

## MORE MIGRANT WARBLER RETURNS

By L. S. Ryan

In EBBA News, 32:1, p. 32, I reported the possible migrant return of a Nashville Warbler (Vermivora ruficapilla). This bird and the others which returned in 1969 were banded seven miles northeast of Little Falls, Minnesota (coordinates 460-0941) in or near an alder-willow edge of a cattail swamp. The returning birds are as follows:

Nashville Warbler	113-63686	U, U	Banded	8/23/66	Returned	9/27/68
Nashville Warbler	117-14226	AHY, M	"	8/8/68	"	9/6/69
Nashville Warbler	117-14275	U, M	"	8/21/68	"	8/12/69
Tennessee Warbler	117-14209	AHY, F	"	7/24/68	"	7/29/69

The Tennessee Warbler (Vermivora peregrina) is clearly only migratory in this area. Both Robert's Birds of Minnesota and Mrs. John C. Green (personal correspondence) indicate that a nesting Tennessee would be very unlikely. In addition, no Tennessee's have been captured or seen in the area in the period June 1 through July 15.

As indicated in my previous article, it is possible that the Nashvilles could have been nesting bird returns rather than migrants. Four birds have been captured in the June 1 to July 15 period in this area from 1965 to 1969. No additional nesting period birds were captured or seen in 1969. After adding the 1969 banding results, the ratio of migrants to nesting season birds is 518 to 4. None of the three returning Nashvilles was captured during the nesting period. While of course I cannot be positive, the evidence indicates to me that at least some, if not all three, of the returning Nashvilles are truly migrant returns.

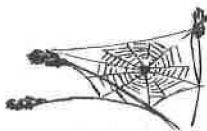
In Ian C.T. Nisbet's article "Returns of Transients: Results of an Inquiry" (EBBA News 32:6, pp. 269-274) he points out that while migrant returns are very rare, the occurrences are not statistically even. Some places have far more than their share of these migrant return warblers. He suggests that one reason for this might be a "weak homing" to a point between their breeding and wintering places possibly to fatten up for the long migratory flight. I do have some evidence that this might be true and that my location might be one of these spots.

My swamp area is perhaps 60 acres in size with an edge of nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length. My nets are set in four lanes covering about a 300-yard section of this edge, which is a bit over 10% of the total edge of this swamp. There are many other similar swamps in the township and throughout this section of Minnesota. I have set my nets once every two weeks from June 1 to July 15 and an average of twice a week in May and from July 15 through October 5 for the years 1966-1969. Thus it would seem that if the birds moved through the area at random and kept moving from place to place, my chance of repeats, let alone returns, would be slight. Yet the facts are different.

Only one Nashville and no Tennessees out of 123 spring birds have been caught on a subsequent day. Spring birds apparently move right through. Of the 61 Nashvilles banded in July and August, 12 or 20% repeated a week or more later. Of the 173 Tennessees banded in July and August, 25 or 16% repeated a week or more later. Thus an appreciable number stay. (To fatten up?) Many of these birds extended their stay into September as indicated by repeats in this month. Only three (all Nashvilles) of the larger total of September and early October Nashvilles and Tennessees stayed as long as a week.

All four of the migrant returns were originally banded in the early part of the fall migration; however, none of these repeated in either of the years. Perhaps this stopping-off, for as long as 49 days, creates a weak homing instinct for an intra-migratory spot and is a reason for the comparatively high number of migrant returns at this swamp in Morrison County, Minnesota.

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#### FOREIGN RECOVERY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

It seems that when we begin to get discouraged at the response to this column, it picks right up! Of the five foreign recoveries listed in the last issue, four have been heard from.

Two of these are published in this issue's Atlantic Flyway Review: for Blue Jay 663-71392, see page 48; and for White-throated Sparrow 105-120114, see page 45. The other two are:-

Red-winged Blackbird 632-91503 banded by G.R. Cavileer on Jan. 1, 1967 at Port Republic, N.J., taken by Mrs. R.W. Foy at Ship Bottom, N.J. on Sept. 30, 1969.

Redstart 119-56541 banded by William Pepper at Island Beach on Sept. 29, 1969, retrapped three days later at Ship Bottom, N.J. (about 15 miles to the south) by Mrs. R.W. Foy on October 2. Though not very distant, it is a clear case of the rare "direct recovery".

Five more newly reported foreign recoveries - check your records! -

Hermit Thrush	105-184372	Evening Grosbeak	632-95310
Myrtle Warbler	122-02040	Slate-colored Junco	109-10189
Myrtle Warbler	121-77542		