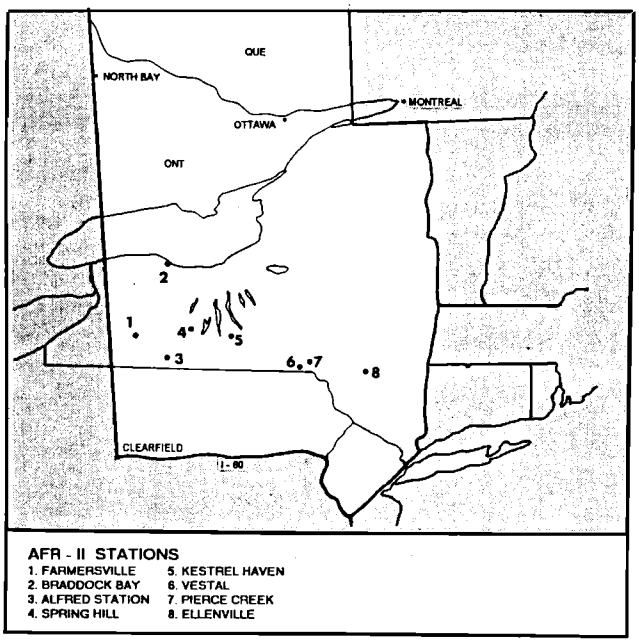
Atlantic Flyway Review: Region II (North Central) Fall 1996

John A. Gregoire, Coordinator
Kestrel Haven Farm Avian Migration Observatory
5373 Fitzgerald Rd
Burdett, NY. 14818-9626

Precipitation highs for the season and year were set throughout the region leaving all banders somewhat frustrated, species diversity lower and banding days sharply decreased by unsafe wind and rain conditions. A regional average of over fifty inches of precipitation fell in 1996, some twelve inches above the norm while "spring rains" continued through summer and fall; only August was considered close to normal.

We attempted to clarify the timing and movement of broad species classifications, e.g., thrushes, through the transect this fall. While we had hoped to get a handle on the gross timing of the migratory flow, the combination of station closures for weather and less than full time coverage at some stations made our attempt at a new table fruitless. We have incorporated some of these data into the station narratives and standard tables. The "best day" category is now followed by a brief indication of the predominant species that day and its percentage of the day's total. Species diversity is reflected in an entry depicting the stations' most diverse day and the number of species encountered that day. Diversity is also reflected as a percentage of total effort at the end of the "Most Frequently Encountered" table.

At least one station conducted daily point counts throughout the migratory period which demonstrated that this fall's migration did in fact take place at a pace similar to past years. It is so easy to blame our woes on a "poor



migration" when factors combine to limit our monitoring by banding. Wild food crops were also abundant this fall which served to keep birds away from feeders. Finally, the factors which govern weather, such as the jet stream configurations and southerlies caused by tropical depressions, served to accelerate movement early in July and August, inhibit and direct the flow in mid-season and open up again in very late fall. The result should appear as good years for stations in the central portion of the flyway, poor seasons along the Appalachian ridge and average to good coastal movement.

Finally, we would like to extend an invitation to banders operating fall stations in the area to join our cooperative reporting effort in the AFR. After all, to what end do we band if not to compile and share our knowledge and efforts?

Table 1. AFR II Summary of Operations 1996.

	Farmersville Station	Braddock Bay	Alfred Station	Spring Hill	Kestrel Haven	Vestal	Pierce Creek	Ellenville
Start	24 Aug.	17 Jul	26 Jul	27 Jul	24 Jul	01 Aug	27 Jul	N/A
Stop	16 Nov`	20 Nov	10 Nov	04 Nov	23 Nov	29 Oct	16 Sep	N/A
Total Days	21	32	86	13	72	59	7	N/A
Nets Used	4*	11-22.5	1-6	9-12.5*	1-19	4-12	10	N/A
Net Hours	277	2923	2111	754	2037	1182	360	N/A
No. Best Day	28	298	26	34	169	58	42	N/A
B D Date	15 Nov	11 Oct	14 Oct	12 Oct	08 Oct	20 Oct	03 Aug	N/A
Why Best Day	N/A	43% RCKI	38% WTSP 31% MYWA	52% WTSP	49% MYWA	77% Sparrow	43% SOSP	N/A
Best Diversity	10 on 26 Sep	28 on 20 Sep	10 on 10 Aug	15 on 06 Aug	24 on 03 Aug	16 on 20 Oct	11 on ??	N/A
Banded '95	435	2721	621	148	2683	1165	321	402
Banded '96	160	1724	499	197	2255	630	402	N/A
Species '95	37	75	62	37	92	67	42	46
Species '96	27	70	53	34	78	58	38	N/A
B/100 NH '95	6	88	29	24	122	92	46	41
B/100 NH '96	28	59	24	26	111	53	61	N/A
% HY '95	60	81	66	80	88	67	77	55
% HY '96	69	88	82	86	89	69	72	N/A

Table 2. AFR II Most Frequently Encountered Species 1996.

