ATLANTIC FLYWAY REVIEW-Region IV. Edited by Bruce Adams.

There are three stations submitting reports for AFR-IV for '73; these are Sandy Hook, Island Beach, and Ship Bottom. With so few stations, it is somewhat difficult to make meaningful comparisons from station to station for the season; this has been pointed out by other AFR editors in other regions too. We can, of course, make comparisons from year to year for a given station and the station leaders have done so in their individual reports, which follow.

But in addition to making comparisons of species, totals, etc., from year to year, banders who are netting along the coast should also consider how their data looks in relation to ornithological research and observations in their area from many years ago. Banders should never forget that, regardless of their individual "projects", they are compiling data which may be of use to other ornithologists and researchers, who may or may not be banders themselves. And, conversely, the observations and data of non-banders, past and present, can be of use to the present-day bander. I believe this is especially true of coastal mist-netting "projects" whether they are officially termed "Operation Recovery", "A.F.R.", or whatever.

Now, if one is to examine past observations and data for coastal New Jersey, going back decades or even as far as 50 years ago, what sources of information do we have to call upon? I can think of two very useful sources, Audubon Field Notes, and Witmer Stone's famed two-volume work, "Bird Studies of Old Cape May", first published in hard cover in 1937. It has since been reprinted in paperback by Dover Publishing Company, and should be of great interest to anyone working on the N.J. coast today.

The title should not be misleading, for although most of Stone's observations in the 1920's and 1930's were at Cape May, he includes much data from other areas along the coast; the book's subtitle is "An Ornithology of Coastal New Jersey". Banders today will immediately be aware of the fact that neither Stone, nor apparently anyone else, was banding with mist nets at Cape May during those years. This raises the question of how, really, can we make any meaningful comparisons between today's banding data, and observations of 50 years ago? Obviously there are limitations due to these differences. But that should not deter us from at least reading about the observations of an experienced ornithologist of that time; it can produce a number of surprises, as I found out after reading it from cover to cover.

We can learn as much from what is not in this book, as from what is in it. A striking example of this is with the Gray-cheeked Thrush. In the original hard cover edition, p.778 of Vol.II, Stone devotes only a single paragraph to his observations of this species. Apparently the maximum he ever saw at one time was 9, and

his closing sentence reads, "The Gray-cheek breeds far to the north and northwest and probably only a small proportion of them traverse our coastline in migration".

Yet in the years of Operation Recovery, the Cape May station annually banded substantial numbers of Gray-cheeks; sometimes as many as 50 in one day, and it is numerous at most of the other coastal stations. Is this due to a population increase over the decades, or an example of observations versus mist-netting? In considering this, ask yourself the question, how often have you gone out and looked for and counted Gray-ch. Thrushes at a coastal station? And if you have, how have your observation totals compared with banding totals?

In the case of Flickers, we have a somewhat different picture, Stone observed them in great numbers, we still do today, and we also trap and band large numbers. A case similar to the Gray-cheeked Thrush also exists with the Solitary Vireo, which Stone regarded as quite rare, but which has been trapped in considerable numbers in Cape May and all along the coast. And even more interesting is the Saw-whet Owl, for which Stone mentions only three records in Cape May; although in a remarkable example of foresight, which certainly reflects his knowledge and experience as an ornithologist, he mentions that "The Saw-whet is doubtless more plentiful than these records would indicate as many have been reported in the central and northern parts of the state". These words were written in the 1930's. The results of coastal netting efforts by banders along the New Jersey coast have proven his speculations to be well founded.

These are but a few examples from this book alone, of how the work of past ornithologists can be of great interest to banders of today. Those of us working along the coast should take advantage of opportunities to compare, over a long range of years, what we see today with what used to be seen; and at the same time compare what we see or not see in the field, with what we see and count in the nets.

The reports of the three stations are as follows:

SANDY HOOK STATE PARK, N.J. - Davis H. Corkran & Waldron F. Kennison

The fall of 1973 saw the Sandy Hook Station again in operation. Net lanes were the same as used the previous year. A total of 15 nets were used.

Banding operations began on August 26, 1973 and continued through October 28, 1973. For the most part, banding was done on weekends during this period. All birds were fully processed, i.e. weighed, fat classed, aged by skulling, wing measured and sexed.

