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RECOVERIES AND AGE RECORDS SHOULD BE MAILED TO OUR CO-EDITOR.

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MISSING FROM THIS ISSUE ARE THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE AND THE BIRD BANDER'S DIARY. JEFF SWINEBROAD AND RALPH BELL, RESPECTIVELY, PHONED THAT THEY COULDN'T MAKE IT THIS TIME. JEFF IS VERY BUSY WITH MEETING ARRANGEMENTS AT THIS TIME OF YEAR AND RALPH IS VERY ACTIVE IN THE BROOKS BIRD CLUB AND WISHES TO BE EXCUSED THIS TIME. AFTER TEN YEARS OF CONTINUOUS DIARIES, WE GLADLY EXCUSE YOU, RALPH, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT DIARY EPISODE IN THE AUGUST 1973 ISSUE.

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THERE ARE NO AGE RECORDS IN THIS ISSUE. JOHN KENNARD, PRESIDENT OF N.E.B.B.A. IS DOING A SIMILAR PROJECT AND TO MAKE A MORE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION, WE'VE JOINED FORCES WITH THEM. ALL AGE RECORDS WE COLLECT, WILL BE FORWARDED TO DR. KENNARD AND THEY WILL BE PUBLISHED IN BIRD-BANDING. WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO REPRINT FROM THEM, LATER ON. PLEASE SEND AGE RECORDS TO HARVEY FARBER, 102 WILSON PLACE, PLAINVIEW, N.Y. 11803.

* * *

(Since this issue is going to press while the Annual Meeting is held, we'll again reserve this page for Officers & Councillors names, starting with the next issue. Editor)

STUDIES ON WINTERING MYRTLE WARBLERS IN NORTH FLORIDA (1966-1972)

Peter H. Homann

This report summarizes six winters of Myrtle Warbler *(Dendroica coronata)* banding at a location in the outskirts of Tallahassee, Florida. The banding program was carried out on the southern third of a 13 acre area owned by the Florida State University (fig.1), with the cooperation of my wife, Ursel Homann. The Myrtle Warblers were attracted to this site by many old pecan trees and, in particular, several evergreen hedges of *Ligustrum* and *Viburnum*.

When banding was begun in 1966, only the eastern edge bordered on a residential area with single family homes amongst ornamental shrubs and old pecan trees. Across the street in the south were old Live Oaks and thick underbrush, while the land to the west and north was largely open with high weeds and scattered trees and bushes. During fall migration, these latter areas attracted moderate numbers of transient warblers of which many were netted and banded. A Yellow Warbler *(Dendroica petechia)* and a Northern Waterthrush *(Seiurus noveboracensis)* were captured here in two consecutive years *(EBBA News 32:269; 33:78)*. These returns suggested that the location was chosen for a stop-over not merely by accident. To the migratory birds, this area apparently was a favored resting place for the reaccumulation of body reserves needed during the remainder of their journey south. Frequent recaptures of transient birds over periods of more than a week supported this view.

Since 1968, large portions of the open fields (area E on fig.1) were developed into a mobile home park. Single family homes were built in Area C which had been covered with half grown pine trees. In 1972, area D became a site for apartment houses, and the land in the south was cleared for development. Today, the banding area is surrounded by residential districts. Migratory warblers are rarely seen and, surprisingly, even the wintering flocks of Myrtle Warblers became smaller from year to year (Table 1).

After we had moved into the living quarters of the FSU property, we noted during the winter that large numbers of Myrtle Warblers roosted in the evergreen hedges: late in the afternoon, the characteristic call note sounded everywhere in the pecan trees and, as the sun went down, the warblers disappeared one by one in the hedges. Hardly any Myrtle Warblers were seen or heard during daytime, except in early spring, or during rainy or stormy weather with overcast skies.

We realized the unique opportunity to investigate our winter population of Myrtle Warblers in respect to the "turnover" of birds within the flocks, and to the frequency of their return in subsequent years. However, the result of our studies remained far behind expectation. The main reason was the decline in the number of wintering Myrtle Warblers as soon as development had set in on the surrounding land. At first, we were puzzled by this coincidence since the banding areas and the immediate neighborhood were not affected. But visual observation had revealed that, in the evening, the vast majority of birds arrived in the roosting area from the northwest. Since the development occurred on the land in just that direction, it appeared that the feeding grounds of the Myrtle Warblers were being removed.

