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EBBA'S PRESIDENT SAYS: A couple of years ago a new bander drove what would have been a good two days ride for Jeb Stuart's cavalry to let this bander in on a bright idea. His idea was simply to add another band to a bird's leg every time it returned! In this way he said, you could easily fill out the column (Number of Previous Returns) on one of those pesky Return Schedules. His enthusiasm waned when he was shown a Downy Woodpecker's record card with 9 returns, and when his attention was called to the abbreviated state of a woodpecker's undercarriage.

Most new ideas -- good ones and bad ones too -- originate when we rebel intellectually about some trifle that stands in our way. That bander obviously kept no Repeat or Return records, and rebelled against his banding homework. When he glanced thru the bird files at Washington Crossing he realized that the man (or was it a gal?) who invented the filing cabinet had a brighter idea than he had.

Investing both time and money in a card index system is worthwhile. At Washington Crossing every bird that repeats after banding has its own 4 x 6 card. When this bird "returns" its record card is moved from the repeat file to the Return File. Writing up annual returns is simply a matter of stacking the year's Return cards beside a typewriter. After this the Return cards are filed again in the Repeat Files, and if the birds return again the following year, the process is repeated. It is a simple matter to list the number of previous Returns, or to learn how many Returns, or Repeats the banding station has had during any period for any species.

A good Repeat File pays off in banding interest. You will be surprised how soon you become conscious of your birds as individuals. For example: at Washington Crossing we have a woodpecker that repeats only on rainy days! Another Downy repeated almost every day the station was open in November -- and in no other month, for four years! Some birds rarely repeat until they become older. Then waning strength brings them to the easy meal in the trap.

A good repeat file will provide the raw materials to answer those questions you ask yourself. How many resident Downies repeat in the summer?

How many Juncos or White-throated Sparrows stay only one or two weeks? How many of the ones that are not repeating show up after a heavy snow? Most of these problems you make up for yourself, your filing system can answer almost immediately. Sooner or later you may find that you have substantial evidence to support the belief that a certain species acts in a certain manner. A trip to Patuxent for corroborative information may provide you with the subject matter for a really important paper. Thus your banding has become more than a fox chase after birds. You have done what you began banding to do -- you have learned something new about the life and movements of wild bird populations.

Naturally you won't let a few records mislead you. But your own records are just as reliable as any others. What's more important, your records are records of still living birds that will compile even additional records. For example: at Washington Crossing a series of 31 Red-eyed Vireo adults were banded in 1954. Of these 60% have returned since in at least one other year. Five of those 31 birds returned in 1957! In less than half a minute it is possible to dig the whole vireo story out of the record files!

Alex Bergstrom, editor of Bird Banding, said over and over again during the informal banding meeting held during the AOU Convention in Cape May this September, that there is a real shortage of banding articles. Actually very little is definitely known about the lives and the movements of wild bird populations, altho almost every bander who keeps accurate Repeat records is in a position to turn up a new fact or so every so often.

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'THE RING' APPOINTS  
JOHN DENNIS CO-EDITOR

John V. Dennis, 17 Liberty St., Nantucket, Mass., has accepted the appointment as regional co-editor of THE RING, quarterly international journal of bird banding. As co-editor, John Dennis' duties will include taking care of a regular supply of news and information from our area, gaining new subscribers to THE RING, and serving on the journal's advisory board. All EBBA members are urged to feed John Dennis news and items suitable for this important banding publication. \*\*\*

OPERATION  
RECOVERY  
1957

Informal reports of the eleven stations taking part in Operation Recovery -- the cooperative banding study of the fall migration along the Atlantic Coast -- indicate more than 7300 birds banded. The Island Beach, New Jersey, station, under the leadership of Elise and Stanley Dickerson, led the way with 2786 birds of 91 species, September 7-21. EBBA members aiding the Dickersons included the Matlacks, the Townsends, Bill Pepper and daughter, Frank Frazier Sr & Jr, and others. A more detailed report will appear in the next issue -- and a formal paper is being prepared for BIRD-BANDING. \*\*\*