



O. R. CORNER

Edited by: Robert P. Yunick

The response from station leaders for write-ups on their Operation Recovery activities has been most encouraging and I want to take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed so generously. The following reports summarize the efforts at six stations in Massachusetts, four in Rhode Island and four in New York.

It is interesting to note what these stations shared in common. On the coast, August appeared to be an inactive month with birds being scarce, particularly on Long Island and Nantucket. Generally there was improvement in September, with some stations near normal in October. However, numbers in general were down. Long Island seemed to be hard hit as noted at Manorville and Atlantic Beach, as was Martha's Vineyard. Beside the Long Island reports noted here, an earlier card from Walter Terry noted that 1967 was his poorest year since he started his station at Brookhaven in 1964. Inland at Vischer Ferry, 1967 yielded more birds per net-hour than 1966, but not as many as did 1965. Compare this with the ups and downs at Round Hill.

On a specific abundance basis, two Massachusetts stations reported fewer thrushes, a Mass. and a N.Y. station reported high numbers of Red-eyed Vireos, and a Mass. and N.Y. station reported high numbers of Myrtle Warblers. Kinglets, while specifically reported as 30% higher at Manomet, were mentioned as numerous banded at Nantucket, Block Island and Atlantic Beach.

October 22 saw a massive flight along part of the coast as noted at Tobay and Atlantic Beach; but at Manomet and Vischer Ferry, the day before was one of great activity. At Vischer Ferry October 22, once the initial dawn activity subsided, was an extremely quiet, birdless day. It will be interesting to see from future reports how other stations fared.

It is very heartening to note Fred Schaeffer's success in capturing two direct recoveries of Yellowthroats within four days of banding. The Brookhaven retrap involves a direct-line distance of about 60 miles from the east, while the South Londonderry retrap represents about 185 miles from the north. Fred's group's educational efforts are to be commended also. In reading all these reports I am struck by the diversity of people's efforts, operating conditions, station circumstances and benefits derived from this program. As Dick Cohen says, "...there's plenty to do".

The following pages contain individual station reports contributed by O.R. station leaders, followed by O.R. CORNER news.

ROUND HILL - Sudbury, Mass. - by Deborah V. Howard

Round Hill is an isolated promontory, rising about 100 feet out of the Sudbury River valley, covered on the north, east and west sides by white pine, oaks of various species and gray birch. The south side and the top are grass-covered. Ten nets were set in the trees on the north and east sides of the hill. In 1967 I ran the nets and did the banding alone. (See Nisbet, I.C.T., W.H. Drury Jr. and J. Baird, 1963; Weight Loss During Migration. Bird-Banding 34: 107-159, for a more complete description of the site and the results of the research carried on there in 1962.)

Nets were run from September 15 until October 11, almost every other day, from about 9 am. until 2 or 3 pm. The total number of species taken in 1967 was 35; the average number of birds per 100 net-hours, 59. This was less than half as many as were caught in 1966 (162 birds per 100 net-hours). Indeed, one of the most striking phenomena at Round Hill has been the extreme fluctuation in the number of birds caught from year to year, ranging from a low of 15 (1965) to a high of 162 (1966) per 100 net-hours. At present I can find no completely satisfactory explanation for this.

The commonest bird at Round Hill is the Blackpoll Warbler. It has averaged 63% of the total catch and almost 6000 have been banded there in the six years the station has been in operation.

The Black-billed Cuckoo, captured on September 18, was the only new species caught in 1967 and brought the number of species which have been taken at Round Hill to 75. (For an interesting summary of the first five years' banding at Round Hill see Mrs. Howard's "Five Years of Mist Netting (1962-1966) at Round Hill..." in Records of New England Birds, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, February, 1967. -Ed.)

EAST CHOP - Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, Mass. - by Grace Coit Meloney

This year's O.R. total of 121 for the period Sept. 6 to Oct. 17 is a great deal poorer than 1966's of 220 for Sept. 6 to Oct. 19. Last year we had more rain and wind. This year we had many perfect days with no birds. This year's species list was 27, against last year's of 24.

The thrushes did not come through in 1967. In addition, there was no excitement like the all-yellow Scarlet Tanager, the Mockingbird and the male and female Kingfishers of 1966. On many days the five nets were up all day with no results.

