



It is difficult to start this column on a cheerful note because we have lost not only a very good friend but one of our finest and most conscientious banders. Elise Dickerson has been a wonderful inspiration and close consultant to me in preparing the Atlantic Flyway Review. Despite the fact that she was always so fully occupied with the administration of her own banding station and her work for EBBA as Treasurer, she has helped me with nearly every column. Her letters were always enlightening and made the most pressing editorial problems seem easy. Further, she was co-editor of The Ring and has given me a great deal of help in that department. I will always remember Elise and I know you will too.

Papers and Notes. If you have something significant to add to literature, EBBA News or this column solicits your papers. The objective of this column is to report on Operation Recovery and related studies. Though "related studies" covers a broad field, we are particularly interested in migration studies, whether spring or fall. Perhaps you aren't the "writing type" - it does not matter. I'll be more than happy to help you write an article; the more people writing, the more data is going to be passed between stations.

Eventually and regardless of the types of study programs currently popular, I'd like to see this column or the "O.R. Committee" which I chair, become a liaison group to document and keep files on who does what. At present, the ornithologist is unable to obtain selective data from the banding laboratory for certain stations (data must be requested by geographical area). If EBBA should institute such a group of people to act as liaison, all these mass banding, migration stations would then be able to operate as a more closely knit unit, an ideal never achieved under the Operation Recovery program. When we achieve this goal (and remember... Rome was not built in a day!) EBBA can justifiably boast of having one of the largest bird study programs in the world. What I am trying to describe in the next couple of paragraphs is a start.

Atlantic Flyway Recovery Report. Over the years, reading all sorts of foreign banding and ornithological journals, I've noticed one important feature stand out: review of recovery data. Neither Bird Banding, nor EBBA nor IBB News lists recovery information, except as some authors do so in their papers. This is a serious shortcoming when one considers the advantages of such a review: all EBBA members can learn from each recovery; and banders and ornithologists, writing papers, can freely quote from this source of recovery data and need not bother the already over-burdened banding laboratory.

No project suggested in this column can turn out successful without your full cooperation. Three issues of O.R. reports have just been published this year which, without your cooperation, would have been mediocre at best. This recovery data project, too, needs your help. If every bander takes five minutes, either sends me a Xerox copy of the "report to the bander" card or write me the following information: band number, species, age, sex, date & location where banded, date & location where recovered; how obtained and present condition (numerical data is OK). See the March 1966 issue of "Bird Banding Notes" issued by Mr. Baysinger's office, for explanation of the numerical codes.

Since we cannot just start in the middle of the year, I'll accept all recoveries and interesting returns (showing age record, etc.) as of January 1, 1969. Important: this project is for all banders, not only for O.R. participants, so tell your friends about it too! It has nothing to do with the "Foreign Recovery Information Exchange" published in recent issues of EBBA News, which is intended merely to promote contact between recoverers and banders and to hasten exchange of recovery information until the banding laboratory is in a position to do so more quickly. The recovery data I will want to publish is data gleaned from the completed "report to the bander" card.

The first three issues of the year are devoted to Operation Recovery station reports, so only four to eight of these recoveries will be listed in those issues; the balance will be covered in the other three issues of the year. A recovery will be marked (Rc), a return (Rt), each entry will be numbered consecutively, but the banders' names will not be included. This is to prevent loss of precious printing space. I'll keep a log of all the information, so if anyone wants to know who banded a particular bird, I'll be happy to let them know. The month's entries will be at the end of this column, as it will be in each issue from now on.

Who Needs Help? So far, not many requests for help have been received from O.R. station leaders. (This doesn't mean that help is not needed; see the March-April '69 EBBA News for a map and listing of stations and leaders, and the May-June issue for their addresses. Anyone interested should feel free to contact O.R. station leaders. -Ed.)

As indicated in the previous issue, help is needed at Cape May O.R. - contact George Hitchner, 58 Kenton Ave., Pitman, N.J. 08071. Here's a nice station, not too big. You won't get swallowed up in the crowds. You can rough it, or softer accommodations are nearby. The birding is also excellent. In any case, please contact George!

At Tobay banding station (Long Island) we can also use help, but since we work on weekends only (and have no banding quarters) we can only use people on a day basis. Anyone having experience removing birds from nets are more than welcome. Banders are needed too, but it would be necessary

for them to use bands of either Tom Davis or myself. If anyone is interested, my address can be found at the end of this column; my telephone number is 212/657-5673.

Next Issue... If you have any interesting recoveries (recovered prior to Jan. 1, 1969) which reflect "reverse migration patterns", I'd like to publish them in the next issue. If every bander would take a few minutes to sift through his "report to the bander" cards, many could be gathered together. Please send this data to me, no later than August 15, 1969. Recoveries after January 1, 1969 (of any kind) can be mailed to me at any time, for publication as they are received, in each AFR column.

More Help Wanted: Two more requests were received as this column was on its way to the Editor - The Manomet Bird Observatory begins full time operation on August 5, 1969. There are accommodations for a few banders or assistants. Contact the Director: Mrs. Kathleen S. Anderson, Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, Mass. 02345.

The Kiptopeke Beach O.R. station can use helpers, and banders; those interested should contact Frederic R. Scott, 115 Kennondale Lane, Richmond, Va. 23226. Station operation has been tentatively set from August 31 to October 19 or 26.

