

RECURRENCE OF CASUALTIES AT GATLINBURG SKI RESORT

By Richard Zani

On October 10, 1967, Park Guide Glenn Cardwell and I received a report at Sugarlands Visitor Center of a large bird kill on Mt. Harrison near the condominium above the Gatlinburg Ski Resort (Tennessee). The visitor making the report said that there were hundreds of dead birds. This sounded similar to a kill reported in late September-early October of 1965 from the same area.

Upon investigating we counted approximately 400 birds in the area of the Mt. Harrison condominium and learned of another hundred at the Ski Resort lower down the mountain. We did not pick up every bird seen, but took one or two of each species that was found. These were later examined for identification only and 22 species were determined; a list of these is given below.

Most notable were two Sora Rails. This bird has been recorded only seven times previously in this area. Most numerous was the Yellow-billed Cuckoo with about 80 birds found. In 1965 there were only a few cuckoos killed. It was also noted that none of the birds was banded.

We checked the weather for the two nights before the 10th and learned that on the night of October 8-9 there was a low of 50° and heavy fog, and on the night of October 9-10 there was a low of 40° and rain. The birds were apparently moving ahead of a cold front and encountered Mt. Harrison in the dense fog. It appeared, from the way they were scattered about, that these birds had collided with the trees as well as with the buildings and utility poles. From the condition of the birds, we concluded that they must have been killed on the night of October 8-9.

A similar kill occurred in 1965, at about the same time, in the same area and in the same manner, when 42 species totalling 1915 birds were killed in a dense fog. While this recent occurrence was only one-fourth as large as the kill in 1965, many of the same species were found. The Sora Rail is the only additional species that was not found in 1965.

Following is a list of the species found dead on Mt. Harrison:

Sora Rail	Black-throated Blue W.	Ovenbird
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Black-throated Green W.	Yellowthroat
Black-billed Cuckoo	Blackburnian Warbler	Hooded Warbler
Catbird	Chestnut-sided Warbler	American Redstart
Swainson's Thrush	Bay-breasted Warbler	Scarlet Tanager
Nashville Warbler	Prairie Warbler	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Magnolia Warbler	Palm Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Cape May Warbler		

References

1. Savage, Thomas. Casualties at Ski Resort, Gatlinburg. The Migrant, Vol. 36, No. 4, p. 81, December 1965.
2. Stupka, Arthur. Notes on the Birds of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, p. 56. University of Tennessee Press, 1963.

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T H E R I N G

As a fellow bander, I would like to bring to your attention a periodical which I consider a MUST for every bander. This periodical, The Ring, is the only truly international bird banding bulletin being published today.

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Having banded for a while in Germany, I feel well qualified to say that European banders look upon the American banding scheme with great awe. They realize how fortunate we are in having such a fine banding laboratory with the latest electronic data processing equipment. So, why not let our European, Asian, African and Pacific friends hear about your accomplishments by writing something about them, and at the same time, let their accomplishments add to your knowledge and enjoyment?

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