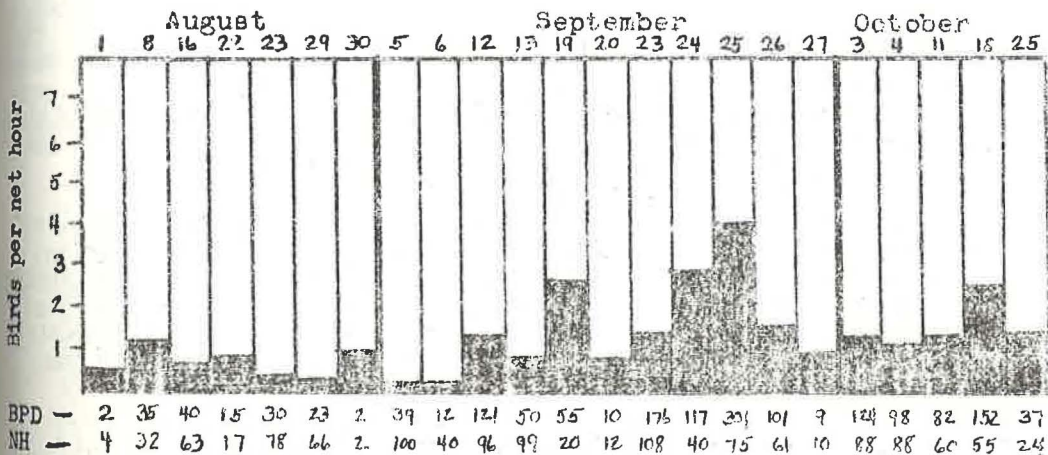


OPERATION RECOVERY
AT PRESQUE ISLE, ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 1964
By Ronald F. Leberman

In its fifth continuous season on Presque Isle State Park, Pennsylvania, Operation Recovery showed great improvement this year with 11,63 birds of 85 species netted and banded. This is the first year in which we banded over 1000 birds during the period of coverage which ranges from the first of August through October. Jim and Jean Stull of Waterford, my mother (Mary Leberman) and myself were the participating banders. Many other persons assisted from time to time helping us to process the birds, carrying net poles, holding birds, and in keeping the coffee pot steaming. As in previous years banding activities were concentrated around the Lily Pond, between the new Administration Building and the baseball field, and along the bay shore toward Niagara ramp. Less time was spent netting in the Thompson's Bay area and Gull Point than in 1963, and lower numbers of shore birds resulted. (For details of the work in previous years and further information on banding methods see "Operation Recovery at Presque Isle," The Sandpiper, Vol. V, No. II, pp. 14-18, by Jean Stull.)

The station was in operation on 23 days in 1964, for a total of 1238 net hours (number of nets multiplied by the number of hours of use).

Table I. -- Number of birds banded per net hour, each day during Operation Recovery, Presque Isle, Erie, Pennsylvania, 1964.
BPD = Birds per day NH = Net hours



A Herring Gull, Whip-poor-will, Parula Warbler and three Yellow-billed Cuckoos were banded at this station for the first time this year. Migratory activity was rather slow in August. The water level of Lake Erie was lower than last year, but there seemed to be fewer shorebirds in the area than usual. Yellow Warblers were, however, very abundant in August.

Warblers began moving through the Erie area in numbers during the first week in September along with good numbers of Swainson's Thrushes, flycatchers and vireos. A new record was set for OR at Presque Isle on September 25 when we banded a total of 301 birds, the greatest number of birds ever netted in one day at this station. The second week of September was good weather wise, but fewer birds were taken.

