coastal Plain Fall 2014

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Atlantic Flyway Review dates back to the first volume of *North American Bird Bander* in 1976, when a dozen Maryland stations plus Chincoteague, Virginia, constituted Region V and no stations reported from south of Virginia. By 1977 the boundaries were changed and the mountains of Maryland and Virginia (west of Interstate 81) were changed to what was then Region IV. Another change in 1975 moved the piedmont and coastal plains of the southeastern states from Region V to a new Region IV. None of the original stations in our region are still active.

Although July surprised us with Hurricane Arthur, tornadoes and record-breaking rainfall along the Atlantic coast, our coastal strip enjoyed close to normal rainfall and temperatures in August, a wet September with normal temperatures, and a very wet October that remained slightly warmer than normal from the Carolinas north through Maine.

Net-hours were slightly higher than last year at most stations except at Foreman's Branch where nets were closed early on non-productive afternoons. Total bandings at these eight stations showed an increase of 11.5%. Again this year no two stations shared the same most active day; the best days ranged from 20 Sep to 11 Nov, both in Maryland. Species diversity was highest from 29 Sep to 25 Oct. No two stations had the same species as their most common bird: sparrows, finches, and kinglets being at the Maryland stations and warblers more prevalent in the south.

Assuming no significant difference in coverage between 2013 and 2014, the greatest increases in 2014 were: 474 more Gray Catbirds at Kiawah; 279 more juncos and 190 more Song Sparrows at Foreman's; and 240 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 167 more White-throated Sparrows, and 151 more

Slate-colored Juncos at Patuxent. The greatest declines noted was a decrease of 452 Indigo Buntings (50%) at Foreman's Branch. As always, several stations reported banding a few species that are rarely encountered in this region: 13 Connecticut Warblers at Patuxent, Bicknell's Thrush and Clay-colored Sparrow at Foreman's Branch; Clapper Rail and Sedge Wren at Kiawah Island; and a Gray Kingbird and an Ash-throated Flycatcher at Cape Florida.

Michelle Davis was the only bander to mention longevity records this year. Her oldest returning birds this season were an eight-year-old Northern Cardinal and an eight-year-old Gray Catbird. Maren Gimpel, Daniel Small, and James Gruber are to be congratulated on the publication of "Winter Site Fidelity of Six Sparrow Species in Maryland" (based on 1,291 return records) in the Apr-Jun 2014 issue of *North American Bird Bander*.

I thank each of the station leaders for their interesting reports year after year and for the role each one is playing to increase public awareness of the natural world and how we can protect it. And thanks to Michael Lutmerding for his helpful suggestions for additions and corrections to this report.

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**Eden Mill** 394-0762  
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Banding activity at Eden Mill was variable this year because of changes in the weather and volunteer availability. Most days were overcast and cool and several were with precipitation which limited the number of nets that were opened. However, the number of birds captured per net-hour was fairly consistent with previous years.

Species diversity in sparrows and warblers was down this year. We captured relatively fewer Song, Lincoln's and Swamp sparrows, though White-throated Sparrow was our most common species, back to the 'top spot' it held in previous years. We captured only seven warbler

Table 1. AFR Region IV - Fall 2014 Summary.

|               | Eden Mill   | Harford Glen | Patuxent Powerline | Foreman's Branch | Kiawah Island | Jekyll Island | Tomoka Basin | Cape Florida |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| First Day     | 1 Sep       | 2 Sep        | 15 Aug             | 3 Aug            | 15 Aug        | 3 Aug         | 7 Sep        | 15 Aug       |
| Last Day      | 1 Nov       | 18 Dec       | 14 Nov             | 30 Nov           | 30 Nov        | 30 Nov        | 21 Nov       | 7 Nov        |
| Days Open     | 10          | 23           | 42                 | 87               | 103           | 22            | 43           | 83           |
| No. Nets Used | 3.5 to 15.5 | 5 to 14      | 26                 | 9 to 92          | 23            | 17            | 6 to 10      | 23           |
| Net Hours     | 419         | 1,172        | 3,483              | 27,029           | 11,565.6      | 1,692.30      | 1,872        | 10,540       |
| No. Best Day  | 37          | 189          | 159                | 425              | 274           | 185           | 14           | 102          |
| Best Day Date | 20 Sep      | 11 Nov       | 31 Oct             | 20 Oct           | 1 Oct         | 4 Oct         | 7 Nov        | 25 Oct       |
| Most Species  | 14          | 20           | 27                 | 40               | 29            | 19            | 7            | 21           |
| " " Date      | 6 Sep       | 14 Oct       | 14 Oct             | 29 Sep           | 5&17 Oct      | 1&17 Oct      | 20 Oct       | 25 Oct       |
| Banded 2013   | 258         | 663          | 1,630              | 9,378            | 4,529         | 1,408         | 147          | 2,128        |
| Banded 2014   | 220         | 970          | 2,210              | 10,402           | 5,086         | 1,377         | 170          | 2,029        |
| Species 2013  | 45          | 43           | 78                 | 117              | 82            | 42            | 32           | 61           |
| Species 2014  | 37          | 63           | 73                 | 123              | 80            | 46            | 36           | 54           |
| B/100nh 2013  | 53.3        | 82.9         | 55.7               | 27.4             | 59.2          | 133.99        | 9.3          | 25           |
| B/100nh 2014  | 61.1        | 82.8         | 63.5               | 38.5             | 55.6          | 81.35         | 10           | 21           |
| % HY 2013     | 85%         | 50%          | 74%                | 89%              | 82.8%         | 86%           | 56%          | 60.6%        |
| % HY 2014     | -           | 51%          | 70%                | 82%              | 81.4%         | 88%           | 68%          | 54.2%        |

