Atlantic Flyway Review

A REVIEW OF OPERATION RECOVERY AND RELATED SUBJECTS

Edited by Frederick S. Schaeffer

In the November-December 1969 issue, Dr. Yunick, in his column, acquainted EBBA members with the fact that Operation Recovery had been discontinued. He made mention of the fact that a committee, the O.R. Committee, would be working under my chairmanship to try to find a way to keep O.R. going under EBBA leadership. We all felt it would be unthinkable to disband this huge volunteer work force.

I am happy to tell you now, that after mounds of correspondence, many telephone calls and much deliberation, we have come up with a study which EBBA has agreed to sponsor. To begin with, we felt that the name "Operation Recovery" had to be buried along with the program itself, so we have come up with a different name which fits our aims and the aims of Atlantic Flyway Review as well. AFR will be the review organ of this program, as it had been for Operation Recovery.

Project "AMFO"

Autumn Migration in Flyway One, AMFO for short, is a modest study, one which can be kept at its present size or, when conditions warrant, can be enlarged. It is designed to solicit data now routinely taken, data which can easily be assembled and analyzed without the use of sophisticated office machines, and data which we need! One of the major objections I had in trying to find a good study, is that the usual order of business is first, you find the study; second, you find the method to obtain the results you're looking for; and third, you find the people to apply the method. In this case, the order is reversed. We have the people, and we are aware of any number of methods and it is well known that a study fitted to the banders rather than banders fitted to a study, can be detrimental in the long run.

AMFO is a twofold study. What follows here is only a general description, for the benefit of acquainting all members with the study which will, since it is EBBA sponsored, be an integral part of EBBA field work. A more detailed description and instructions will be sent to all station leaders of some 30 stations participating. Forms will be sent along with these instructions. The forms are different from those for O.R., simply because our objectives are different and we have no desire to ask for information which is, although interesting, not immediately essential to reach the goals of our program. In other words, we wish to keep the paperwork to an absolute minimum and to obtain the data in such a form that it is not necessary to change it into a different order of presentation, thereby wasting precious time.

Part I. Age Ratio Study. The objectives of this study are to find accurate (and this cannot be emphasized enough) relationships between age groups of migrants as compared to habitat and weather. It is designed for species, a minimum of one, a maximum of five (per station) which are representative of the station and which can be aged by both skulling and morphological characteristics. Two species on which we desire as much of this information as possible are Yellowthroat and American Redstart. Although we seek information on no more than five species, this does not mean that stations cannot band anything else, by any means. It merely points out, that at present we are unable to handle this data for more than five species at one time per station.

Part II. Age Character Study. The species you select for this study should be none of the species selected for the Age Ratio Study. In this phase, we would like to obtain more reliable criteria on aging by means of plumage. You are not bound to limit the number of species selected, but you must be confident that you are able to age those you do select, by skulling. No sheets will be issued for this part of the study, because printed sheets in an exploratory study have the major disadvantage, that one only fills in the information called for. We suggest that you take copious notes, and advise us of your hypotheses at the time you send in the sheets for the age ratio part of the program.

This ought to be a truly cooperative program. By this I mean, that you, the bander, should benefit from your data as much as EBBA will benefit from it. The data will be due each year at the end of the year. Once my personal banding schedules are out of the way, I will begin to analyze the data and will keep at it until some conclusions can be established. These conclusions will be treated in Atlantic Flyway Review, in the form of a progress report. Age character data will be checked for validity by the O.R. Committee, which will act as an advisory board to me and if we feel the data is factual and correct, we will ask you, the bander, to publish it. If we feel the data is insufficient, we will contact you too, to suggest that you work at it again in subsequent operations.

Who may participate? The thirty or so stations which have been punctual in submission of their data for Atlantic Flyway Review in the past, are already on the mailing list for sheets and instructions, which should reach you about June 15th. Anyone else who has a station and who would wish to join, should meet the following criteria:

a. Preferably an inland location (since we have so many coastal stations already.

b. Either continued operation for 20 days or more, or weekend operation over the entire period of August through October.

c. You must be able to get data to me by the end of the year (exact date to be announced).

One of the biggest drawbacks of Operation Recovery was, according to Chan Robbins, that some people persistently sent in the data far beyond the deadline. It should be established, therefore, from the start, that when the data is due, there will be only about a ten-day grace period. As there is not that much data involved, I do not believe that this is too stringent a measure. I can only start analyzing data, when all of the participants have forwarded same.

Below is the list of stations (by state) which will be mailed instructions. If yours is not among them and you feel that you can satisfy the above criteria, please write me as soon as possible so I can mail you the materials, and also ensure that my stock of sheets is sufficient to reach through the entire season. Those stations wishing to band in November may do so, and this applies particularly to southern stations.

