

# Atlantic Flyway Review: Region I 1987

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The stations in this report range from 411 to 425 degrees latitude and 0700 to 0713 longitude and are coastal or on islands just off the coast. Most report the 1987 banding results to be better than 1986 but still less than in past years. Manomet has not reported again this year and their information is sorely missed, but there is a welcomed new station report from Lyme, CT.

Comparisons are difficult due to the inconsistency of the dates the stations are open (varying from August 1 through November 24) and the weather patterns in each area. Peak days were inconsistent, running from early September through mid October. All stations reported an apparent good nesting season in their localities.

Gray Catbirds are the #1 bird in quantity at one island and two coastal stations but dropped to third place on Nantucket and not at all in the top ten at Appledore (both islands).

The most banded warbler of past seasons, the Yellow-rumped Warbler, does not appear in the top ten at three of the stations; in fact, Rockport (coastal) reports them to be almost absent. The Common Yellowthroat made the list from all five stations.

Appledore Island is the farthest north and Block Island the farthest south. The number of warbler species banded in the top ten moving from north to south: Appledore 4, Rockport 1, Nantucket 6, Kingston 5, Lyme 2, and Block Island 4.

Block Island and Kingston are the closest in both latitude and longitude but a close look at the top ten reveals quite a difference in the species they share, with only five species in common. The Rhode Island stations share five species in common while the Massachusetts stations share only four. It is interesting to note that the House Finch only appear on the Massachusetts top ten. Have they not expanded further north or to the islands?

**Table 1. Summaries for Region I, 1987**

	Block Island RI	King- ston MA	Lyme CT	Nan- tucket MA	Rock port MA	Apple dore Is. ME
Days of Operation	41	65	59	43	78	26
Number of Nets Used	10	4	1-16	2-10	8	5-10
Total Net Hours	2987	835	4837	1834	4451	2323
Largest Daily Catch	61	28	39	132	32	148
Birds Banded, 1986	923	415	--	1762	619	1763
Birds Banded, 1987	1058	633	835	1486	666	1760
Different Species, 1986	72	58	--	82	59	67
Different Species, 1987	73	58	60	75	66	68
Birds/100 n.h., 1986	20	52	--	57	16	77.2
Birds/100 n.h., 1987	33	76	17	81	15	75.7

**Table II. Summary of most common species.**

Block Island, RI		Kingston, RI		Lyme, CT	
Gray Catbird	298	Gray Catbird	108	Wood Thrush	118
Yel-rmp Warbler	109	Com. Yellowthroat	67	Veery	79
Red-eyed Vireo	49	White-thr. Sparrow	54	Swainson's Thrush	65
Brown Creeper	45	Blue-wng. Warbler	41	Ruby-Cr Kinglet	64
Golden-cr. Kinglet	35	Ruby-cr. Kinglet	32	Dark-eyed Junco	50
Com. Yellowthroat	35	Black-cap. Chickadee	32	Yel-Rmp Warbler	44
White-thr. Sparrow	34	Yel-rmp Warbler	25	Hermit Thrush	36
Bl-thr Blue Warbler	30	American Redstart	21	White-thr Sparrow	35
Swainson's Thrush	29	No. Cardinal	19	Gray Catbird	27
American Redstart	29	Bl & Wh Warbler	18	Gol-cr Kinglet	23
				Ovenbird	23
Nantucket, MA		Rockport, MA		Appledore Island, ME	
Yel.rmp Warbler	817	Gray Catbird	121	Red-eyed Vireo	182
Com. Yellowthroat	105	House Finch	118	Amer. Redstart	171
Gray Catbird	76	Song Sparrow	57	No. Waterthrush	148
Cape May Warbler	42	Mockingbird	37	Com. Yellowthroat	144
Song Sparrow	40	American Robin	32	Cedar Waxwing	91
Amer. Redstart	37	Red-eyed Vireo	26	Song Sparrow	80
House Finch	23	Eastern Kingbird	24	Veery	66
Bl-cap Chickadee	20	Com. Yellowthroat	20	Yel-bel Flycatcher	52
Blackpoll Warbler	20	No. Cardinal	18	Ovenbird	50
Yel-br. Chat	16	Wh-thr Sparrow	14	Least Flycatcher	49

**Block Island, RI 411-0713**  
**Elise Lapham**

This year, 1987, is the 20th anniversary of our banding on Block Island. The first two years I was a sub-permittee of Elise Dickerson, whom some of you may remember. She ran the Island Beach Operation Recovery Station for a number of years. Since her death in 1969, my daughter, Helen, and I have run the station. Although we band in the spring as well as in the fall, this report covers only the fall. Including both seasons, we have banded over 59,000 birds, almost all from the net lanes adjoining our house.