Farmersville Station			Braddock Bay			Alfred Station			Spring Hill		
Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY
AMGO(4)	34	94	WTSP(1)	299	97	SCJU(1)	81	72	GRCA(2)	27	85
SOSP	31	77	RCKI(4)	271	NA	BCCH(2)	61	91	WTSP(8)	21	100
SCJU(1)	20	NA	HETH(3)	117	93	MAWA(8)	46	94	SOSP(6)	19	100
BCCH(3)	14	70	GCKI(6)	100	NA	MYWA	26	70	REVI(3)	13	85
COYE(7)	12	75	AMGO	77	49	COYE(3)	26	86	AMRO	12	89
GRCA	11	71	BCCH(2)	73	90	BLJA	18	100	BCCH(1)	12	80
SWSP	9	67	MAWA	66	89	SOSP(4)	18	92	VEER(7)	9	100
MAWA	4	100	YWAR(5)	56	95	WTSP(9)	17	94	COYE(4)	9	89
WTSP(10)	4	75	SOSP(8)	44	75	RBGR(5)	16	94	SCJU	8	100
NOCA	3	67	BTBW	43	91	CEDW	15	73	PUFI	7	12
									OVEN(11)	7	100
% Total Banded	89			66			65			73	

NOTES: (#) Indicates ranking last fall.
(na) Not Attempted.

Table 2 (Contd.) . AFR II Most Frequently Encountered Species 1996.

Kestrel Haven			Vestal			Pierce Creek			Ellenville		
Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY	Species	#	% HY
SOSP(1)	456	96	WTSP(1)	81	56	SOSP(1)	70	90			
MYWA(9)	251	98	COYE(7)	56	86	GRCA(4)	37	81			
COYE(3)	198	94	GRCA(3)	54	89	AMGO(2)	17	59			
AMGO(3)	157	81	CEDW	48	71	FISP	12	83			
GRCA(2)	120	92	SOSP(4)	46	72	COYE	9	77			
YWAR(5)	70	83	SCJU(2)	28	54	AMRO(6)	8	88			
CEDW(11)	70	48	OVEN	24	96	BAOR	7	71			
WTSP(9)	69	98	REVI(5)	22	59	INBU	4	100			
SCJU(14)	55	67	CHSP	17	76	VEER	4	100			
HOFI(10)	50	98	AMRE	15	93	RBGR	3	67			
BCCH(4)	43	95									
% Total Banded	66			73			84				

NOTES: (#) Indicates ranking last fall.
(na) Not Attempted.

Farmersville Station 422-0782
Cattaraugus County, NY
Donald F. Clark

This is the 28th report for the Atlantic Flyway Review. A total of 160 birds of 27 species was banded, weighed and measured. This is about a third of those banded last year. This discrepancy was due partly to illness of the bander and horrible weather conditions during migration. I was able to band on only 21 days from 24 August to 6 September.

In addition to the record rains mentioned in the introduction, this end of the region had twenty-nine inches of snow in November. The only flocks of birds that came to the feeders arrived after the snows. They were mostly juncos and goldfinch with a few other sparrows.

Only 22 warblers of eight species were caught. No flocks or even individuals were observed feeding. Only one thrush was banded. The first ATSP arrived in mid November, stayed during the snowfalls and then disappeared. Flocks of geese came into the pond to rest during daylight hours. The top day saw over 300 on the pond. They stopped arriving after 13 November when the pond froze over. No neck-banded birds were observed this year.

We had no foreign retraps. One early winter banded ATSP was found dead two years after banding at North Bennington, VT. This fall was the first when bird feeders were not emptied each day. Normally, they are filled every morning but, there were several times this fall when it took five to seven days for them to be emptied. This exemplified the lack of sparrows, jays and finches in this area.

Alfred Station 421-0774
Allegany County, N.Y.
Elizabeth W. Brooks

The 19th year of fall banding at Alfred Station began on 26 July and ended on 10 November, for a total of 86 days of operation. From one to six mist nets were used, in the same locations as in previous years, for a total of 2111 net hours. A total of 499 birds of 53 species was banded (23.6 birds/ 100 net hours). There were no new species banded and the station's cumulative list for fall stands at 100 species.