Ontario: Bradley's Marsh; Maine: Mt. Desert; Vermont: Wilmington, South Londonderry, Marshfield; Massachusetts: Lincoln, Nantucket, East Chop; Rhode Island: Block Island; New York: Farmersville, Salisbury, Vischer Ferry, Tiana Beach, East Moriches, Fire Island Light (*), Manorville, Brookhaven, Tobay (#), Atlantic Beach; New Jersey: Island Beach, Mariedor, Ship Bottom; Maryland: Chestertown, Irish Grove, Bellevue; Virginia: Kiptopeke Beach; West Virginia: Allegheny Front Mountain; Pennsylvania: Friendsville, Presque Isle; Florida: Homestead.

(*) Fire Island Light station will be on the mailing list, to receive data should they wish, but will not participate in submitting data as they are operated in connection with Hofstra University and possible conflicts of interest might result.

(#) Tobay, which is my station, will serve as a pilot station to check methos of operation for this and future phases of AMFO.

If there should be stations which receive instructional material, but feel they cannot participate, they are requested to send the sheets back. We certainly hope there will not be any who feel compelled to do so.

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ISLAND BEACH - New Jersey - (reported by F. Schaeffer, based on the station summary)

Island Beach State Park, N.J., is the site of one of the two largest stations by way of totals. 1969, however, was one of the lowest seasons for this station. The reason is that more birds were fully processed and I find it encouraging that banders stop and think about what they are banding. It seems to me that at the rate of 17-25,000 per O.R. period, it is pretty difficult to appreciate banding, the investigation of living creatures, and there is always the danger that banding at such a rate

becomes a race against time. Birds are not merely blobs of feathers to be tagged, but to be appreciated for the beauty they bring to man's world. So much for the "editor's note".

	Indiv.	Species	Net Hours	B.p.n.h.(x100)
1968	26,938	133	14,905	181
1969	12,137	120	8,952	135

There were some interesting species (in AOU order): 1 Hairy Woodpecker (10-4); 4 Acadian Flycatchers (9-11, 9-14, 9-25, 9-27); 1 Olive-sided Flycatcher (9-6); 1 Bewick's Wren (10-10); 1 Prothonotary Warbler (8-16); 1 Black-throated Gray Warbler (9-22); 1 Blue Grosbeak (9-2); 3 Grasshopper Sparrows (9-28, 10-16, 10-19); and 1 Henslow's Sparrow (10-19).

The biggest days were 9-14 with 640 birds of 58 species; 9-27 with 612/57; 10-4 with 549/45; and 10-15 with 658/38. Most frequently banded species were: Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1292; American Redstart, 910; Yellowthroat, 878; Slate-colored Junco, 779; White-throated Sparrow, 749; Brown Creeper, 734; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 731; Catbird, 714; Myrtle Warbler, 568; and Red-breasted Nuthatch, 406.

There were also some interesting dates: Great Crested Flycatcher (10-7); Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (10-2); Least Flycatcher (10-18); Solitary Vireo (10-26); Black & White Warbler (10-26); Cape May Warbler (10-31); Myrtle Warbler (8-21); Palm Warbler, western (10-29); American Redstart (2 on 10-31); and Field Sparrow (9-14).

I could not begin to list all the cooperators since there were a great many. The overall coordination was done by Kit Price, and other station leaders were: Dorothy Bordner, John Miller, Bill Pepper, Dave Corkran and Wally Kennison.

MARIEDOR SANCTUARY - New Jersey - John and Mary Schmid
Co-operator: William E. Savell

This station, located on Rt. 542 1½ miles from New Gretna, N.J., did remarkably well this year, as the following table shows:

	Indiv.	Species	Net Hours	B.p.n.h.(x100)
1967	126	?	940	13
1968	(Not in operation)			
1969	796	43	992	80

In 1969, the station was in operation from September 26 through October 31. A total of 26 days, at ten nets per day, generally from 7 am. to

noon. Birds were fully processed. Following are the birds most frequently banded:

Myrtle Warbler, 345; Rufous-sided Towhee, 95; White-throated Sparrow, 80; Red-winged Blackbird, 46; Slate-colored Junco, 40; Bluejay, 30.

Most unusual was a Kentucky Warbler on September 26.

(John and Mary Schmid are planning to move to New Jersey, and hope to make this an all-year banding station. -FSS)

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There is no one better equipped to review the Maryland stations than Chandler S. Robbins, and with his kind permission, the following review is reprinted from Maryland Birdlife 25(4) December 1969, p. 129 et seq.

July was exceedingly wet in the Middle Atlantic States, with precipitation two to three times the normal amount in the Chesapeake Bay area. This produced a lush growth of vegetation and an abundance of natural food for wildlife. Temperatures in the northeastern states were decidedly on the cool side in July, but there was no evidence that low temperatures to the north of us triggered an early southward movement of passerine migrants.

In August the temperature pattern in the eastern states was reversed, with subnormal mercury readings in the Southeast and above-normal temperatures in the Northeast. As a result, the peak movement of such typical August transients as the Veery and the Empidonax flycatchers spilled over into September. Rainfall was slightly below normal in both August and September, but was sufficient to maintain ground moisture at a high level. Temperatures hovered close to normal during the first half of September, then took a slight dip in the last two weeks.

