



Atlantic Flyway Review



A REVIEW OF OPERATION RECOVERY AND RELATED SUBJECTS

Edited by Frederick S. Schaeffer

A brand new year is upon us again so, somewhat belatedly, may I wish you a Happy New Year. Although this issue's column is a review of the New England Operation Recovery stations, I would like to begin with a review of the influence of weather upon migration - a most important subject and yet few of us know how to interpret it. Before going into this, I would like to make a few comments relative to the O.R. Committee.

It is obvious that we need to band more birds to gain some insight into the mysteries of migration. This is brought out noticeably in Dr. Ian Nisbet's gallant attempt to work up the non-breeding transient return records (EBBA News 32:6, 269-274). Although we undoubtedly agree on this point, it is equally important that we take data which can be used now or later to substantiate points of evidence such as Dr. Nisbet is working on. It is very important that birds be recorded in the field in chronological order of capture, later to be transferred to the individual bander's own records. In this way, the field record sheets can be returned to the station leader so that a permanent field record is available for each station, for use by EBBA, AFR or other interested parties. It may appear easier for some individual banders to use EBBA record sheets or similar forms as field records (by band number) but this makes the work of the station leader or, particularly, one trying to study the data, virtually impossible. Whatever study EBBA intends to implement, I can assure you that paperwork will not be as vast as in previous years and data will be asked which is now routinely taken.

Some readers have been suggesting that a different name for "Operation Recovery" be considered, something more representative of EBBA. This would presumably either be an abbreviation of a long name or a short name spelled out. I would be most interested in having more comments, on the merits of changing the name, and suggestions for a new name.



One more very important point - I have been having a good deal of trouble with mail delivery and have therefore rented a post office box: please use, instead of my home address, the following: P.O. Box 3295, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017.



Weather and Migration. We all realize that one of the strongest influences upon migration is the weather. Interpreting weather patterns is tricky, and perhaps the following comments will be of assistance.


There are three basic weather characteristics which will invariably affect migration: barometric pressure (in millibars on official weather

maps), wind speed and direction, and temperature. When there is a stationary cold front over your area, the barometer generally low, strong winds from the west, some low clouds and/or rain, there is usually no bird movement. When this cold front moves out of the area, temperatures drop, barometric pressure will rise, skies will clear and with northwest/west winds migration begins. Often in early fall, we may get a warm front coming from the Gulf area while the aforementioned cold front disappears over the ocean. The barometer will then gradually drop, temperatures will begin to rise, it will be generally partly cloudy perhaps with some light precipitation on south or southeast winds. At this point, birds will move considerably and even as the warm front moves through your area and pressure and temperature rise, migration will still go on full swing. Once this warm front passes your area to the north or northeast and winds begin to turn southwest, migration will slow down considerably. As the warm front dissipates or merges with a new cold front forming over Canada, you will note the barometer to drop again, there will be slight easterly winds and perhaps some rain or fog (temperatures rising), migration slows even more. This brings the cycle back to the cold front stationary over your area, when all movement once again ceases.

Much of the foregoing will be Greek to anyone not familiar with weather maps; space does not allow a lengthy dissertation on map symbols but here are some of the basic ones:

Cold front:  Wind direction (NW): 

Warm front:  Wind speed (shown: NW at 8 to 12 mph.): 

Stationary front: 

The temperature figure is always to the left of the dot (the dot itself denotes cloud cover) of the city, while the barometric pressure is always to the right with a + or - denoting rise or fall in the previous three hours. A fraction (e.g., .45) given directly below the barometric reading gives precipitation in inches in the past six hours.

I think it would be most helpful to read Bob Yunick's station report first as it is a very complete review of the area weather situation throughout the August-October period. I will attempt to do such a review in subsequent issues but can only do so when I have a complete day-by-day summary of at least two stations representative of the total area. As Bob indicates, there was a minor movement on Aug. 1-2, a heavier one on Sept. 19-20 and 27-28 and the last three weekends in October were rather active.

For anyone who would like to follow the weather more closely, a "Daily Weather Maps - Weekly Series" can be had for \$7.50 per year from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.S. 20402.

