



# Eastern Regional News

## Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

### Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I 1986

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Scientific conclusions concerning any increase/decrease of bird populations from so few station reports is not possible. Any comparisons should take into consideration: 1) number of nets used, 2) number of hours per day, 3) number of days nets were opened, 4) time of days nets were opened, 5) time during the season - it varies considerably, 6) the comparative latitude, which varies by 14 degrees, and longitude, which varies by 13 degrees, and 7) the differences in habitat.

The individual station reports are a more reliable source of information and comparisons to prior years. Block Island, Nantucket, and Appledore Island are offshore whereas Kingston, Rockport, and Manomet (Cape Cod) are on the coastal mainland.

As for the weather: Whale Cove, ME, reported rain and strong NW fronts in September; Block Island, RI, had no rain or NW fronts; and Kingston, RI, reported only easterly fronts in September and October. Once again, the Port Clyde Station in Maine did not have a report because the

migration was poor and nets were opened only on three or four days. Mrs. Plymire remarked on the continuing decline of the Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Parula, and Myrtle Warblers as well as the thrushes (none this year) and the White-throated Sparrow has become rare. She wrote that there was a good crop of wild berries in her area but suspects that some trees need to be removed. She is moving to a new locale (two miles from the present location) and we hope she will be rejoining us as a reporting station in 1987.

No report has come from Manomet Bird Observatory.

Within the top ten species banded, only one station reported no warblers but was the only one to report House Finches. White-throated Sparrows were reported from Block Island, but not the other islands or the coastal stations. Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported from the island stations but not the coastal stations. The Gray Catbird was reported from all stations except Appledore Island.

**Table 1. Summaries for Region I, 1986**

	Block Island RI	Kingston RI	Nantucket MA	Rockport MA	Appledore Island ME
Days of operation	49	69	53	75	26
Number of nets used	3-11	4	1-11	8	6-9
Total net hours	4546	800	3067	3816	2283
Largest daily catch	53	27	125	45	211
Birds banded, 1985	1313	540	881	886	1562
Birds banded, 1986	923	415	1762	619	1763
Different species, 1985	70	49	74	68	67
Different species, 1986	72	58	82	59	67
Birds/100 n.h., 1985	40	67	37	18	104
Birds/100 n.h., 1986	20	52	57	16	77.2

**Table II. Summary of Most Common Species**

Block Island, RI		Kingston, RI		Nantucket, MA		Rockport, MA		Appledore Island, ME	
Gray Catbird	216	White-throated Sparrow	61	Yellow-rumped Warbler	651	House Finch	134	American Redstart	195
American Redstart	46	Blue-winged Warbler	35	Common Yellowthroat	218	White-throated Sparrow	60	Red-eyed Vireo	143
Common Yellowthroat	46	Gray Catbird	30	Cape May Warbler	106	Gray Catbird	53	Northern Waterthrush	140
Golden-crowned Kinglet	42	Common Yellowthroat	26	Red-breasted Nuthatch	67	Song Sparrow	46	Common Yellowthroat	134
White-throated Sparrow	38	Black-capped Chickadee	25	Song Sparrow	52	American Goldfinch	44	Cape May Warbler	111
Red-eyed Vireo	38	Dark-eyed Junco	25	Gray Catbird	51	Black-capped Chickadee	32	Red-breasted Nuthatch	97
Yellow-rumped Warbler	35	Black & White Warbler	21	American Redstart	40	American Robin	32	Cedar Waxwing	82
Red-breasted Nuthatch	32	American Redstart	20	Bay-breasted Warbler	39	Northern Waterthrush	24	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	72
American Robin	31	Veery	11	Pine Warbler	35	Blue Jay	15	Least Flycatcher	62
Veery	27	Golden-crowned Kinglet	10	Magnolia Warbler	31	Mockingbird	15	Song Sparrow	53

**Appledore Island  
Isles of Shoals  
York County, ME  
David W. Holmes**

**425-0703**

The Shoals Marine Lab Banding Station enjoyed a truly record-breaking season in 1986. New high records were set for species, individuals, and net hours so that our birds-per-100NH figure became a record low, 77.2 (previous low - 99). Our other record-setting occurrences were the 4 September totals, both of new birds banded, 180; and total birds handled, 211; the addition of Pine Warbler to the Shoals Lab banding list; and the season's total of 30 species of warblers (previous high - 28).