Field ornithologists are very much aware of the intensity, speed and direction of movement of cold fronts during the autumn months, because the heaviest southward migrations generally take place in the cool air masses that typically follow cold-frontal passage. Not a single cold front vigorous enough to cause a 10° drop in temperature from the minimum reading of the previous day crossed Maryland between July 1 and August 20. But the front of the 20th brought a good variety of flycatchers and warblers to the banding stations in Kent and Queen Annes Counties (Table 1) on the next two days.

The next cold front passed through on the 26th and bround a heavy influx of birds on the 27th. The commonest transients on that day were the Canada Warbler (15 at Kent Point, 12 at Damsite) and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (10 at Kent Point). Ovenbirds, Veeries, and Least and Traill's Flycatchers were well represented. The Mendinhalls banded a late Louisiana

Waterthrush at Damsite and also caught their first Swainson's Thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Magnolia, Mourning, and Wilson's Warblers of the season. The Kent Point banders also netted their first Swainson's Thrush and Red-eyed Vireo.

The next cold front did not arrive until nearly two weeks later. The front itself passed over on Sept. 8, followed by low temperatures (at Salisbury) of 54° on the 10th and 45° on the 11th. The resulting influx of transients was the second heaviest of the month at Ocean City and Irish Grove. Three banding stations were not in operation those days; the other three O.R. stations all had their seasonal peak of Veeries on the 9th (Kent Point) or 10th (Irish Grove and Ocean City). Other species that figured prominently in this flight were: Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (O.C.), Red-eyed Vireo (O.C. and I.G.), Black & White, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Yellowthroat, Canada Warblers, and American Redstart (the above warblers at all three stations), and Bay-breasted Warbler (K.P. and O.C.).

In contrast to the first half of September, which favored Maryland with but a single cold front, three strong fronts swept over the Free State in the latter half of the month. Prior to these, however, northwest winds that were not associated with frontal passage brought the season's peak of Red-eyed Vireos (30), Philadelphia Vireos (9), Cape May Warblers (12) and Northern Waterthrushes (38) to Ocean City on the 14th.

The cold front of Sept. 17-18 caused a big invasion at Kent Point, with the following seasonal peaks on the 19th: Black & White Warbler (41), Ovenbird (17), Northern Waterthrush (25) and American Redstart (59). Damsite, in the next county to the north, did not share in the invasion; they had no more than one apiece of these four species. Irish Grove and Ocean City fared only a little better.

The front of the 24th again favored Kent Point. Their commonest birds on the 26th were the Brown Creeper (10), Swainson's Thrush (14), Magnolia Warbler (14), Black-throated Blue Warbler (12), Yellowthroat (15) and American Redstart (14).

The truly spectacular migration of the month occurred on Sept. 29-30, following the cold front of the 28th. Salisbury temperatures dropped to 47° on the 29th and 39° on the 30th, for the coldest reading of the month. Winds were light north-northeast during the night of Sept. 28-29, and calm the next night, producing favorable conditions at <u>all</u> Maryland O.R. stations on both days.

Although no species except Wood Thrush reached its seasonal peak at all five of the O.R. stations that were manned on Sept. 29-30, four stations registered their seasonal high for the Swainson's Thrush, Catbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers on

one of these two days. The Magnolia Warbler, Ovenbird and Yellowthroat were also among the commonest birds on both days. Harry Armistead saw <u>76</u> species at his Bellevue home on the 30th.

Table 1. Summary of O.R. Bandings in Maryland in 1969

Station	Dates	Net-hours	New Birds	New per 1000 n-hr	Species	Commonest Species	
Bellevue	8/2-10/27	2,481	1381	557	75	Myrtle Warbler	328
Damsite	8/5-11/2	16,233	3910	241	93	Myrtle "	808
Irish Grove	9/3-11/3	13,839	4109	297	93	Myrtle "	1619
Kent Point	8/16-10/18	17,117	3600	210	92	Blue Jay	1019
Monkton	9/7-10/30	535	299	559	36	Slate-c. Junco	50
Ocean City	9/9-9/29	6,357	2234	351	84	Am. Redstart	297
Totals		56,564	14,852	262 (Av.)			

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18. Rc. Myrtle Warbler 655; HY M 74-55932. Mrs. D.A. Mendinhall
10-15-68 Chestertown, Md.
10-20-68 Kiptopeke Beach, Va. (H.B. Hawkins)

19. Rc. Ovenbird 674; HY U 75-63447. Mrs. E.P. Teulings
10-04-68 Cape May, N.J.
06-15-69 Mansfield Center, Conn.

20. Rc. Veery 756; HY U 107-025386. Mrs. E.P. Teulings
10-06-68 Cape May, N.J.
10-27-68 Kiptopeke Beach, Va.

21. Rc. Myrtle Warbler 655; U-U 108-79271. W.K. Bigger
10-15-64 Island Beach, N.J.
03-15-66 Chapel Hill, N.C.

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I regret to have to announce that at time of writing, I am about 80% sure that I will not be able to attend the EBBA meeting in Albany this year. I had hoped to attend, particularly with Project AMFO coming up, but a very demanding work schedule is in the way. I shall certainly attend if at all possible.

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