Our banding data are summarized in fig. 2. We did not plot netting hours because such values would be worthless considering the main flight of Myrtle warblers usually lasted only one hour per day, and that the number of nets, and their location, was chosen according to the birds' abundance and the pattern of their movements. In presenting the total number of birds banded per period of five days, divided by the number of days of actual banding, we can give a reasonably accurate picture of the abundance of Myrtle Warblers throughout the winter even though banding often had to be restricted to weekends.

The data in Fig.2 suggest that, over the years, we lost the first waves of warblers (November-January), and gained a different one (February-March). However, the increase in the number of banded birds during spring was due to the fact that, in recent years, we spent more time netting warblers during daytime while they were feeding in the lush green patches of "bur-clover" *(Medicago)* under the pecan trees. One of these Myrtle Warblers (Febr.2,'69)

had been banded by R.W. Lawrence in New Hampshire (Oct. 26, 1968;see EBBA NEWS 33:200). This was our only foreign recovery.

Certain individuals were repeatedly captured over periods of several weeks. However, we had no indication that many birds were permanent winter residents in the banding area. Furthermore, when we analyzed the distribution of repeated captures during one winter we could not detect any obvious pattern. Similarly, no pattern was evident which would describe the relation between the time of banding of an individual in one winter, and its recapture during a following winter (Fig.3). The fluctuations in total numbers of captured Myrtle Warblers during any winter season was quite similar to the fluctuations of TV tower casualties as observed by H.L. Stoddard and R.A. Norris near Tallahassee (Bull.Tall Timbers Res. Stn. 8, 1967, 104pp.). It is noteworthy then, that the distribution of recaptures during any one winter, and of the returns during subsequent winters, could not be correlated with any particular "migratory wave" (with the probable exception of the returns in 1971/72).

Table 1 and Fig. 3 reveal, furthermore, that the decrease in the total number of captured Myrtle Warblers was not accompanied by a decline in the number of returning birds. This could not be attributed to the increased total number of banded Myrtle Warblers (Table 1, and Fig.3). No conclusion can be drawn from these findings, however, since the data from our rather irregular banding activity are not well suited for statistical analyses. But we should like to suggest that our wintering Myrtle Warbler "populations" were quite heterogeneous in respect to the degree of territorial attachment developed by any individual.

TABLE 1. MIGRATORY WARBLERS CAPTURED IN TALLAHASSEE

	BIRDS OTHER THAN MYRTLE W.		MYRTLE WARBLERS		
				Returns from prev. winters	
YEAR	Individuals	Species	Indiv.*	Total	fr.prec.yr&
1966/67	-	-	291	-	-
1967/68	146	19	305	1	1
1968/69	236	19	346	3	1
1969/70	117	18	223	10	8
1970/71	207	21	141	6	5
1971/72	37	10	69	9	8
Fall 72+	40	9	-	-	-

& from preceding year.
* Includes the returns (13 males, 16 females)
+ In the preceding years, the fall captures comprised at least 80% of the total number of warblers captured during the whole migratory season (excepting Myrtle Warblers).