My vacation started on September 20, and it proved to be a very interesting week. After spending a couple of days at Powdermill Nature Reserve with my brother, Bob, we returned home Tuesday evening and prepared to leave for Erie early the next morning. In the meantime a new supply of nets, which were badly needed to replace our faded and tattered old ones, had arrived, and we were eager to get started. We (Mary Leberman and I) arrived at Erie on Wednesday and had our nets set up by 8:30 a.m. It had been raining earlier but the sky was clearing now and I soon returned from the first round of the nets with the gathering sacks loaded with both warblers and thrushes. Work continued at a rapid pace until noon. We banded our last bird (a Swainson's Thrush) at dusk, and our day's work had produced 176 birds--113 of them warblers.

Thursday, September 24, after a good nights rest at a nearby motel, and following a large breakfast we were ready to get back to "work." The day was cool and extremely windy, with threatening clouds overhead. Despite poor weather conditions we did manage to band 117 birds; 97 of these were warblers. As the last bird was banded it started to rain so the nets were quickly closed for the night, and we returned to the motel to review the records and total up the species.

We were very disappointed upon awaking Friday morning (September 25) to an absolute downpour, but the radio promised that the rain would end by noon, so we spent most of the morning in Erie, returning to the banding station about 11:00 a.m. The rain had slacked somewhat so I opened just five nets that were set together in a single lane near the Administration Building and put up a card table at the north end of the path near the baseball field. Birds were everywhere and mostly flying low near the ground. The nets were bulging, sagging with birds before I had opened the last one. Mother worked at the table banding, aging, sexing and measuring the birds as I brought them from the nets and I also estimated the fat classification of each. The processing of the birds was slow work and a bottleneck in our operation. It was clear from the start that we would not have much time for rest this day. It had now ceased raining altogether and the sky was clearing fast. By this time it was past noon,

but there was no end in sight. As I would look back at the nets I saw bird after bird fly into them, many others were bouncing off, and a great many more were flying over them. By 2:00 p.m. we had managed to get a bite to eat. Each trip to the net produced no less than twenty-five birds, and it was evident that we could not handle the birds safely at this rate, so I closed all but one net. As soon as we were caught up with the processing of the birds already at hand I reopened the nets. We were still busy and took turns checking the nets. At about 5:00 we ran out of size 0 bands--the size used on most warblers. We experimented with a few of the next size band on the larger warblers such as Blackpolls and Cape Mays, letting Redstarts, Magnolias, and Tennessees go unbanded, but by now most of the birds we were catching were thrushes. The last bird netted was a Brown Thrasher; it was our 301st bird of the day. I had never anticipated the time when I would have to let birds go unbanded, but here it was happening to us. It is hard to say just how many birds we could have banded had we more help, had we been able to use all of our nets, and had we not exhausted our band supply. We returned home that evening very tired, but also very excited.

On Saturday, September 26 we were off again for Erie with a new supply of bands which had just arrived, by luck, in the morning mail. There weren't nearly so many birds around, and it was extremely cool and windy, but we went ahead with the banding, netting 66 birds; only a very few of them warblers this time.

In October, especially during the first week, Jim and Jean Stull had very good luck--particularly with Myrtle Warblers, juncos and thrushes. The total list of all birds banded follows:

OPERATION RECOVERY BANDING TOTALS FOR PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK, ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 1964.

Species	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Totals
1. Herring Gull	1	x	x	1
2. E. Short-billed Dowitcher	10	x	x	10
3. Least Sandpiper	4	x	x	4
4. Semipalmated Sandpiper	6	x	x	6
5. Lesser Yellowlegs	1	x	x	1
6. Spotted Sandpiper	2	x	x	2
7. Semipalmated Plover	1	x	x	1
8. Great Crested Flycatcher	1	2	x	3
9. Eastern Wood Pewee	2	8	x	10
10. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	x	6	x	6
11. Acadian Flycatcher	1	x	x	1
12. Traill's Flycatcher	x	1	x	1
13. Least Flycatcher	2	7	x	9
14. Red-eyed Vireo	1	25	1	27
15. Philadelphia Vireo	2	8	x	10
16. Warbling Vireo	x	2	x	2
17. Starling	1	x	x	1

