



Eastern Regional News

Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

NEW AFR REGION DESIGNATIONS

Over 30 banding stations in eastern Canada and the United States currently contribute to the Atlantic Flyway Review (AFR). This effort has resulted in the banding of tens of thousands of migrating birds since the days of Operation Recovery, which originated in 1955 under the guidance of Chan Robbins.

Migration monitoring is one of the most important cooperative projects in which banders can participate. However, the hours of hard work, both in the field and doing the requisite paper work, are not truly effective unless the results are tabulated, analyzed, and shared with other researchers.

In an effort to provide better analysis of the data collected at stations participating in the AFR, John Gregoire and I endeavored to reorganize the geographical boundaries which identify the present four reporting contributing regions. The changes are not major but reflect a better understanding of actual bird movement during fall, while allowing for a more accurate analysis of this cooperative research.

As of 1995, fall AFR regions consist of the following:

AFR I - NORTH COASTAL REGION - includes Canada from Montreal eastward, New England, Coastal New Jersey, and Delaware. *Tracey Dean* (Huntsman Marine Science Centre, Brandy Cove Rd., New Brunswick, Canada E0G 2X0) will be the coordinator.

AFR II - NORTH CENTRAL REGION - includes Canada from North Bay to Ottawa and western New York to the Hudson Valley. *John Gregoire* (Kestrel Haven Farm Avian Migration Observatory, 5373 Fitzgerald Rd., Burdett, NY 14818-9626) will serve as coordinator.

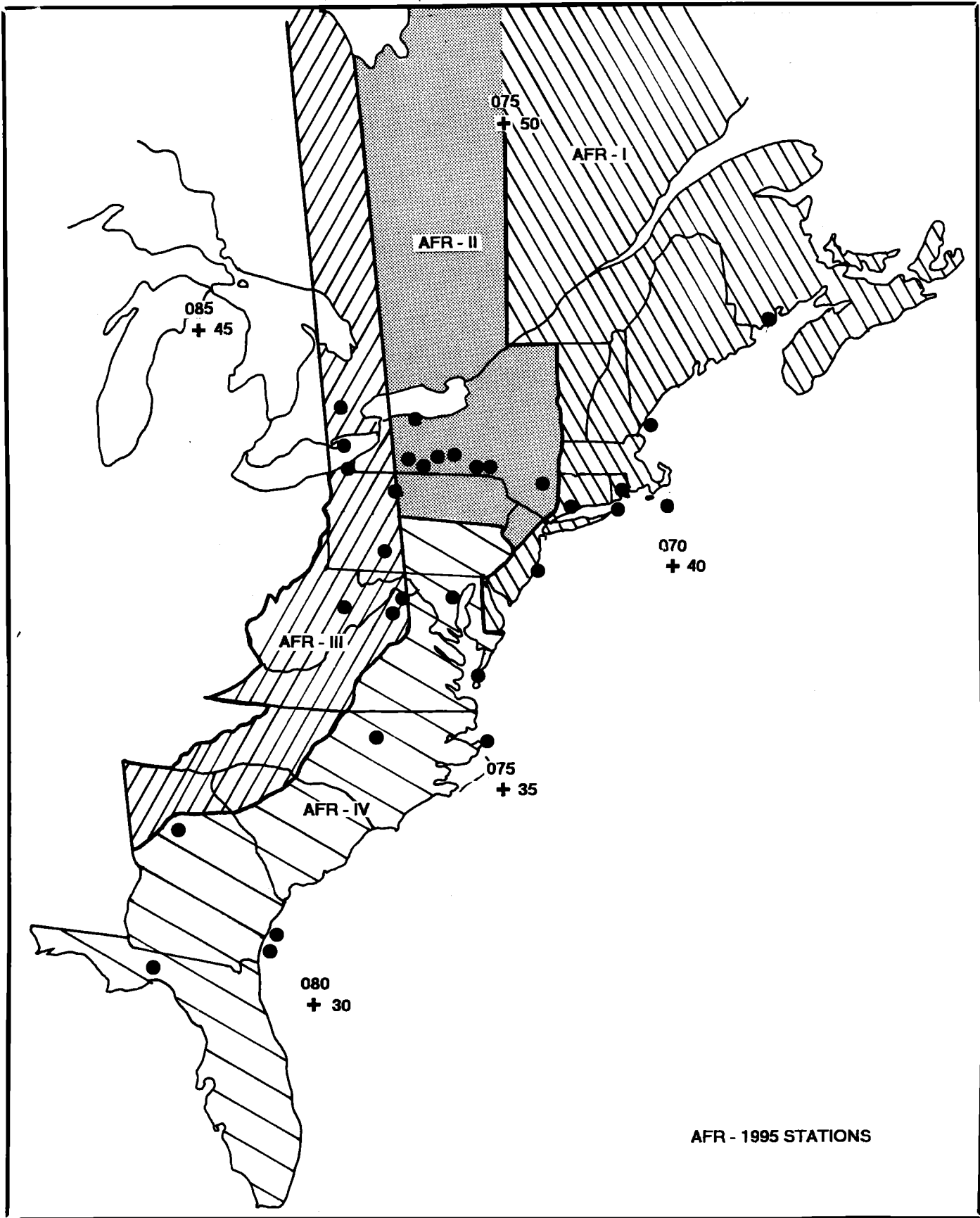
AFR III - WESTERN RIDGE REGION - will include the Sudbury/Georgian Bay area of Ontario, through the Lake Erie/Ontario gap, and down the Appalachians. I will coordinate this area (*Elizabeth Brooks*, 1435 Waterwells Rd., Alfred Station, NY 14803).