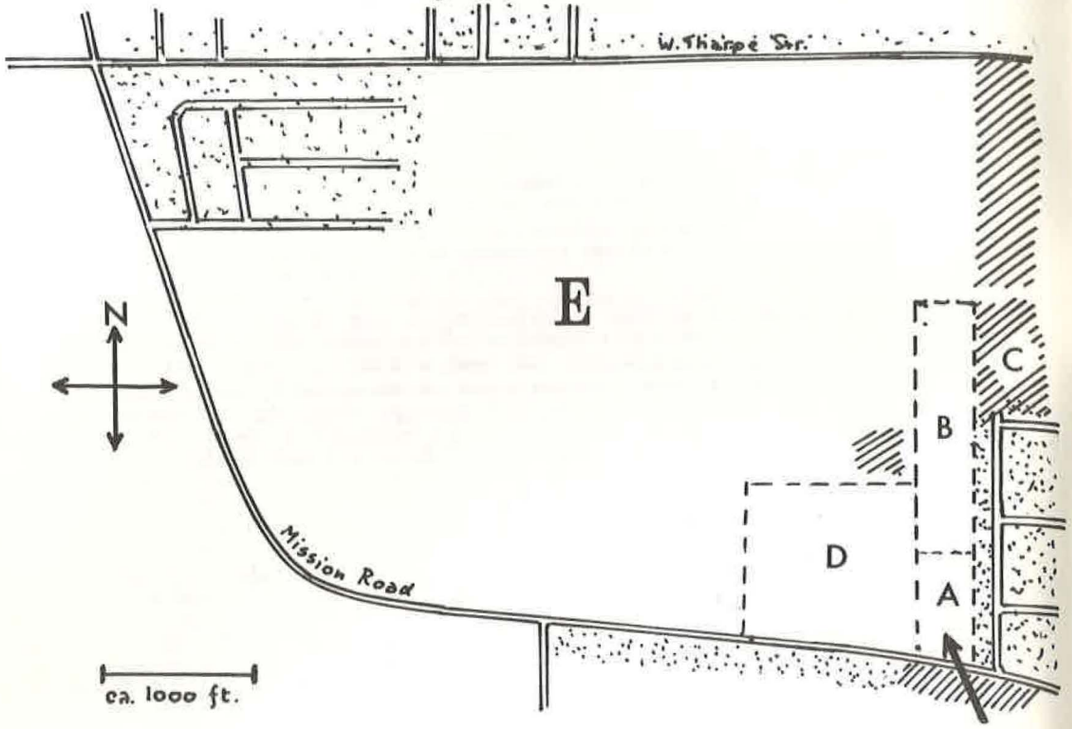


Figure 1 - Map showing banding location and adjacent areas as of 1966.
: residential areas; :wooded areas.

Fig. 2: Distribution of the Myrtle Warbler captures during six winters. The height of the bars gives the number of birds captured per period of five days per month, devided by the number of days on which the nets were put up (see text). The numbers in the right corner give the total number of banded individuals, plus returns from previous winters.

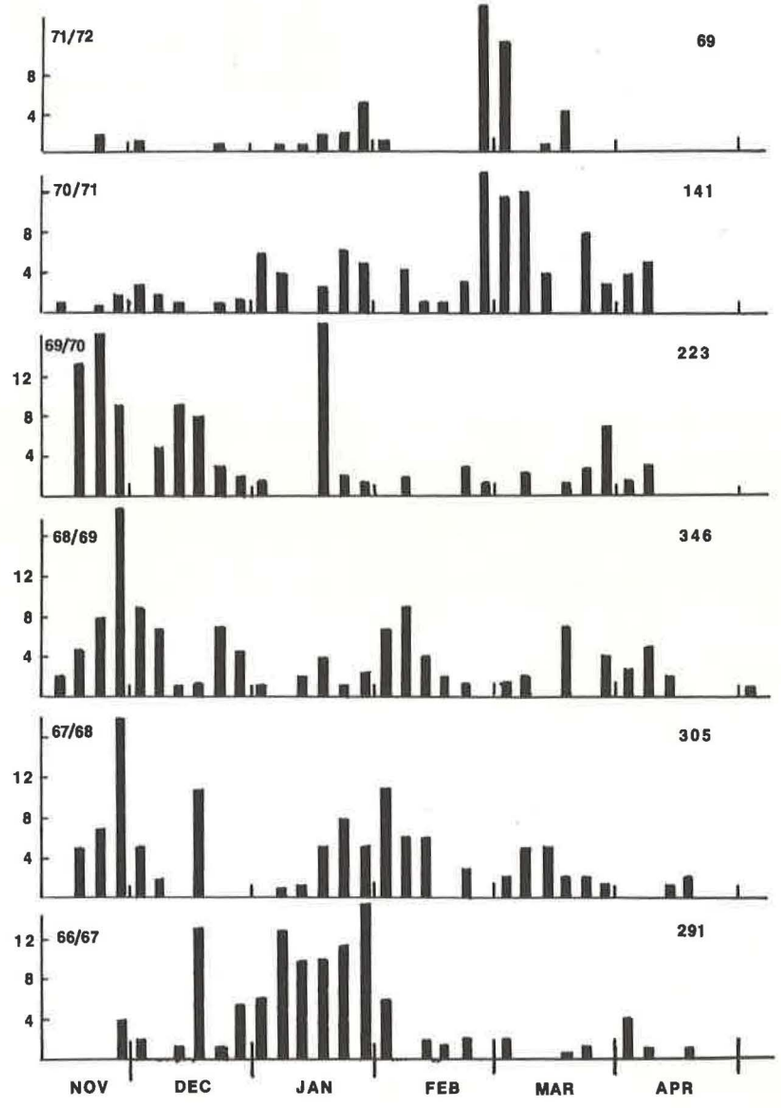
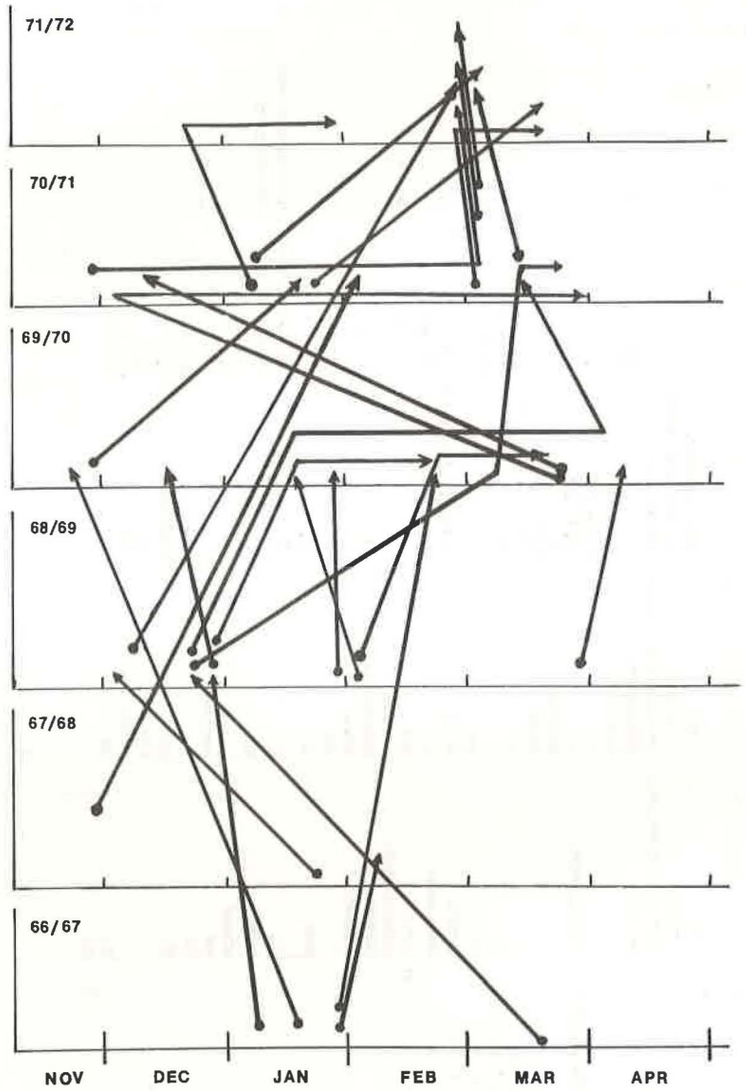