It has been sad to note over the year how both the numbers and species of birds have decreased. This may be partially because of the surprising growth of the cover on Block Island over the past 20 years. The bayberry, viburnum, shad, poison ivy, and chokeberry have flourished. What was once a marsh along one of our lanes has filled in with chokeberry and rosa rugossa. But obviously the loss of wintering habitat and summer breeding grounds account for most of the decrease.

This year, however, showed an improvement over 1986, with interesting differences in numbers in some of the species caught.

	1986	1987
Gray Catbird	216	298
Yellowthroat	46	35
American Redstart	46	29
Magnolia Warbler	2	12
Wood Thrush	1	4
Hermit Thrush	4	15
Yellow-rmp. Warbler	35	109
Golden-cr. Kinglet	42	35
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	18	30
Red-br. Nuthatch	4	36
Gray-cheeked Thrush	4	14

Veerys and Swainson's Thrushes showed slight increases. Two Hairy Woodpeckers were the first ones caught in the nets since 1979 and a Hooded Warbler, the first since 1983.

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A wave of Brown Creepers came 13-14 October, of which 17 were banded and 12 released unbanded. They flew into the nets exhausted, with no fat. I found they were going into shock if handled too much. This has happened in the past with kinglets, but this was the first time with creepers.

Again we had a number of nets destroyed by deer. For protection, we have tried chicken wire, deer repellent, human hair, and cakes of soap. Anyone--any new ideas?

**Kingston, RI 412-0713**  
**Douglas Kraus**

As in the past years, nets were operated from dawn to about 10 a.m. when most activity near the nets ceased. The results in 1987 were comparable with those of 1982 and considerably better than those of 1983-86. Birds per 100 net hours in 1987, 76; 1986, 52; 1985, 67; 1984, 56; and 1983, 74.

Most of the birds banded in August were involved in nesting locally. For these, the HY/AHY ratio was 10/1, indicating a successful nesting season.

The numbers of many species rebounded from the 1986 lows: ('87/'86) Catbird 108/30, Yellow-rumped Warbler 25/0, Common Yellowthroat 67/26, Ovenbird 15/4, and House Wren 14/4. Continuing in depressed numbers: Red-eyed Vireo 3/2 and Wood Thrush 2/2.

There were 79 repeats and 20 returns. Of the latter, six involved migratory species. A Tufted Titmouse returned for its eighth year.

**Lyme, CT 412-0722**  
**Ginger Bladen**

The Thrush Wood banding station is operated on nine acres of typical Connecticut woodland; i.e., rocky hill-sides and mixed deciduous hardwood trees. There is a small pond, enough clear slope for bluebirds to nest, a few yards of grassy lane with hedgerows, a small stream, and an important area of wetland. A few large "planted" evergreens grow in one area. Undergrowth varies but includes spice bush, many ferns, and skunk cabbage.

Location is 1-1/2 miles ESE of Hadlyme in Lyme. This is about 1 mile E of the Connecticut River and 8 mi. N of Long Island Sound.

This station has been in operation on a year-round basis for over three years. This is the first data submitted for AFR at the suggestion of Edith Andrews. (Please refer to Tables 1 and 2 for statistical data from this station.)

**Nantucket, MA. 411-0700**  
**Edith Andrews 411-0701**

The station was operated much as in the past except there were fewer days suitable for banding: it either rained, was too windy or the cold fronts didn't quite reach us--all in all a poor season. Almost all of the warblers were down in numbers when compared with 1986. Notably: Tennessee, Nashville, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Cape May, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted. Only two Black-and-Whites vs. 17 in 1986 and no Northern Parula at all. It was also a poor year for Red-breasted Nuthatches, 4 compared with 67 in 1986. White-throats and Juncos were down; no Lincoln Sparrows; the list goes on.

On the plus side, there were 16 Yellow-breasted Chats after none last year; one each of a Prothonotary, Worm-eating, and Connecticut Warbler, three species which do not occur here with any frequency. Of interest was an intergrade Red-shafted X Yellow-shafted Flicker.

A Common Yellowthroat banded as an AHY-F in 1983 returned, making it at least five years old. There were 14 other returns, all resident species. There were 187 repeats.

Two traps were operated, catching mainly banded Black-capped Chickadees and Song Sparrows. One Yellow-breasted Chat ventured into a trap set on the ground.

The largest daily catch of 132 occurred on 19 October when 119 Yellow-rumps were banded.

Special thanks to Kathy Klimkiewicz of the Banding

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#### **Whale Cove**

**Rockport, MA 423-0703**

**Russell T. Norris**

This station has been in operation for 12 years. The nets were open from 1 August to 15 November. A few traps were also open with an additional 190 birds taken. Net hours were only 89% of the average for the last ten years. Birds banded were only 42% of the average and the birds per net hour were the lowest on record.

The severe summer drought continued through August, but September was very wet and cloudy. October had abundant sunshine with below normal rainfall. November was dry until the 10th when over a foot of wet snow fell in three days. Temperatures throughout the fall were somewhat below normal and the first killing frost was on 7 November. Light winds were from the northwest on many days, but there were no strong waves of migrants during the entire fall.

