

OPERATION RECOVERY - 1959

By Albert Schnitzer

The Atlantic seaboard from Canada on down is festooned with a fringe of peninsulas and barrier reefs. It seems apparent that as the various birds reach tide line on their fall migration south, they are confined to the coastal belt because the land falls away westward. Each tapered finger of these peninsulas and barrier reefs constitutes a funnel along which the birds concentrate, especially near the southern extremity of each of these points of land.

Netting of the hosts of migrants at these fortunately situated spots has been practiced as far back as 1951. In 1956 the efforts of a number of the banders at some of these spots were coordinated, common purposes defined, and common procedures fixed. The name Operation Recovery was adopted for this cooperative project.

Most of you are familiar with this operation. For those who are not, I refer you to the articles by Jim Baird and others in Bird-Banding; and by Stanley Dickerson in EBBA NEWS. Baird describes the operation as a whole. Dickerson deals with Island Beach, specifically.

The nature of the terrain and of the flora at Island Beach make it particularly adaptable to netting. Except for the slight roll of the dunes, the terrain is quite flat and since the shrubs and bushes into which the birds drop to feed rarely exceed 6 or 8 feet, it is clear that once the birds are down, they are unlikely to pass over the nets as they hurry along their course. For this reason the operation at Island Beach has been singularly successful.

This year Operation Recovery at Island Beach will commence on September 4th and will be maintained through October 3rd. It is anticipated that this will cover the peak of the warbler flight and a fair portion of the sparrow flight.

We are hoping to find the answers to a number of local problems such as flight direction and their causes. It is planned to have a competent crew of observers whose efforts will be coordinated by Joe Jehl. He and his men will be the only participants who will not be engaged in actual netting, or measuring, weighing, and recording of birds. Joe plans a rigorous schedule of field observations, most of which will be made dusk to dawn.

Netting cooperators and others to measure, weigh, and record are welcome but in order to provide continuity to the figures, volunteers who are available only for week ends may have to yield place to those who will be available for longer periods of time.

It goes without saying that netting volunteers must have their netting licenses and a reasonable amount of experience. The exacting and arduous conditions at Island Beach demand netters of proven competence. It is also hoped to have schedules arranged by August 1st. It would therefore be appreciated if volunteers would communicate with me before August 1st and in their first communication would indicate the dates when they will be available.

I spoke of exacting and arduous conditions. To minimize this would be misleading. On the other hand I could not overplay the sense of excitement that permeates the entire operation. It is true that when your alarm sounds before sunrise, you'd like to step upon it heavily and amputate its reveille, but there is no denying how intensely you are affected by the rosy fingers of dawn stretching toward you out of the sea, the roar of the surf, and the anticipation of unusual finds as you rush to examine your nets. I can see no logical reason why you cannot have similar sensations right in your own home banding station. It can only be that your susceptibilities are keener when you can see from horizon to horizon, smell the salt spray in your nostrils, feel the earth quiver under the impact of the waves, and look forward to a day of camaraderie with you fellow enthusiasts.

155 Wild Hedge Lane, Mountainside, N.J.

FOR SALE
To EBBA members only
MULTI-CELL GATHERING CAGES

Light weight, wooden, beautifully finished with Spar varnish. These boxes are made to order, with costs of materials and small labor charge by hobbyist. Prices as follows:

8 cell . . .	\$10.00
10 cell . . .	12.50
12 cell . . .	15.00
15 cell . . .	18.75
16 cell . . .	20.00

May be ordered through Treasurer. Will be shipped collect.