Species	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Totals
18. Redwinged Blackbird	1	9	x	10
19. <u>Grackle</u>	x	2	x	2
20. Cardinal	1	x	x	1
21. Baltimore Oriole	7	x	x	7
22. Scarlet Tanager	x	2	x	2
23. American Goldfinch	1	2	1	4
24. Nashville Warbler	x	13	x	13
25. Tennessee Warbler	1	79	2	82
26. Cape May Warbler	x	52	x	52
27. Yellow Warbler	36	2	x	38
28. Myrtle Warbler	x	12	130	142
29. Magnolia Warbler	1	115	2	118
30. Chestnut-sided Warbler	x	16	x	16
31. Bay-breasted Warbler	x	9	x	9
32. Blackpoll Warbler	x	110	x	110
33. <u>Blackburnian Warbler</u>	1	2	x	3
34. W. Palm Warbler	x	26	7	33
35. Ovenbird	x	10	x	10
36. Northern Waterthrush	2	3	1	6
37. Connecticut Warbler	1	1	x	2
38. Common Yellowthroat	4	19	x	23
39. Hooded Warbler	x	2	x	2
40. Wilson's Warbler	3	12	1	16
41. Canada Warbler	4	5	x	9
42. American Redstart	4	49	1	54
43. Black-and-White Warbler	x	7	x	7
44. <u>Parula Warbler</u>	x	1	x	1
45. Black-throated Blue Warbler	x	16	1	17
46. Mourning Warbler	x	1	x	1
47. Black-throated Green Warbler	x	3	1	4
48. Wood Thrush	x	3	x	3
49. Veery	2	x	x	2
50. Gray-cheeked Thrush	x	74	3	77
51. Swainson's Thrush	3	141	9	153
52. Hermit Thrush	x	6	88	94
53. Robin	x	1	x	1
54. Catbird	8	23	x	31
55. Brown Thrasher	x	3	x	3
56. House Wren	5	5	x	10
57. Winter Wren	x	3	1	4
58. White-throated Sparrow	x	25	30	55
59. Tree Sparrow	x	x	2	2
60. Chipping Sparrow	x	x	1	1
61. Field Sparrow	x	4	1	5
62. Slate-colored Junco	x	2	112	114
63. Song Sparrow	21	3	2	26
64. Yellow-shafted Flicker	2	11	1	14
65. Downy Woodpecker	1	3	x	4

Species	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Totals
66. White-breasted Nuthatch	1	5	x	6
67. E. Belted Kingfisher	3	1	x	4
68. Brown Creeper	x	4	12	16
69. Ruby-crowned Kinglet	x	2	29	31
70. Golden-crowned Kinglet	x	x	32	32
71. Black-capped Chickadee	x	x	1	1
72. Cedar Waxwing	x	1	x	1
73. Indigo Bunting	x	1	1	2
74. <u>Whip-poor-will</u>	x	1	x	1
75. Rose-breasted Grosbeak	x	1	x	1
76. Rufous-sided Towhee	x	x	1	1
77. <u>Yellow-billed Cuckoo</u>	x	3	1	4
78. Black-billed Cuckoo	x	3	x	3
79. Solitary Vireo	x	1	1	2
80. <u>Empidonax Flycatcher</u>	x	2	x	2
81. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	x	9	2	11
82. Lincoln's Sparrow	x	2	x	2
83. Swamp Sparrow	x	1	13	14
84. White-crowned Sparrow	x	x	1	1
85. Ruby-throated Hummingbird	x	2	x	0
	<u>147</u>	<u>991</u>	<u>493</u>	<u>1631</u>

*Underlined species are new for OR at Presque Isle.

The six most commonly banded birds were:

Swainson's Thrush	153
Myrtle Warbler	142
Magnolia Warbler	118
Slate-c. Junco	114
Blackpoll Warbler	110
Tennessee Warbler	82

RD 1, Saeger Hill, Meadville, Pennsylvania