In 1986, the station opened 19 August, closed 14 September, and only lost one day and about three hours to weather. Nets were open roughly from dawn until just after dark, running just a bit later this year in an effort to catch a Whip-poor-will (at least three individuals were on the island, two of which used our net poles as late-evening hawking perches). We ran our standard 6 nets plus 3 extras as time and help permitted; our usual 2 in the mostly dry "bog" at the north end of the island and a new net up by a fresh water pond on the south side of the island. Most days with help, we ran either the bog or the lake on alternate days, but on the long weekend when I had two net runners, we did all of them. This is one factor in our large net hour total. Another factor in our birds-per-100NH figure had to be the leak in the island's main water line which travels alongside our four net long lane. Some major cutting was done over the summer in the search for the leak, so those nets caught full sun for two additional hours each day. They caught many less birds than in previous years.

Numbers of note include really major flights of Red-breasted Nuthatches, 97; and Philadelphia Vireos, 41; and the very low total of Northern Waterthrushes. Our greatest

days were 4 September with 180 new birds; 8 September, 154; 1 September, 109; 7 September, 106; and 2 September, 104. Our retrap rate was on the high side with 372 individuals for a rate of 21.1%. Birds of note included our second N. Mockingbird, third Whip-poor-will and N. Cardinal, and fourth Sharp-shinned Hawk, Golden-winged, Worm-eating, Kentucky, and Connecticut Warblers. September 4 was also a banner day for the 3 Olive-sided Flycatchers. We also welcomed back 7 old friends: 1 Gray Catbird, 2 Song Sparrows, and 4 Common Yellowthroats which were banded in 1984 and 85. As usual, no foreign birds were handled, and there have been no reports or recoveries of our birds from anywhere else.

Thanks again to Winnie Burkett, Rozzie Holt, Mary Ann Tretter, and Mark Vranicar, my very faithful assistants; and as always, to the Shoals Lab staff, students, and friends for their support and help with the operation.

**Kingston, RI  
Douglas Kraus**

**412-0713**

As in the past 15 years, netting was carried out during the first 3 to 4 hours of the day, by which time most activity at the nets had ceased. For the years 1981-86, the birds/100 net hours were 74, 74, 56, 60, 67, and 52. This year's capture rate of 52/100NH is the lowest at this station since netting started 30 years ago.

Banding in August was average with fair numbers of local species and early migrants. In September, however, the cold fronts moved through with easterly components and deposited few migrants. This pattern continued through most of October.

For birds nesting locally, the ratio of immatures to adults was 4.0, indicating a successful nesting season.

Below are some comparisons of the numbers of bandings in 1986 with averages over the past ten years.

	In 1986	10 Yr. Av.
Blue-winged Warbler	35	13
Golden-crowned Kinglet	10	5
Common Yellowthroat	26	29
Black-capped Chickadee	25	31
American Redstart	20	36
White-throated Sparrow	61	99
Slate-colored Junco	25	51
Ovenbird	4	11
Gray Catbird	30	100
Wood Thrush	2	8
Red-eyed Vireo	2	8
Myrtle Warbler	0	52

Only a few Myrtle Warblers passed through this area.

There were 56 repeats and of the 33 returns, 18 were migratory species.

**Whale Cove 423-0703**  
**Rockport, MA**  
**Russell T. Norris**

The Whale Cove Station was in operation for the eleventh year in 1986. Nets were opened on 75 days between 4 August and 15 November. A few traps were also operated. A total of 619 new birds of 59 species were captured in the nets with an additional 196 taken in traps. There were 52 repeats recorded. Net hours were considerably reduced -

down to 74 percent of the average for the last nine years. Birds banded were only 37 percent of the average and the 16 birds/100 net hours was the lowest of record, even below 1985. The following table shows the birds netted, net hours, and birds per 100 net hours for the fall months of 1986 and the previous nine years.

Year	Number Banded	Net Hours	Birds/100 Net Hours
1977	1386	5028	28
1978	1861	5196	36
1979	1720	4188	41
1980	2242	5195	43
1981	2222	6276	35
1982	1472	6082	24
1983	2316	5190	45
1984	1218	4525	27
1985	866	4757	18
1986	619	3816	16

There was frequent rainfall during the fall months of 1986 and light northwest winds occurred on many days. Strong northwest flow in mid September resulted in the peak days of the 17th and 22nd. There was also a brisk wind out of the northwest on 5 and 6 October, although the station was not in operation. Temperatures averaged somewhat below normal and the first killing frost was on 14 November.

The twelve most common species netted in the fall of 1986 are shown in the following table and compared with the totals for these species in previous years.