Although the number of days of coverage is above the 19-year average of 71, there was essentially no banding done between 30 September and 11 October because that is the period I devote entirely to banding at Braddock Bay. Again this year, there were no really active days at Alfred. The best daily catch occurred on 14 October with 26 birds netted of six species, predominately WTSP (38%) and MYWA (31%).

I banded a high number (61) of chickadees in this, a non-eruptive year. Since 91% of them were HY birds, this may represent offspring of last year's eruptive birds that found suitable breeding habitat south of their natal area. Warblers were well represented species-wise (18) but only MAWA, MYWA, AMRE and COYE were banded in numbers over ten. AMRE (10) and BAOR (12) were at record high numbers. Thrushes were almost non-existent. with WOTH and GCTH missing entirely. Other species missing that have been netted in almost every other fall include TRFL, EAPH, WIWR, EATO, CHSP and FISP.

There were 155 repeats and 21 returns. An EAPH, a BCCH and a SOSP, all at least five years of age, were the most senior. A HOWR and a BCCH were at least four years while the remainder, of which nine were chickadees, was under three years of age.

Hypoboscid flies were found on 20 birds of 11 species. Feather lice were found on three birds (AMRE, RBGR and INBU). Six out of 15 CEDW banded had orange terminal tail bands. Injuries and abnormalities included an integrade flicker with two outer primaries and two outer retrices salmon in color and a NAWA displaying white crown feathers.

In summary, totals were slightly above the 19-year average while the birds/100 net hour ratio was just slightly below average. Although total net hours were just about average, banding on several potentially good days was abandoned because of

wet/windy weather. A banding demonstration scheduled at Foster Lake in September was washed out by hurricane "Fran".

Braddock Bay 431-0774
Monroe County, NY
***Elizabeth W. Brooks*, compiler**

This was the twelfth consecutive year of fall passerine banding at Braddock Bay. Banding was carried out at the Kaiser-Manitou Beach Banding Station by myself, Robert McKinney and Sharon Skelly with help from several volunteers. Fall banding began on 17 July and ended on 20 November with concentrated daily coverage from mid-September until Mid-October. Rain and wind prevented banding on quite a few days. On a total of 32 days there were 1724 new bandings of 72 species during 2923 net hours of operation. There were 59 birds banded per 100 net hours which is one-third lower than in 1995; our average is 68. The best day was 11 October with 298 birds banded of which 129 (43%) were RCKIs. The most species-diverse day was on 20 September when 28 species were banded.

From one to 23 mist nets were used in the same locations as in previous years. An aerial net was used on several days, and from one to three aerial nets may be built for future use. Vegetation in the study area is managed to minimize habitat change. BITH, CERW and BHCO were new species for the fall cumulative list which now stands at 104 forms. Our overall percent hatching year figure of 87.5% does not include kinglets as their skull pneumatization often completes by 1 October and most of our kinglets were banded after that date.

Positives included record high captures of nine species including HOWR (+3SD), RCKI (+4SD), SOVI (+3SD), TEWA, NAWA, MAWA (+2SD), BTBW (+2SD), BTGN and BBWA. All were above the average for the last eight years. There were quite a few negatives. Approximately 1000 fewer birds were banded in 1996 than last year, although 1996 totals were actually 400 birds greater than the station average of 1319. The 59 birds/100 net hours ratio was down from the station average of 68 and considerably under last year's ratio of 88. Two species made up a good portion of the lower numbers: BCCH (457 in 1995 and 73 in 1996) and WTSP (524 and 299). A species usually trapped but missing this season was WOTH.

Hypoboscid flies were observed on two RCKIs, two WTSP, one HETH and one HOFI. Injuries and abnormalities included a WIWR with a 3 mm tumor on the right foot, a YWAR with badly worn flight feathers on 26 July, a WTSP with a 3mm tumor on the right halix and a WTSP with orange-yellow lores.

There were 83 repeats and seven returns, the eldest of which was an AMGO banded in 1993 and returned at five years of age. Another AMGO, a BCCH and a SOSP were at four years with the remainder at two and three years. All repeats were re-weighed and fat scored as part of an ongoing stopover ecology project. The BBL sent word on two foreign encounters of fall-banded birds. A junco banded on 3 October 1995 was trapped and released by Ronald A. Canterbury on 7 April 1996 near Beckley, WV. This is 409 mi SW of Braddock Bay. A WTSP, also banded on 3 October 1995, was found dead on 21 March 1996 near Mercersburg, PA. This is 236 mi S of the banding station.