Statistical Summary

I would like to thank each and every one of you for the prompt submission of your figures. If a station failed to reply, the columns will be left blank, and we can only assume that you have no further interest in participating - if I am mistaken, please let me know right away! Stations marked with an asterisk (*) are new for 1969 or were not in operation in 1968. Ocean City will be terminated as of 1969. BFNHx100, right-hand column, means birds per 100 net hours; last year's figures are shown also, for the sake of comparison. @ means approximately.

Station and Leader	# of Nets	Net Hrs.	Indiv.	Spec.	BFNHx100 '69/'68
<u>Ontario</u>					
Bradley M., M.J. Wolcott	20-25	2520	2311	73	91 / -
<u>Maine</u>					
Mt. Desert, B. Patterson	5	890	532	54	59 / 63
<u>Vermont</u>					
Marshfield, M. Metcalf	7	1665	1083	62	65 / -
S.Londonderry, B. Downs	(traps)	-	785	38	-
<u>Massachusetts</u>					
East Chop, G. Meleney	5	461.5	240	28	52 / 22
Manomet Bird Obs., Anderson	Av. 38	31178	4828	104	15 / 30
Nantucket, E. Andrews	1-5	773	1211	56	156 / 214
Lincoln*, D. Howard	12	3801	869	55	22 / -
Siasconset	Not in operation				
<u>Rhode Island</u>					
Block Island, E. Lapham		2412	3486	96	144/150
Kingston, D. Krauss					
<u>New York</u>					
Bedford Hills, D. Junkin	Not in operation				
Vischer Ferry, R. Yunick	13-41½	3813	2387	77	63 / 68
Tiana Beach, L. Wilcox	5-9	574	@1739	} - 79	234 / 227
E. Moriches, L. Wilcox	5-9	381	@ 496		
Manorville, G. Raynor	3-10	2154	779	49	36 / 31
Brookhaven, D. Puleston	Av. 15	2516	2426	83	96 / 104
Fire I. Light, P. Buckley	Av. 15	3226	6279	103	194 (Sep-Nov)
Tobay, F. Schaeffer	Av. 15	3466	5741	94	165 / 164
Atlantic Beach, R. Cohen			2216		
Farmersville*, Clark	Av. 6	2410	416	56	17 / -
<u>New Jersey</u>					
Sandy Hook, R. Rosche					

<u>Station and Leader</u>	<u># of Nets</u>	<u>Net Hrs.</u>	<u>Indiv.</u>	<u>Spec.</u>	<u>BPNHx100</u> <u>'69 / '68</u>
<u>New Jersey (cont.)</u>					
Island Beach, K. Price	Av. 14	8952	12137	120	135 / -
Mariedor*, J. Schmid	7-10	992	796	43	80 / -
Cape May Point, G. Hitchner					
<u>Maryland</u>					
Monkton, S. Simon					
Chestertown, D. Mendinhall	4-37	14800	3910	93	24 / 36
Ocean City, C. Robbins	24	6357	2234	84	28 / -
Irish Grove*, G. Cole	Av. 18	13512	4109	93	30 / -
Rock Run, D. Hackman					
Kent Point, D. Bridge					
Bellevue*, H. Armistead		2481	1381	75	55 / -
<u>Virginia</u>					
Kiptopeke, B. Scott et al.	Av. 42	18439	10425	105	56 / 66
<u>West Virginia</u>					
Allegheny Front, G. Hall et al.		1501	1469	57	97 / 112
<u>Pennsylvania</u>					
Presque Isle, R. Leberman		1045	703	53	67 / 90
Friendsville*, C. Gottschall	6	1500	592	62	39 / -
Elverson, J. Cadbury					
<u>Florida</u>					
Homestead, I. Fisk	15	6122	1763	68	24 / 38
Loxahatchee, P. Sykes					

Station Reports. You will note that some of the stations elected to use only the abbreviated report, some wrote an addition to it, and some asked me to write an extract from their often very long reports.

MOUNT DESERT - Maine - Barbara Patterson

Mount Desert is located one half mile south of Somesville, Hancock County, Maine, at 442-0682 (on Mt. Desert Island). Mrs. Patterson reports that she worked the station from August 30 to October 16, but only four days in October. Total days operated were 25. She uses five nets per day of banding and total net hours came to 890. She banded 532 birds of 54 species, with the occasional help of William Townsend. About 75% of the birds were fully processed.

Most numerous were the American Redstart (55), Parula Warbler (34), Nashville Warbler (32) and Magnolia Warbler (30).