	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979
House Finch	134	86	222	343	117	191	175	235
White-throated Sparrow	60	95	91	185	132	195	165	248
Gray Catbird	53	156	126	236	130	196	164	237
Song Sparrow	46	52	50	70	96	111	154	96
American Goldfinch	44	13	47	49	21	25	51	16
Black-capped Chickadee	32	75	27	105	70	156	258	67
American Robin	32	92	73	233	221	364	62	131
Northern Waterthrush	24	16	42	47	36	29	20	22
Blue Jay	15	5	10	30	15	40	12	19
Mockingbird	15	29	16	41	17	73	31	14
Dark-eyed Junco	14	40	13	75	38	35	58	15
Swainson's Thrush	13	2	8	19	1	18	5	11

In the fall months of 1986 only four species (Blue Jay, Swainson's Thrush, Veery and Golden-crowned Kinglet) were netted in numbers greater than the average of past years. The woodpeckers (Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Downy) were way below average numbers,

while the flycatchers (Kingbird and the *Empidonax* group) were only down slightly. No Tree Swallows were banded because the large flocks that usually roost on utility wires in early September did not appear. Barn Swallows were down considerably. Only a single Tufted Titmouse was

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taken and the Black-capped Chickadee flight in Whale Cove was very small, with bandings only 33 percent of average. The White-breasted Nuthatch was absent, and the Red-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper were way down.

Mockingbirds and Gray Catbirds were banded at all-time lows as was the American Robin. The Cedar Waxwing was banded at way below average, and the only common vireo, the Red-eye, was taken at less than 20 percent of average. Two Philadelphia Vireos were banded but the other vireos were absent.

Among the warblers, only the Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush and Yellow-breasted Chat were taken in average numbers. The two breeding species, Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroat, were banded at the lowest numbers ever. The usually common migrant warblers, Cape May, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and American Redstart, were almost non-existent. Cardinals and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were banded at about 65 percent of average.

The Purple Finch and American Goldfinch were banded at way below average. While House Finches were more abundant than in 1985, the numbers banded were far below the previous years. Three sparrows, Savannah, Chipping, and Field, were absent entirely and only a single Swamp Sparrow was captured. Only the Lincoln's Sparrow was banded in average numbers. The fall flights of Dark-eyed Juncos and White-crowned Sparrows were way down. The White-throat bandings were only 40 percent of average. A few Tree and Fox Sparrows were banded but way below average. Song Sparrows were down about 50 percent from the average of previous years.

One new species to the station, a Carolina Wren, was captured in August.

**Nantucket, MA                    411-0700**  
**Edith Andrews**

In the fall of 1986 the Nantucket Station operated much as in the past with 33 days at the Mothball location (411-0700) from 31 August to 4 October and 20 days at Ice Pond Lot (411-0701) from 18 - 29 August and 7 - 31 October. At the Mothball location, 4 to 11 nets were used and 1 to 7 at Ice Pond.

Our biggest day occurred on 17 September when 134 birds

were handled, 125 of which were new bandings. These included 17 species of warblers. The day was noteworthy not only for the number banded, but also for the number of individuals with pneumatized skulls: 35 or 28% of the 125. Comparing the same time period in 1985, only 5% were AHY birds. Also without precedent was the number of Tennessee and Magnolia Warblers, 15 and 16 respectively, on that day. More than we usually have in a whole season.

Other species which showed increases were, first and foremost, an astonishing total of 35 Pine Warblers. This has always been considered a rare bird at the Mothball Station, and all 35 were banded there. The 218 Common Yellowthroats is an all-time high; the season total of 31 Magnolia, 21 Tennessee, 17 Yellow, 17 Nashville, 15 Prairie, 12 Black-throated Green, 11 Blackburnian are all increases over the last few years. This year all Yellow-rumps were banded which accounts for there being about twice as many as last year, when 206 were released unbanded.

On the down side, it proved to be another poor year for thrushes: no Gray-cheeked, no Hermit and 6 Swainson's all in one day only. There were no Cuckoos and no Yellow-breasted Chat this year. Sparrows, namely White-throated and Juncos, continue to show a decrease in numbers.

Blackpoll Warblers showed an increase over last year, 23 versus 4, but still way down when compared with the 266 in 1983.

Of special interest was an HY-M Cerulean Warbler banded on 5 September and an HY-U Blue Grosbeak on 6 September.

There were 251 repeats: one, an HY-M Cape May Warbler, originally banded 18 September at the Mothball location was retrapped on 7 October at the Ice Pond location, which is 2-1/4 miles as the crow flies; and 8 returns.