Weather was an adverse factor, especially during our concentrated effort period. We had many beautiful Indian Summer days with no birds followed by massive, fast-moving cold fronts that blew migrants right on by us. Our best day, 11 October, started with clouds and snow showers and ended with bright sun. Highlights of that day included a face to face meeting with our renegade skunk eating a bird in the bottom bag of a net, a shared bag of warm pumpkin fry cakes, the banding of 298 birds during shortened net hours and the best part of the day ... a quick view of the gorgeous hatching year female peregrine banded by Dan Niven at the Main Blind. Special thanks to John Lehr and Dave Semple who assisted so skillfully and patiently that day.

Negatives besides the weather were problems with a neighbor's cat who killed a number of birds forcing us to close part of our net set-up on several days. We set a Hav-a-Hart for the cat, caught the

skunk instead, released the skunk, and then discovered the skunk also taking birds from one of our nets !

Our volunteers were marvelous! We thank Mark Conti, Bob Dows, Jason Franz, Myrt Harding, John Lehr, Brian Mongi, Dan Niven, Dick O'Hara, Dave Semple, Jeanne Skelly, Doug and Lois Smith, Tricia Stanko and Paul Weld. Special thanks to Mike Lanzone for designing our new aerial net and to Gerry Leubner for his donation of equipment. We especially thank Bill and June Kaiser for their support and permission to band on their land, and Bob and Charlene Reed for housing.

Migration monitoring at Kaiser-Manitou Beach Banding Station is a research project of Braddock Bay Bird Observatory and is supported by the donations of its members.

Spring Hill Wildlife Sanctuary 423-0772
Steuben County, NY
Robert G. McKinney

In this, the fifth year of AFR banding at this site, covering thirteen days of operation, only 194 individuals of 34 species were banded. This was poorer than average. Banding was conducted from 27 July through 4 November, closing early for the season because of snow and cold. The diversity of warblers was disappointing, the poorest in the five years. There was one species surprisingly new for the sanctuary, a Brown Creeper. Obvious by their absence were SWTH, BTBW and ATSP which were present all other years. From 9 to 12.5 nets were used plus a few birds were captured with a four cell Potter trap, an all-purpose trap and a Government sparrow trap.

Kestrel Haven Farm
Avian Migration Observatory 422-0764
Burdett, Schuyler County, N.Y.
John and Sue Gregoire

By 31 October, high winds and rain had forced this station to remain closed for a record 39 days. November offered only a few hours of netting. Daily point counts were again conducted and served to further frustrate the banders as we watched migration blow by while documenting all the species missed. Despite that gloom, we had our second best season although diversity was at the lowest in five years with most misses occurring with fairly common species. No new species were encountered and the station total remains at 112.

We banded 2255 individuals of 78 species during 340 hours of operation on 72 days. We also had 465 repeats, 47 returns from previous years (lowest since 1992) and 164 birds not banded for a total of 2929 netted. Our measure of efficiency was our second highest at 111 birds banded per hundred net hours for newly banded birds and 144/100nh overall. Species not banded included a too quick BAWW, a bouncing BBCU, an unidentifiable black-legged, flat-headed sparrow in full molt and a host of HOSP, EUST and RTHUs. The latter were at an all time high of 114. Monarch butterflies were also passing through in high numbers with many stopping at our fields of aster and goldenrod during a long migratory period.

We enjoyed our first Ovenbird return. Returns included 18 Neotropical and some notable senior citizens. GRCA at 9 years, RWBL at 8+ years, two YWAR and a GRCA at 6+, DOWO, CHSP and BCCH at 6, three DOWO, RWBL, AMGO, BCCH and two SOSP at 5 years; others were from one to four years of age. We also had notification of an AMRO banded last November and recovered in Auburn, NY this May and a REVI banded last September which was recovered in Oakville, Ontario in June 1996.

Weather once again played a major role in the timing and routing of migrants. Although we had a few "traditional" movers in the form of Northwest fronts, tropical depressions and jet stream patterns provided strong southerly winds and an overall hindrance to migration. Despite closing so often for bad weather, we banded 770 in August, 521 in September and 718 in October. One wonders how much better it could have been. A huge turnout of MYWAs and COYEs contributed to our good total. Our 8 October record of 169 of 23 species banded was almost half MYWAs. On 3 August, we enjoyed 88 banded of 24 species of which 23% were YWARs. In all, we had nine days with over 50 individuals banded. Of 22 warbler species, seven were in double digits and two in triples.