Table 2. AFR IV. Ten Most Commonly Banded Species, Fall 2014.

|                | Eden Mill | Harford Glen | Patuxent Powerline | % HY | Foreman's Branch | % HY | Kiawah Island  | % HY | Jekyll Island | % HY | Tomoka Basin | Cape Florida | % HY |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------|------|------------------|------|----------------|------|---------------|------|--------------|--------------|------|
| 1. 43 WTSP(3)  | 75        | 128 AMGO (6) | 304 RCKI (8)       | 56   | 1,374 SOSP (1)   | 86   | 1,217 COYE (1) | 83.3 | 468 WPWA (2)  | 95.1 | 37 MYWA      | 294 OVEN (3) | 49.3 |
| 2. 33 GRCA (1) | 90        | 126 WTSP (1) | 277 WTSP (3)       | 59   | 1,254 WTSP(2)    | 78   | 1,046 GRCA (3) | 91.2 | 371 COYE (1)  | 83.6 | 18 OVEN (2)  | 268 BTBW (2) | 54.9 |
| 3. 16 COYE (8) | 94        | 104 SCJU (3) | 219 SCJU (4)       | 65   | 728 RCKI (4)     | 84   | 842 MYWA (2)   | 77.2 | 133 GRCA (3)  | 90.2 | 12 BTBW (1)  | 229 GRCA (1) | 82.1 |
| 4. 14 MAWA (7) | 100       | 78 GRCA (4)  | 175 GRCA (6)       | 84   | 594 COYE (5)     | 68   | 210 PABU (4)   | 93.3 | 58 PABU (4)   | 89.7 | 11 WEVI      | 217 AMRE (4) | 35.9 |
| 5. 12 NOCA (2) | 90        | 78 SOSP (5)  | 146 COYE (7)       | 57   | 581 SCJU (8)     | 75   | 188 PRAW (6)   | 77.1 | 53 AMRE (6)   | 83.0 | 8 GRCA       | 158 COYE (6) | 72.8 |
| 6. 11 SOSP (4) | 91        | 53 SWSP (9)  | 81 MAWA (1)        | 64   | 451 INBU (3)     | 93   | 185 REVI (5)   | 85.4 | 50 WEVI (10)  | 88.0 | 0 AMRE (3)   | 142 WEWA (5) | 33.8 |
| 7. 10 CARW (6) | 78        | 47 NOCA (2)  | 74 HEITH (9)       | 91   | 382 GRCA (9)     | 85   | 182 AMRE (7)   | 80.1 | 41 BTBW (5)   | 82.9 | 0 COYE (4)   | 120 BAWW (7) | 37.5 |
| 8.. 8 CACH     | 100       | 33 COYE (10) | 72 TEWA (3)        | 76   | 322 FISP (7)     | 87   | 95 WPWA *      | 83.2 | 22 NOCA (7)   | 40.9 | 0 VEER (5)   | 77 NOWA (8)  | 37.7 |
| 9. 7 INBU (10) | 67        | 27 MYWA (13) | 64 SOSP            | 70   | 269 SWSP (6)     | 77   | 94 NOWA        | 58.5 | 21 REVI       | 100  |              | 67 NOPA (10) | 53.7 |
| 10. 6 MYWA     | 83        | 27 RCKI (14) | 63 REVI (2)        | 70   | 261 AMGO         | 56   | 80 RCKI (10)   | 69.6 | 16 INBU (8)   | 93.8 |              | 56 WPWA (9)  | 78.6 |

(#) Indicates placement on list in 2013.  
\* Includes both WPWA & YPWA.

species. We did encounter more Magnolia Warblers this year, making them our fourth most banded species. We also captured many more Common Yellowthroats this year, all HY birds, which may suggest successful reproduction in the area.