Figure 3: Returning Myrtle Warblers. The origin of the arrows indicates the date of banding, their tip the last recapture. Recaptures in between are shown by changes in direction of an arrow "shaft".



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PREDATION OF BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE IN WINTER

By Earle and Fern Bennett

With oak leaves still falling we usually have the first Sharp-shinned Hawks *(Accipiter striatus)* and Northern Shrikes *(Lanius excubitor)* about our feeders and very frequently throughout the winter months, yet with these predatory birds the number of Black-capped Chickadees *(Parus atricapillus)* remain quite stable (resident) but during migratory periods there is the normal increase of transients.

A study was commenced exploring whether the Northern Shrike under favorable conditions (*i.e.* with chickadees coming and going at feeders) was indeed the bloodthirsty bird so frequently described in literature; a partial bird of prey that killed more than he consumed and if so, how many chickadees were attacked during his stay. We would also observe the Sharp-shinned Hawks attacks on this species.

It occurred to us an exact count of predation was impossible for though both birds of prey sat in the open quite commonly some twelve and fifteen meters away, there were more visits when they remained hidden from view, but we followed a program of daily watch at varying hours of the day. Prevailing winds and temperatures were recorded as the study commenced. Each Black-capped Chickadee had a differing color combination on the left leg, and when resident flocks, usually in numbers of three to six birds appeared with unbanded members or migrating birds appeared without identification we trapped and color-banded. With carefully prepared records of resident, returns and migrants this gave us numbers of losses. A Chickadee was considered a migrant during the four winter months if he returned to feeders after an absence of twenty-five days or more, then he was listed as a return.

Our feeding station is located at the bottom of Brimstone Hill on the Pond Road approximately five miles from the city of Gardiner, Maine. The study area covered approximately 50 acres. The habitat to the north is partially overgrown fields of alder bordered by aspen, with a small stand of fir, pine, balsam and mixed deciduous vegetation. To the east one crosses the Pond Road entering woodland of pine, ash, beech, many gray and white birches on a sloping ridge. There are mature oaks a quarter mile in and a steep ledge drops to a variety of bush, mature aspen, pine, beech and balsam to the Cobbossee Stream. Directly across from our home both east and south are small fields backed by pine, a brush area with numerous hawthorn, wild apple, alder, aspen divided by two ravines with great willows, elms, thick underbrush common to this habitat and this also has gray birches throughout as it reaches the stream.