Blackpolls were at an all time low but this may be partially due to the fact that no banding was done from September 14 through 20. The best day was September 3 with a total of 93 birds of 30 species in 58 net-hours. A warm front was moving up the coast, with easterly winds, rain over most other parts of New England.

SOUTH LONDONDERRY - Vermont - Betty Downs

Mrs. Betty Downs was plagued by heavy rains in August and September and her husband has been convalescing, so her banding suffered a little. Nevertheless she managed 785 birds of 38 species. All birds are caught by means of ingeniously constructed water traps, and she uses no nets (see EBBA News 32:5, p. 236).

The station, located on her property (Glebe Farm) at 431-0724 lies along the side of Glebe Mountain. Whereas her yard is fairly level, the mountainside abruptly begins where her yard ends. There is a small pond and many feeders but these do not seem to create too much competition for the water-traps of which she operated mostly two throughout the period. In August, she noted, "we were under water".

She had a total of two Swainson's Thrushes and no Gray-cheeked. This is interesting. There was a great decrease of these two species along the coast, but apparently inland they are low too. The question is, where did they go?

MARSHFIELD - Vermont - by Mrs. Marion F. Metcalf

Marshfield station is located in Washington County, Vermont at 441-0722. Operations were carried out mostly on weekends from August 5 through September 28 for a total of 34 days. From two to nine nets were used per day with 1665 net hours for the season. 1083 new birds of 62 species were banded. There were 550 repeats and 40 returns; no foreign recoveries.

The banding station is located on a half-acre island on a small pond of 90 acres. The island is reached by 250 feet of boardwalk which goes through a beautiful swamp. The island's vegetation is quite dense, with larch, hemlock, spruce, a few birch and maple. Low bush blueberries are very abundant. The swamp contains black alder, leatherleaf, viburnums, Labrador tea, rhodia and many other varieties that I do not know. The nets that produce the most birds are set on the edge of the boardwalk between low bushes. We leave the island as free of cutting as possible, only trim for net lanes and paths to the cottage.

Some interesting returns were: Chestnut-sided Warbler banded June 10, 1967, returned for the first time August 5, 1969; White-throated Sparrow banded July 19, 1966, returned May 14, 1967, and Sept. 28, 1969 with nice clear brown eye.

Species most frequently banded were: Purple Finch, 293; White-throated Sparrow, 153; Tennessee Warbler, 66; Magnolia Warbler, 35; Yellowthroat, 96; Canada Warbler, 49; Black-capped Chickadee, 52.

One Gray-cheeked and ten Swainson's Thrushes were banded.

VISCHER FERRY - New York - by Robert P. Yunick

The sixth year of fall banding at Vischer Ferry Game Management Area produced a number of new records and maxima. Banding was conducted on the same weekend basis as in the past, during the period of August 1 to October 26 with 3810 net hours of effort producing 2387 birds of 77 species. Also included were 658 repeats, 47 returns, and one foreign retrap for a total of 3092 recorded captures. Highlighting the ten new species to the list which stands at 104 plus one subspecies, was a resplendent AHY male Prothonotary Warbler caught on August 2. In accordance with the Operation Recovery procedures under which the station was operated, over 99% of the new bandings were weighed, measured and fat-classed. In addition, valuable data related to studies of selected species were gathered.

This year's operation differed from that of previous years in that the place of banding within the management area was changed. Previous banding had centered in two areas known as East and West Field and had concentrated on netting these field edges. Last year, a dike in the southwest corner of the management area, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile from East and West Field, was opened to netting. Due to the success in 1968 of the southwest corner dike lane, Will Merritt and I cleared three additional lanes in the southwest corner area in the spring of 1969 for use in the spring and fall. The operation varied from 13 to $41\frac{1}{2}$ nets.

August was a month of five weekends, four of which were hot and humid and very uncomfortable. The first, Aug. 1-2, was terribly hot and humid though moderately active prior to an incoming cold front. Southward warbler migration was visible in the treetops. The remainder of the month produced poor bird yields of 30 to 40 birds per 100 net hours. The last three weekends of August were dominated by warm southerly weather systems not conducive to migration.

The warm, humid weather persisted to mid-September giving equally disappointing bird yields. Migration was in progress all during August and early September as evidenced by new species arrivals. The migration was, however, weak in terms of numbers due to the unfavorable weather. The remainder of the season was active with above-average netting results.