Bird Banding: A Hobby or a Vocation? One of the Banding Laboratory's favorite questions is, why are you banding? With the growing interest in banding, I think it would be helpful to examine our objectives at this time, just prior to another fall banding season.

Since this column is part of EBBA News, a journal read by all members and not only those directly involved with Operation Recovery, let us get very basic for a moment. Why did you apply for a banding permit? Was it because you saw others banding, and figured that it would be a nice past-time? Was it because you were a bird-watcher and thought you'd be able to see more birds this way? Or because as a bander you would be considered one of the "elite" of your bird club? Surely few of our readers could answer "yes" to any of the above, but if such were your reasons for requesting a permit, then you're barking up the wrong tree!

If your reason was that you wanted to contribute to a detailed study of a species or several species, then you've latched on to something...and I hope you stick with it. My next question is: if this was indeed your reason, how is it that there is so little data being passed back and forth between banders and banding stations? Could it be that we are competing with each other? Or is it simply that you aren't the author-type and have no intention of publishing anything?

Banding birds, then, should be much more than a hobby. To those who have worked in Operation Recovery in the past, I'd say that if you still

feel it is only a hobby, perhaps you ought to go back to running a one man station or stick to one type of study program. I realize that the great mounds of paperwork approach a form of drudgery and the resultant workload is greater than most people would want to attack in their respective places of business. Of course, there's always an alternative: if you want less paperwork, you simply band fewer birds!

At this point, many readers will wonder if I am here to attack banding, or if I'm trying to change the system. Neither. I merely invite you to think back objectively to the day when you first received your banding permit and ask yourselves, "Did I accomplish what I set out to do?"

Before you start this year's fall operation, I think it is most important to examine what you're trying to accomplish. The approach. "well, I'll just band and see what interesting project I can latch onto" is no good! Let's face it, here are three months, 90 days of toil, yes, hard work, and it would be pretty discouraging if at the end of it you have to admit to yourself, "I learned nothing".

What study can I do? That is a question I've asked myself so often. I've answered my question meanwhile. The answer did not reach me overnight, but this is how I went about solving the problem. I first examined my surroundings. I looked at the ecology of the place where I band. What are the major forms of plant life? I then examined the birds (from a bird-watcher's point of view) which normally come through the area at different seasons of the year. I figured that the spring migration wasn't so good, and a question came up - is this because all of the birders go to a different area, so that accurate figures for my banding area were lacking? Secondly, I set out to examine the various populations of birds. From past reviews in regional periodicals (Audubon Field Notes and others) I gleaned data on breeding populations. My own records (retrap records) indicated which birds were the breeders and which were not. Examine your past banding records. What interesting factors are hidden in all that mass of data? First of all, take a look at the adult-immature ratios. If, at your banding station, there is a preponderance of immatures in one or more particular species...why? Unless you compare your data with that of neighboring banding stations, you won't get the total picture. Are all those immature birds nearly emaciated when you catch them; in what weather conditions is this condition prevalent? If fat classes and weights are not taken...this information would not be available.

I am not saying that it is a crime not to take weights and measurements, nor am I saying that one who does not take this data is any less of a bander. What I am saying is that if you do not take this very basic data, then what data ARE you taking? Just because the Banding Schedule (Form 3-860) does not call for physiological data, does not mean that it should not be recorded. If as much data as possible is not taken, does it not appear that we are really birdwatching with mistnets rather than with field glasses?

The key to the problem may be that too many banders band for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, so to speak, and not for their own improvement in ornithology. We must remember at all times that the Banding Laboratory is primarily a collection agency for data which has to be entered in a central file. They are not interested in certain data because their computer oriented filing system is not geared to take that kind of data. The motivation you should have is that you are banding to learn more about ornithology and related sciences, and while you're at it, while you have this august opportunity, take as much data as you can!

There are many pros and cons to what I'm saying. The foregoing is intended only as an aid, to help evaluate our work, rather than as any sort of criticism. I've been guilty of so-called "ringing and slinging" too, and probably will again. I try not to ring-and-sling, though! Occasionally, particularly during O.R., it has been said if you have no time to band all the birds you net, throw them away unbanded. With this I firmly disagree. Though I discourage banding merely for the sake of banding, rather than for the sake of gathering information - the bird you throw away unbanded may be the one which is picked up in Argentina! With the small recovery ratios, we cannot take a chance. What I'd do, is close up my traps so no more birds can get caught, but I'd band everything caught up to that point, even if I miss a weight or a measurement here and there.

Atlantic Flyway Recovery Report

1. (Rc) Saw-whet Owl, 372; AHY-F 524-21171
 04-07-68 - JFK Wildlife Refuge, Nassau County, New York
 01-12-69 - So. Portland, Cumberland County, Maine. Found shot.
 2. (Rc) Myrtle Warbler, 655; HY-U 116-39872
 10-28-67 - JFK Wildlife Refuge, Nassau County, New York
 02-21-69 - Miami, Dade County, Florida. Found dead.
- 139-48 85th Drive, Jamaica, N.Y. 11435



With the passing of the Treasurer, who was also a very dear friend, we cannot escape the thought that this column, adorned with Dorothy Bordner's delightful and often humorous drawings, is perhaps not quite appropriate for this issue...it will reappear in its usual form in the next.

Many readers will recognize the cover picture, representing "Harrier Hill", the name the Dickerson's gave their Block Island home...the drawing appears on their Block Island stationery.

Deadline for the next issue is September 1. Please send us material for publication as far ahead of Sept. 1 as possible.