It was a good year for *Empidonax* flycatchers as we captured every species that was possible, including Least, Yellow-bellied, Acadian, and Traill's (we hoped that at least some of the Traill's were Alder and some Willow; the latter breeds in the area). We captured another Sharp-shinned Hawk, which is always exciting.

Thanks to the efforts of Troop 899 and a new Eagle Scout, net lanes were expanded northeast of the pavilion, closer to Big Branch. Unfortunately, these additional net lanes were not very productive, likely because of the height of the surrounding vegetation and possibly the steep terrain. We continued to benefit from new Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) students who show interest. Thanks to their enthusiasm, we continue to develop new research questions and strive to develop the next generation of prospective wildlife biologists as much as we can.

As always, many thanks go out to our regular volunteers: Suzanne Procell, Jerry Strickroth, Bob Werrlein and Dennis Kirkwood and the staff at Eden Mill Nature Center.

**Harford Glen** **392-0762**  
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The constant and dramatic changes in the environment and encroachment in and around Harford Glen appear to have eased enough to provide some consistency in data. Therefore, I decided to venture forth with another contribution to the AFR reports.

However, once the data were tabulated it became apparent that there is still considerable variation in the avian populations at Harford Glen. It has been a few years since the major disturbances (consisting of encroaching developments at the Glen's borders, lumbering of the pine woods adjacent to the banding area that were under attack by the Pine Bark Beetle, and repeated flooding of the net area) occurred before, so we should be stabilizing.

I am indebted to my husband, Amanda Koss (the Harford Glen teacher who works with us) and our volunteers: Eileen Frey, Jane Scocca, Jean Williams, Dennis Kirkwood, Dave Larkin, and Phil Powers without whom we would not be able to keep the banding station operational.

**Patuxent Powerline Right-of-Way** **390-0764**  
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This station is in a power line right-of-way that bisects an upland deciduous forest. It has operated since 1980, except for 2004-2006. The habitat is dominated by a dense six- to eight-foot high canopy of shrubs and is an excellent source of shelter and food for breeding and migrating birds. Twenty-six nets are arrayed along a one-half mile east-west axis. Nets were opened by dawn and closed about 3.5 hours later. From 2007-2014, we have operated fairly consistently seven days in August and November and 14 days in September and October for a total of 42 days, generally on a M/W/F schedule. In 2013 however, due to the government shutdown, we banded only 35 days. Any comparisons to previous levels of activity refer to the years 2007-2012, since our 2013 season was truncated.

This—our 32<sup>nd</sup> year—was our best since 2007, with 2,210 bandings but only 73 species, our second lowest species total. It was a season with two very different halves. The first half dominated by warblers, Gray Catbirds, and Red-eyed Vireos found us far below our previous mid-season average; whereas, the second half of the season, dominated by sparrows and kinglets, found us setting a new high for the second half of the season.

Numerous highlights included banding our first Pine Siskin since 1980. This is the 124<sup>th</sup> species on this station's fall banding list. We had five 100+ banding days, all in the latter half of October. These five days accounted for almost 30% of this season's bandings. The previous year, with the most 100+ days, was 2012 with three. Ten species set new end-of-season highs. Particularly noteworthy were: Slate-colored Junco (219, previous best 160), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (304), Song Sparrow (68), Connecticut Warbler (13), Common Yellowthroat (146), and Black-throated Blue Warbler (43). We set species-specific single day banding records for: Connecticut Warbler (5), Northern Parula (6), Cape May Warbler (3), Song Sparrow (14) and Slate-colored Junco (58). On 13 Nov we were joined by a Barred Owl that perched about 30 feet away from our banding desk. It seemed to show little interest in us or what we were doing.

Our 549 warbler bandings of 28 species accounted for 25% of all of our bandings which is their historical norm. *Mimids* (notably Gray Catbirds) were at 8%, down from a norm of 12%; sparrows at 31% up from their norm of 25%. All other families were +/- one to two percent of norm.