

ARE DOWNY WOODPECKERS LESS NUMEROUS THAN LAST YEAR  
by Albert E. Conway

Last Saturday, December 3, my wife and I visited the Washington Crossing Park banding station of Dr. and Mrs. Paul H. Fluck, and while we were there, Dr. Fluck lamented the scarcity of Downy Woodpeckers at that location and advanced the hypothesis that this was due to a large number of these birds being drowned in their holes, at night, by the August 19th flood of the Delaware River.

Since no examination was made of the remaining nest or roost holes immediately after the flood, support for the hypothesis will have to come indirectly by a comparison of pre-flood versus post-flood populations in both affected and non-flooded areas.

At Dr. Fluck's station, he banded about 70 birds from 1952 up until the flood, and, of these, more than half were recaptured in the half-year preceding the flood; since that time, only nine of these birds have been caught, and this despite the fact that this is the season when these birds come most readily to traps.

A similar situation exists at the Editor's station near Easton, where the Downies, like those at Washington Crossing, nest and roost along the river edge. Of 18 Downies banded and around all last Winter, none has been trapped this Winter, although a single banded bird and two others have been present. It should be noted that associated species, White-breasted Nuthatch and Hairy Woodpecker, also cavity nesters, are almost absent this year.

Members who have kept accurate records of Downy numbers in previous Winters are requested to send us their observations. In this way, it should be possible to determine whether this is a situation peculiar to the flooded areas or to other areas as well. That the latter may be true is suggested by a pre-Christmas Count trial run which my wife and I made today, December 11, in which we saw no Downies in areas in which we usually get from 10 to 20. Let's see what others can show.

\* \* \*

CHECK YOUR RECOVERY FORMS FOR ERRORS

Mr. Allen J. Duvall requests all banders to check the reports of recoveries sent to them on Form 3-624 and to advise the Banding