Cold weather at mid-September triggered considerable activity. There was noticeably greater activity on Sept. 19-20 two to three days after passage of a front. The 36 species captured on Sept. 20 represents a new record high species count. Sixteen of the 36 were warblers. Even greater

activity was noted on the next weekend, Sept. 26-28 when a record 288 birds were banded on Sept. 27 immediately before a front which produced rain, causing net furling at 1630 that day. Following the weak front on Sept. 27, the 28th was also an active day.

The weekend of Oct. 4-5 produced a peak of the White-throated Sparrow migration when on Oct. 5, two days after front passage, a record total of 167 White-throats were banded and a near-record 280 birds banded. The remaining three weekends produced bird takes well above average under high pressure weather conditions. On Oct. 11-12 the front had passed three or four days previously; on Oct. 18-19 the front was one or two days past; and on Oct. 24-25 it was three to four days past. In all cases, the weather was generally calm, clear and generally moderate.

While the change of netting habitat makes general species abundance comparisons difficult, there are several standout changes that reflect changes above and beyond that attributable to habitat change. These must be considered in the light of a netting effort increase of 60.7 percent.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher increased from 12 in 1968 to 29, or an increase of 142%. Traill's increased 100% from 8 to 16, recouping the loss experienced between 1967-68. Least Flycatchers on the other hand declined significantly as the catch in 1969 was 9 birds just as in 1968. The Pewee count of one is low compared to last year's five.

A marked decrease in Yellow Warblers occurred. Only 29 birds were banded to last year's 54. Past experience has shown that the migration of this species is in progress in early August with a high adult age ratio, followed by a tapering off of the migration dominated by birds of the year lasting to the end of September. This year the start of the migration was more highly adult than usual and no Yellow Warbler was banded after August 23. AHY's outnumbered HY's 2 to 1 - a highly unusual situation.

This year, the second foreign retrap ever recorded at VFOR was captured. It was an AHY White-throated Sparrow captured on October 19. The bird was banded April 27, 1966 by Walter K. Bigger near Proctor, Penna., about 190 miles southwest of VFOR.

Vischer Ferry Game Management Area is located in Saratoga County, New York, about ten miles east of Schenectady on the Mohawk River at 424-0734. Banders were Robert P. Yunick and Will D. Merritt, Jr., assisted by Peter J. Yunick and Harvey H. Spivak.

NANTUCKET - Mass. - Edith Andrews

The station, also known as Mothball Pines, is located $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Nantucket Town in Nantucket County, Mass. at 411-0700. The station was

operated on 41 days from August 19 through October 26 by Mrs. Edith Andrews.

From one to five nets were used in a total of 773 net hours for the season. A total of 1211 new birds of 56 species was captured, together with one subspecies. There were 125 repeats and four returns (of Black-capped Chickadees).

Mrs. Andrews says she took additional data for an age character study of Canada Warbler and American Redstart. The only rarity this fall was a Mourning Warbler on September 27, 1969. Noticeably absent, concludes Mrs. Andrews, were Gray-cheeked Thrushes - not one was banded in 1969.

EAST CHOP - Martha's Vineyard I., Mass. - Grace C. Meleney

East Chop station is located $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile north of Oak Bluffs, Dukes County, Mass. at 412-0703. The station was operated by Miss Grace C. Meleney, assisted by Katherine K. Lyon, from September 2 through October 14, 1969 on a daily basis.

Total nets used per day was five, for 1048 net hours, producing 239 birds of 28 species. Thirty-three birds repeated 200 times, three returned and there were no foreign retraps (apart from those of Mabel Gillespie's, whose station is only $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away).

A Pigeon Hawk was banded for the first time at this station on September 30, and a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on October 10. The best day (based on birds per net hour) was September 29, when there were 27 birds in 25 net hours. The best day based on individuals was 32 birds on October 6. Miss Meleney uses nets as well as traps so the term "birds per net hour" cannot be used exclusively.

Miss Meleney continues her report that she feels an island, five miles of the coast (of Cape Cod) is a good place for the study of migration, indigenous species, length of life and other factors.