Few species showed increases above the average for past years. Outstanding among the increasing species were the Eastern Kingbird (taken in much higher numbers than ever), the Common Yellowthroat (50% above the average), and the Mockingbird and Veery showed substantial increases from past years. Also of note are the eight Warbling Vireos banded, more than ever before.

Species taken in about average numbers were Mourning Dove, Barn Swallow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, and Northern Cardinal. Red-eyed Vireos and Cape May Warblers increased greatly from the 1986 lows and were taken in average numbers.

Common Flicker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were absent for the first time in eleven years. Downy Woodpeckers were down. The Empidonax flycatchers continued at the same low level as in the past two years. Migrating flocks of Tree Swallows did not appear for the

second year. There was no noticeable movement of Blue Jays with bandings only 20% of average. Black-capped Chickadees were at the lowest level since the station has been in operation.

Gray Catbirds were up considerably from 1986 but much below the average of earlier years. American Robins continued at the low of 1986 but below average. Only one Ruby-crowned Kinglet was banded this year, continuing the low of 1986, way down from the high levels of a few years ago.

Purple Finches only appeared occasionally during the fall of 1987 with bandings only 20% of the average. The always common House Finch was banded at 65% of the average. American Goldfinch was taken at 25% of the average. Lincoln Sparrows were absent. Swamp Sparrows were banded at about 30% of average, while the Song Sparrow were down to about 70% of the previous years.

The Yellow Warbler, formally a common breeding bird here, was banded at less than 50% of average. Both Bay-breasted and Blackpoll Warblers were down, and the Northern Waterthrush, a usually common migrant, was taken at 25% of average. The American Redstart continued to be way down for the third year.

Two species which have always made up a major part of the fall migration here were at all-time lows in 1987. This is the third year of almost complete absence of Yellow-rumped Warblers during the fall. Average banding of Yellow-rumps from 1976 through 1984 was 153, while a total of only 35 have been taken during the last three years. White-throated Sparrows, usually very common during fall migration, were banded at less than 10% of previous years. Since this station has been in operation, there has never been so few White-throats. Dark-eyed Juncos were also very scarce this year with only two being banded.

Two species new to this station were captured: an immature Red-headed Woodpecker and a Great Blue Heron, which strained the capacity of this one-man operation.

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**Appledore Island, ME**  
**Shoals Marine Lab**      **425-0703**  
**David Holmes**

1987 - how amazingly like 1986, and how very different, and how much fun it is to have both statements totally true! The station was open for the exact same number of days as last year and we lost only one full day to weather, although two additional days were run only about one-half the usual effort. We ran the same nets as last year, and added one in a newly created "road" on the way to the "bog". The help was a bit more scant than in previous years, so the furthest nets from the "office" were not open as consistently.

My impression is of a late migration in the early fall punctuated by some most unexpected early arrivals in mid-September. Things dribbled through in August, especially Northern Waterthrushes and Cape May Warblers. The September rush started four days later than usual. There were six days with over 100 new birds: 17 August (111); and in September, the 4th (123), 5th (148), 6th (124), 10th (148), and 12th (115).

Specific comparisons with last year's results included the breaking of three of last year's new record highs on number of species and net hours, and the low on birds per 100 net hours. The difference in the b/nhr figure could be explained by the absence of two species: Red-breasted Nuthatch, 97 in 1986 and 6 in 1987; and Cape May Warbler, 111 in '86 and 45 in '87. Philadelphia Vireos were down by half (41 in '86 and 21 in '87), but this is simply returning to a more normal number after an unusual high. Interesting increases include Song Sparrows, 53 to 80 (apparently a super nesting season; we only caught one obvious migrant), Veerys (16 to 66), Ovenbirds (36 to 50), Eastern Kingbirds (9 to 36), and Connecticut Warblers (2 to 9).

Species new for the station were the 4 Yellow-billed Cuckoos (moderate fall webworm infestation), 1 Carolina Wren, 1 Winter Wren (early!), and 3 European Starlings (probably local young). Other unusual species were the Sharp-shinned Hawk, House Wren, American Robin, 3 Yellow-throated Vireos, and an Indigo Bunting. Also add 12 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds to all totals as birds trapped but released unbanded.

Our fall returns were 3 Common Yellowthroats and 2

Song Sparrows. We received word of the station's first recovery during the past year: a Gray Catbird banded as an AHY-M on 25 May '86 was found dead on Nantucket Island, MA, on 23 July '86. Interesting date isn't it! We almost never catch adult catbirds in the fall. When do your adult catbirds leave? A second recovery is apparently making its way through the system at the Banding Lab. We have now banded 11,800+ birds at Shoals Lab. The tiny percentage of post-breeding reports is giving rise to a good deal of speculation along with a desire to check out lots of gull and fish stomachs. As usual, no foreign birds were caught.

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