Peak days (100 or more) occurred as follows: 09/09/73-113; 09/30/73-141; 10/07/73-209; 10/08/73-170; 10/20/73-119; 10/21/73-137; 10/22/73-144. This contrasts to 1972 results when there were only three days when more than 100 birds were banded and these days were all in October.

The most numerous species this fall was the Golden-crowned Kinglet (255) which first appeared on 09-30-73 and continued in some profusion through the last day of operation. This exceeds the 1972 count by 140 individuals. Other species that were numerically strong were: Myrtle Warbler/222; American Redstart/149; and White-throated Sparrow/119. There was a marked increase in the number of Thrushes except for the Wood Thrush. The 1973 season produced 60 Hermit Thrushes (24 in 1972); 38 Swainson's Thrushes (15 in 1972); 28 Gray-cheeked Thrushes (4 in 1972); and 28 Veery (12 in 1972). White-throated Sparrows also almost doubled in numbers from last year.

Weather conditions were generally unseasonably mild with little or no rain during the days that the station was active. This may account for the late on-rush of birds in late October.

A total of 1,623 individuals of 71 species were banded in 1,445 net hours of banding. Four species not previously banded at this station were included in this year's count: Black-billed Cuckoo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Tree Sparrow.

The fall operation produced a total of 52 returns. One foreign band, a Catbird (791-00834) was obtained on October 8, 1973. This turned out to be a bird banded at Manomet, Mass., on July 26, 1973 as a hatching year bird.

ISLAND BEACH, Seaside Park, N.J. - Herman W. "Bud" Cooper

The Island Beach Bird Banding Station operated for 44 days from August 18 to October 28, 3 days during August, 24 days during September and 17 days during October. The station banded 6941 birds of 110 different species using 3939 net hours.

The biggest days in September were the 8th and 9th, with tallies of 399 and 454 while October 22nd and 27th, 1134 and 797 birds were banded. October 13th was the poorest day with only 8 birds banded.

Most numerous of the species banded was Junco (1015), Golden-crowned Kinglets (665), American Redstart (632). No other species was over the 500 mark, but there were 479 Myrtle Warblers and 433 White-throated Sparrows.

Most effort has been given to our shore birds this year with 114 banded of 12 species.

The following banders participated in the autumn banding: Bruce Adams, Bud Cooper, Hazel Gorman, Jesse Grantham, Will Merritt, John Miller, Sam Orr, Bob Pantle, Margaret Pepper, Bill Pepper, Kit Price, Lloyd Price, Howard Spendelow, Jeff Spendelow, Hannah Suthers, Mabel Warburton, and Bob Yunick.

Deep appreciation is extended to the banders and their many assistants who give their time and effort to help in our station project.

SHIP BOTTOM, N.J. - Dorothy & Roger Foy

As is the custom, this station is operated year round, but this report will cover the period 1 August 1973 through 31 October, 1973. The station is located at 393-0741 and a description of the area can be found in EBBA NEWS, 34(4).

Having only two weeks vacation instead of the usual three to four in the Fall of 1973 we did not interupt our banding at Ship Bottom to band at Island Beach as in past years.

We encourage other banders who leave their permanent banding stations for a week or two during migration to "stay put" because the "grass is NOT always greener" over the fence, as we found out! By remaining at Ship Bottom throughout the entire Fall migration 8/1 to 10/31/73 we banded more birds in relatively the same net hours as if we had split our time between Ship Bottom and Island Beach. In the 33 days we banded at our home station we banded 1,796 birds of 75 species during this migration.

After 9 days of over 90 degrees heat we had a welcome change by the way of a small cold front from the NW beginning Sept. 7th. The next three days were predominately "thrush days". (From the start of migration until the end of September we noticed an almost total absence of Red-wings and Starlings, more so this year than previous ones. In Ship Bottom the Starling is not the "inescapable" and obnoxious bird it is in other areas (Island Beach for example). Winter would be rather dull at times without this bird since it is beneficial besides having a character and personality completely its own. It's intelligent and immaculate and runs the gamut from aggressive to docile. As a side note the Starling (Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris) and the Hill Mynah are in the Starling family - Sturnidae. Anyone who has had a Mynah as a pet knows well of its intelligence and capacity for developing individual repertoires and the vocal characteristics of its owner. Starlings in our area can imitate the Cardinal, Redwing and Cowbird).