

Operation Recovery at Tobay Banding Station
1965

By Frederick S. Schaeffer

Thirty-three days between August 1 and October 31, 1965, marked the second season for Tobay Banding Station, Operation Recovery. This year we netted and banded a total of 3607 birds of 97 species which is quite an improvement over last year's 2151 birds of 75 species. Of course, this improvement didn't come about by itself. The fact that we were able to use more nets, that we had more assistance and some of the comforts of life we didn't have last year, certainly helped.

This year we concentrated on two main areas in the John F. Kennedy Memorial Wildlife Refuge near Tobay Beach, located about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Jones Beach Central Mall on the South Shore of Long Island. The first area, perhaps best for October and species other than Myrtle Warbler is located between the main parking field and the sanctuary proper. The second area, located near the western end of the pond, was used mainly in August and September by Tom Davis, although in October he joined me near my location. In the location first described I have three lanes, all approximately running North to South and 300 feet long. The unique feature of these three lanes is that whatever the time of day, at least one of the three produces a good yield, unless of course there is no flight at all. Most of these lanes are hand-cut through dense poison ivy and bayberry. I cannot remember a single day this year that I did not have some Poison Ivy, particularly since I do work on nesting Tree Swallows there during the Spring. But even that one gets used to!

Since Mr. Van Velzen had issued subpermits for some people working with Tom Davis and myself, we had plenty of help. Frank Enders played an essential part in weighing birds while I was too busy with banding itself and my other able assistant, Mrs. Helen Dumont, who previously held a permit in Jamaica, B. W. I., and had plenty of experience with mist nets there, helped to retrieve many birds from the nets. Bob Sutherland worked with Tom Davis in the other set of lanes. Those lanes proved unique because the Myrtle Warblers, our most banded species, (1501) follow the contours of the pond, and by setting his nets perpendicular to the edge of the pond beyond the vegetation, he was able to net a great percentage of the total of that species. Other able assistants were Leonard Epstein, Frank Bader, Linda Larys, and Will Houston, who for a long time worked in Jamaica with Mrs. Dumont.

In my last article on O. R., 1964 (EBBA News 28:1, 33-37) I mentioned that our biggest worry was transportation. Tom Davis had a car but I had none. Two birds were killed with one stone when I bought a Station Wagon: transportation and a warm and dry place to sleep. Mr. H. William Warner of the Town of Oyster Bay, who manages the south shore beaches and also Tobay Beach and Sanctuary, was most kind by allowing us to use a hut for storage space and washroom facilities (after the beach season was closed). This really helped our morale along, when we spent nine continuous days in the field from the 16th through the



Top right - Tom Davis (left)
and Fred Schaeffer at Tobay
Operation Recovery

Top left - Yellow-breasted Chat

Above - Wilson's Warbler

At right - Lincoln's Sparrow
(Photos by the author)

24th of October. Not all of these days were good days for banding, but because we had enough help to have the net lanes manned at all times with a reduced number of nets, I was able to visit with Leroy Wilcox of Tiana Beach O. R. and see Mr. John Renkavinsky of the New York State Conservation Department in Oakdale whose help has been a deciding factor in the success of Tobay Banding Station.

To show our improvement in numbers over 1964 I can perhaps best show comparative figures of the ten top birds per year.

	<u>1965</u>		<u>1964</u>
1. Myrtle Warbler	1501	Myrtle Warbler	819
2. Tree Swallow	220	White Throated Sp.	173
3. Song Sparrow	212	Song Sparrow	173
4. Catbird	137	Slate Col. Junco	170
5. White Throated Sp.	116	Hermit Thrush	73
6. Robin	91	Catbird	66
7. Yellowthroat	78	Palm Warbler	53
8. Savannah Sparrow	67	Flicker & Swamp Sp.	52
9. Flicker	62	E. Towhee	50
10. Swamp Sparrow	59	Ruby Crowned Kinglet	40

The Slate Colored Junco this year came up with a poor number of 46, and the most we had on one day was 25 on October 17th, whereas last year the big Junco day was the 24th of October with 46. This year on the 24th we did not get any Juncos at all. Hermit Thrushes came to 41, with a big day of 25 on the 24th of October, the same date as in 1964 when we got 31. This year we did poorly in Vireos. In 1964 we had all of them to be commonly observed in the East. This year only the Solitary, Red Eyed, and 4 Warbling Vireos.

Despite these disappointments there were many happy moments. We were able to fully process (with weights and measurements) a good many Myrtle Warblers and Tree Swallows and, especially in the latter case, these measurements and weights will come in handy in my project in the Spring. The best thing that happened along were 14 Saw-Whet Owls during October, of which 6 arrived on October 17th.

Lastly, we had a Marsh Hawk on Sept. 19th, a Pigeon Hawk on Oct. 2d, an American Woodcock on Oct. 31st, two Ruby Throated Hummingbirds on Sept. 4th, a Hairy Woodpecker on Oct. 19th, a Carolina Wren on Aug. 15th, a Pine Warbler on Oct. 9th and 16th, a Rusty Black bird on Oct. 17th, a Cardinal on Oct. 20th, a Grasshopper Sparrow on Oct. 16th, and three Lincoln Sparrows on Sept. 18th, October 10th and 17th. In August we banded 277 individuals of 30 species in 9 days with a total of 344 net hours; in September, 874 individuals of 67 species in 9 days with a total of 1615 net hours and October, 2456 individuals of 67 species in 15 days with 2414 net hours. This gives us a total of 3607 individuals of 97 species in 4273 net hours.