Special thanks to banders Ginger Bladen, June Ficker and Jonnie Fisk for running the station during my absence and to Robert Anderson, Marcia Arland, Alan and Carole Bennett, Dot Davis, Angie Genovese, Marge Hunt, Jonathan Klizas, Joan Lackenbacher, Dorothy Long, Gloria McKinnon, Simon Perkins, Arlene Pollack, Mary Sheldon, Ginny Tallcouch, Nan and Ted Waldron, Charlotte Weston, and Penny Wilbur for their assistance.

## A Remarkable Traveler

On 9 January 1984, a male ASY Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) was mist netted and banded (#990-18706) at our station on Casey Key, a barrier island on the gulf coast in Sarasota County, Florida. The bird remained with us through the winter, repeating at the nets on five occasions, the last being 14 March.

We received a report from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service the following winter that #990-18706 had traveled to Andros Island in the Bahamas. There it was caught in a mist net and released alive at San Andros Airport during a banding operation by Tracey Dean, a Canadian bander from Ontario, on 29 December 1984. The bird did not repeat at the nets.

Where the bird spent the next winter is not known. Then came another report from the Fish & Wildlife Service informing us that our Indigo Bunting had been found dead at Cape St. Mary, Nova Scotia, on 26 May 1986. In this case the band was included with the report for verification.

The recovery report was made by George R. Boyd, Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests, Kentville. He wrote as follows: "Thank you for the information on our wayward Indigo Bunting (#990-18706). It is stories like this that makes for interesting reading for the public and gives us banders a shot in the arm. Unfortunately, our bunting died after he flew into a picture window at the home of Fred Belliveau, Cape St. Mary, Digby County. Kind of an unspectacular way to die after surviving seven captures and flying most of the eastern coast of the North American continent."

This record is remarkable not only because of the incredibly low encounter rate on banded passerines, but also because of the scarceness of Indigos in Nova Scotia. The A.O.U. Check-List (1983) acknowledges them as "casual north to Quebec, Nova Scotia...". It is extremely rare to obtain this amount of documentation on the migratory activities of one of our small perching birds.

According to Danny Bystrak of the Bird Banding Laboratory, they have only been reported three times in Nova Scotia on the North American Breeding Bird

Survey. One report was on 12 June 1969 near Chester, the second report was on 27 June 1973 near Tatamagouche, and the third report on 24 June 1978, also near Tatamagouche. there have been 17 bandings in the Province but #990-18706 is the only recovery there.

On checking the "season" reports on the Northeastern Maritime Region in AMERICAN BIRDS for Indigo Buntings for the past 11 years, we found the following records:

- 1976 - unusually numerous in Nova Scotia (23 individuals) earliest date April 23
- 1977 - an early date of April 5 at West Pubnico, N.S.
- 1978 - 1979 - 1980 - 1981 - No records.
- 1982 - a few overshooting Indigos in April including two on 28th at Georges Banks
- 1983 - three singing males noted in Newfoundland during late June and July
- 1984 - influx of 50+ noted at Nova Scotia
- 1985 - virtually absent
- 1986 - overshooting in Nova Scotia (65 individuals) earliest date April 1

The dates of the 17 bandings supports the notion that most occurrences in Nova Scotia are spring overshoots or reverse migration in the autumn. The date of 26 May is late for a spring overshoot, but Cape St. Mary is a typical coastal landfall location. We will never know if our intrepid traveler was part of a colonizing attempt or merely an overly enthusiastic migrant.

Danny Bystrak reviewed early drafts of this paper and made many constructive comments and suggestions and we are grateful.

**Stanley and Annette Stedman**  
1156 Casey Key Road  
Nokomis, Florida 34275

## Fast Times

During ten years of operation of a hawk banding station at Breezy Point, NY, we have had a number of our birds caught at other banding stations. The following are two of the most notable encounters:

Band #902-71259, a HY male Sharp-shinned Hawk, (*Accipiter striatus*) was caught, banded, and released at Breezy Point on 10/19/83 at 12:15 and was recaptured at Cape May Point, NJ, on 10/20/83 at 15:05 by W. S. Clark. Fast time? Yes. A record? No.

Band #1043-67548, a HY female Sharp-shinned Hawk, was caught, banded, and released at Breezy

Point on 10/7/86 at 08:50 and was again caught at Cape May Point on 10/8/86 at 07:25 by Robert Pantle. This is a record.

The latter is quite remarkable. The distance from Breezy Point to Cape May Point is 125 air miles. Considering the fact that hawks do not migrate at night, this bird must have flown all day on October 7th.

**Sammy Chevalier**  
147-01 Village Road  
Jamaica, NY 11435



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