LINCOLN - Mass. - Deborah Howard

Mrs. Deborah Howard writes, "As you see, we did not run Round Hill. Instead, we netted on a second growth woods in Lincoln, part of the conservation land owned by the town of Lincoln. We wanted to catch birds at an inland station which would not have the peculiarities of a 'bird concentrating area' like Round Hill. We felt that Round Hill was very odd in a number of ways and we wanted to study migration through netting in a more representative area. We called the station 'Codman Woods'. We operated daily, except for rain from September 10 through October 9. We had 209 repeats - some of them the same bird; no returns and no foreign retraps. We took only age (skull and plumage) and sex if possible, weight, wing length

(chord) and fat class. The area is a second growth woods with oak, cherry, birch, ash, white pine and cedar among the major tree species. We ran two nets in a red maple swamp in the middle of the area."

The study was conducted by Deborah Howard and Ian Nisbet of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, in Lincoln, Mass., at 422-0711. Twelve 30mm tethered nets were used with a total of 3801 net hours which produced 869 birds of 55 species.

MANOMET BIRD OBSERVATORY - Mass. - Kathleen S. Anderson

(Mrs. Anderson sent the following short review so that it could be included in this issue. She advises that a complete summary will be mailed when it is printed, and hopefully it will be possible to include it, or portions of it, in a future issue of EBBA News. -FSS.)

Manomet Bird Observatory is located on Stage Point, six miles east-southeast of Plymouth, Mass., in the village of Manomet, Plymouth County (415-0703).

The station was operated from August 7 through October 31, daily, except for rainy days (total 84 days operated). A total of 38 nets per day usually were used for a total of 31,178 net hours. The total of banded birds was 4828, of 104 species. There were 1418 repeats but returns and foreign retraps have not, at time of writing, yet been completely compiled.

All banders helped in the collection of ectoparasites for the Encephalitis Field Station. E.J. Fisk did a plumage study on Empidonax. R.C. Fiske studied coverts of chickadees. All banders participated in a crown pattern study of White-throated Sparrows.

Some of the interesting records - five hybrid Flickers: three in August, two in October; 24 Boreal Chickadees in October and one in November. We banded 32 Tufted Titmice (vs. none in 1966, one in 1967 and three in 1968!). Also...one Cerulean Warbler on September 29, an Orchard Oriole on August 10 and a Seaside Sparrow on August 19.

Some shorebird netting was done with three nets on the beach. One aerial net, two nets wide, 20 feet up (with standard mesh) was used.

* * *

We would like to see more inland stations. The preponderance of the Operation Recovery type stations are located along the coast. Stations need not be large, nor is using nets a requirement (although it helps).

And while we're on the subject of inland stations, Mrs. Helen duMont, who used to be my subpermittee at one time at Tobay Banding Station, now

has her own permit and runs a station in Wilmington, Vermont. I just learned that she had a Meadowlark on Christmas Day in about 15 inches of snow. Can any bander top a better Christmas present? Unfortunately it hasn't been banded yet.

Very recently I received a note from Mrs. Roger Foy of Ship Bottom, New Jersey - about 15 miles south of Island Beach, on the coast - saying that she and her husband would like to start a new daily Operation Recovery station there. I heartily endorse this and would like to take this opportunity to welcome them to the clan.

Mrs. Barbara Patterson (station leader at Mt. Desert, Maine) asked me a question: "Would you please clarify for all of us, just what constitutes an O.R. return. Jim Baird says any bird involved in the O.R. season, either at the time of banding or return. Do you go along with that?"

Yes, I do go along with that, but it is not an official Banding Laboratory term. There is only one definition for the word "return" as far as the Lab is concerned and that is: "A banded bird recaptured or sighted after an interval of 90 days in the same grid where it was banded" (see Bird Banding Manual, BBM-A-1120).

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Atlantic Flyway Recovery Report

10. (Rc) Myrtle Warbler, 655; HY-U 110-35499. Thomas H. Davis, Jr.
10-16-65 John F. Kennedy Refuge (Tobay) Nassau County, N.Y.
04-15-69 Umatilla, Lake County, Florida.
11. (Rc) Blue Jay, 477; AHY-U 663-71392. Mabel Warburton.
05-04-65, Morrisville, Penna.
Nov.? 69, Huntingdon Valley, Penna. (Exact date of recovery
unknown. -Ed.)

We're running out of recovery material for this section - please send more! Thanks...

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NEXT DEADLINE for material for this column is February 20, 1970 - for due dates of O.R. station reports, see page 255 of the last issue of EBBA News (32:6).

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