AFR IV - PIEDMONT/COASTAL PLAIN - will include most of the southern stations away from the ridge formerly covered in AFR V and will be coordinated by *David Leake* (113 Poteskeet Trail, Kitty Hawk, NC 27949).

Take a good look at the map (contributed by Sue Gregoire) which outlines the four AFR regions. There are many obvious gaps in coverage. We need additional reporting stations in these areas. If you run or plan a fall banding station in any of these areas and are willing to submit reports on a standardized form and use constant-effort methodology, contact an area coordinator for instructions and reporting forms.

I would like to thank John Gregoire for his thoughtful and creative approach to AFR geography, Sue Gregoire for her map work, and the other coordinators for their helpful input into the decision making process.

Elizabeth Brooks
AFR Coordinator



ESTABLISHING A STANDARDIZED PROTOCOL FOR CONTRIBUTING AFR FALL MIGRATION MONITORING STATIONS: A STATUS REPORT

Elizabeth W. Brooks AFR Coordinator

Protocol guidelines for bird banding stations contributing to the Atlantic Flyway Review's fall migration monitoring program were published by Clark (1978) and updated by Brooks (1991) using many of the criteria set by Chan Robbins for Operation Recovery in the mid-1950's. Mutchler (1990) expressed concern for the future of the AFR and Stewart (1985, 1986) urged better use of the data collected. Issuing strict protocol guidelines would serve to improve the quality of the AFR contribution to the study of migration in the Atlantic Flyway, but a realistic assessment of presently contributing stations indicates that only a very small percentage have the personnel and resources to operate under the strict protocol guidelines that an idealized migration monitoring program would demand.

An ideal migration monitoring protocol for a banding station should entail the following minimum requirements:

1. Consistent timing of operation from year to year, beginning in late July when locally breeding species leave the area and migrants begin moving in, and ending in mid-November when migrants have finished moving through the banding area;

2. Location in an area not influenced by feeders and large populations of local birds, and where an adequate volume of migrants is apparent;

3. Maintenance of a constant-effort banding operation where habitat is managed to minimize change, net size and placement is the same from year to year, hours of operation (at least for six hours beginning at dawn) are constant from day to day and year to year, and banding is conducted daily, unless weather or other conditions that would be detrimental to the health and safety of birds prevent it;

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4. Contributing to the analysis of AFR migration data by taking and submitting all the necessary ageing and sexing data along with accurate records of net hours, number of birds banded, number of species banded, percent hatching year, and birds-per-net-hour figures; and

5. Providing analysis of long-term trends through compilation of Standard Deviation or other statistical analyses of data and comparing these with data from other appropriate population monitoring programs such as BBS, BBC, WBPS, or CBC).

These would be the ideal minimum protocol requirements for banding stations submitting fall reports to the Atlantic Flyway Review. In actuality, of over 30 stations presently contributing records to the AFR, only two or three truly meet ALL the above protocol requirements. It is not a lack of desire to conform to a standardized protocol but rather the reality of the situation. Banders have jobs, family and community responsibilities, health concerns, and other commitments which often limit the time and resources they can contribute to migration monitoring. Some stations occasionally get so swamped that, for the safety of the birds, skulling must be temporarily abandoned. Other stations can get so inundated with migrants that constant net effort is unsafe for the birds. Some stations do not have computers to properly analyze data. Some stations are unable to continue operating past mid-October, while others cannot begin operations until after Labor Day.

As the present Coordinator of the Atlantic Flyway Review, I have sought to make this cooperative banding project an inclusive rather than exclusive endeavor, encouraging participation by both amateur and professional ornithologists alike. The AFR gives a wide variety of banders an important outlet for their work and

encourages standardization of effort and reporting along with analysis of local population trends while operating in a supportive, appreciative climate.

I believe there is value in every station's effort. Despite the inevitable difficulties in comparing such a wide variety of effort and sometimes less-than-ideal situations, the Atlantic Flyway Review presents a unique view of fall migration. It continues to have value, with over 13 stations submitting fall data for at least 15 years. Allegheny Front has just completed its 38th AFR season! Among the other long-term efforts are Powdermill and Kingston (35 years), Presque Isle (34 years), Kiptopeke (32 years), Block Island (28 years), and Farmersville Station (27 years).

The challenge is to continue efforts to standardize operations and reporting while finding creative and statistically valid methods to analyze AFR data. The cooperative study of the timing of movement of 22 selected species, initiated by

John Gregoire, is an example of such an endeavor and involves a large number of AFR stations. I welcome any suggestions which will improve the quality of AFR operations and make better use of the data being gathered.

LITERATURE CITED

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