Most species were within normal numbers and negative deviations may simply have been due to our closures for wind. Of note, thrushes, except for HETH, were low to none. We recorded ten year highs for ACFL (greatly expanding breeding range), WIWR, BWWA, MYWA, COYE, COGR and AMGO. BAOR, INBU and PUFI were in second highest numbers while we banded the most CHSP since 1989. Our concern for FISP was alleviated by the highest number of bandings since 1986. Overall, the wet weather made for poor hay farming and the more probable fledging of field nesting birds. Insect eating species benefitted by our longest and most intense outbreak of cluster flies, also known as buckwheat flies, the species (*Pollenia rudis*) provided ample food for migrating flycatchers who assisted our habitability by working around our home. You've got to experience these pests to understand why even the annual black fly time is preferable.

Photos and banding data on the five juvenal plumage LISPs banded here early last August have been accepted as a new record. Adding a hint of permanency, we banded a breeding female in late May 1996 with a fully developed, edematous brood patch; a male with prominent CP was banded this fall.

Parasites abounded this fall. Every species handled was host to hypoboscid flies and feather lice were abundant. We netted a BCCH whose wing and tail measurements were within CACH bounds. Strong fault bars were noted on both COYE and INBU while a YWAR presented with bilateral 2 mm bone spurs at the tarsal joints. A WOTH displayed pox on its bill between the nares and a HOFI had a 6 mm tumor on the right gape.

Much has been written on CEDW diet and yellow or orange tail bands. This season we had several HY and AHY with either color, some displayed new feathers of both colors and seven presented bands of yellow outlined in orange and the reverse! The latter may provide grist for a "punk-rocker" theory of diet/color.

On a more serious note, we had our first cases of *Mycoplasma* infection (conjunctivitis) in HOFIs. Five HY birds were afflicted; three of these were not symptomatic at banding but presented with fully involved blindness at later repeats. As the bacterium is quite infectious and vectored by contact, we eliminated any feeder which caused head contact (tubes,etc) and sought a means of field sanitization for our hands after handling affected birds at the nets. We found an ethyl alcohol lotion called PURELL at the pharmacy which is effective, easy to carry and pleasant to use. The use of such a product and routine hand washing when possible is highly recommended to mitigate our involvement as banders in the spread of this disease.

We ran the station without gaboons this year but are indebted to the Watkins Glen/ Montour Falls Lions for their enthusiastic support and to the following for much needed and appreciated grants of equipment, advice and assistance: Delorme Atlas Company, Dr. Barry Hartup,DVM and Dr. Opumadi, DVM, of Cornell Wildlife Veterinary Medicine, Gary Herzig of Herzig Publishing in Watkins Glen, Cortland Line Co. of Cortland, NY., Bird-watchers Digest, Country Home Products of Vergennes, VT, GOJO Industries of Akron, OH. and Spider Technologies of Helsinki, Finland. Finally, we are thankful for the many years of support, advice and example of Balbina Nowicki Gregoire who passed away in December 1996; she is remembered not only for her herself, but especially for her high ethical standards and her love of corvids, especially Blue and Gray Jays in Massachusetts.

Powderhouse Road Station 420-0755
Vestal, Broome Cty., NY.
Gail Kirch

August banding was normal with banding on 17 days, most of them from 16 August to 31 August. September and October banding was for the first time restricted to weekends. I tried banding early morning and late afternoon but the results did not justify the effort. September weekends were either rainy, very windy or foggy; only 113 birds were banded. October weekends were also poor for banding and characterized by rain, wind and frost. What banding was done produced average results when compared to past Octobers.

Much to my surprise, when I compared 1996

results to 1990-1995 means, the total look of the season came well within the mean. Exceptions were COYE (+1SD), CEDW (+2SD), CHSP (+5SD),and BCCH (-1SD). Birds per hundred net hours were concomitantly lower this year.

There was a bumper crop of small fruit on this station. Similar to 1994, many berries remained on the bushes after migration was over including Autumn Olive (*Elaeganus commutata*), a favorite food and Grey-stemmed Dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*), a berry usually eaten by the end of October. Both types of fruit were present through December. Bees produced bumper crops of late summer and fall honey. Strangely, butterflies were noticeably absent for the second summer in a row.

Pierce Creek Station **420-0755**
Binghamton, Broome Cty., NY.
Steve Rice

Due to an injury at work I was unable to run this station for a full season. I could band only until 16 September. Abbreviated operations included six nets operated from 27 July to 16 September for seven days while banding 190 birds of 21 species over 360 net hours. Rainfall was above average and berry crops (privet, elderberry and dogwood) were very good. I am looking forward to a full season next year.

Ellenville Station **414-0742**
Ellenville, Ulster Cty., NY.
Valerie M. Freer

Ellenville fell victim to the horrible banding weather. Limited net time produced few bandings and a further report is not waranted.