Mabel Gillespie's results were worse than mine. However, we did manage to capture a large number of repeats. There were 250 in September and October, mostly chickadees. Mabel recaptured 24 of my birds. Among

the returns were a Downy Woodpecker banded 9/27/62 by Mabel and recaptured by me on 10/5/67; and my own Song Sparrow banded 7/7/66 and recaptured on 10/15/67.

NANTUCKET - Massachusetts - by Edith Andrews

At Nantucket most of the banding during the O.R. period took place at the Mothball Pines, a small woodland of Japanese black pine comprising about two acres on the southeast side of a fresh-water pond near a barrier beach separating pond and ocean. This is mainly a fall migration stop and banding operations have taken place there since 1955. Two additional stations were operated when conditions warranted, one at Madaket and one at Quaise: these support a greater number of nesting species and artificial feeding has been carried on. Madaket has been operated since 1956 and Quaise since the fall of 1963. The Madaket station consists of about 12 acres, triangular in shape, two sides bordered by fresh water, the other by a paved road. About half of it is a swamp of azalea, clethra and bayberry; the remaining is open field with stretches of bayberry and wild roses and small clumps of mixed Japanese black and pitch pines. The Quaise station is on a neck of land between a fresh pond and a salt marsh. Vegetation is clumps and borders of groundsel, bayberry, wild rose and privet hedge plus a scattering of red cedar, grassy areas and a dirt road.

From one to five 12-meter nets were operated daily, subject to weather, from Sept. 17 to Oct. 28; and weekends and holidays for the first two weeks in September with a total of 18 days in September and 22 days in October. Nets were set on poles each day between 8 and 9 am. and removed each afternoon. Traps were operated on three of the forty days of the O.R. period. A total of 1636 individuals of 77 species was banded; of these, 1591 were netted in 805 net hours and 45 were caught in traps.

The season was very slow in starting, almost no migration in August and very few birds banded before Sept. 19. After that it was spotty until October when it built up to a peak by the middle of the month with another period of activity beginning on Oct. 20 and lasting through the 27th. Weather conditions were generally poor. Cold fronts failed to reach Nantucket and consequently no big flights occurred when they were expected, especially in September.

Myrtle Warblers were by far the most numerous with 641 banded, followed by Golden-crowned Kinglets, 175; Slate-colored Juncos 87; and Redstarts, 85. Unusual species for the area included Red-headed Woodpecker, House Wren, Phila. Vireo, Worm-eating Warbler, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Assistants were: James Baird, Kenneth Blackshaw, Stanley Bolden, Paul Murphy and Simon Perkins.

MANOMET - Massachusetts - by Kathleen S. Anderson

Seventeen to 40 nets (depending upon staff) were scattered at random

over approximately 30 acres of mixed habitat, predominantly thickets with some open fields and some oak and pine woods. Nets remained up 24 hours per day, Sept. 12 through Oct. 27, being furled one day due to rain and briefly during heavy showers on a few other occasions. About 50 people participated in banding activities at various times through the season and the same number cooperated in "Operation Seawatch", recording migrant waterfowl and other species passing nearby Manomet Point.

Weather was generally fair, with a warm September and a dry, cool October. Peak flights were on Sept. 18, and Oct. 5, 15, and 21. Woodpeckers were greatly decreased, Sapsuckers as well as Flickers and Downies. Chickadees were down from 158 in 1966, to 78. Catbirds dropped from 301 to 215. Robins were down from 106 to 57, and other thrushes decreased by about the same percentage. On the other hand, kinglets increased 30%, Red-eyed Vireos from 25 in 1966 to 78, and all of New England's six species of vireos were recorded. Myrtle Warblers showed the greatest increase, up to 590 from 268 in 1966. Twenty-two other species of warblers showed no notable changes in numbers; finches and sparrows were non-exceptional.

No unusually rare species were taken this year, but ten species were new to the list. Seventy-two species were taken in 14,800 net-hours in 1967 as contrasted with 73 and 10,613 in 1966. Totals banded were up to 1997 from 1783 in 1966. The fact that we did no shorebird netting this year was a factor in the decreased number of species.

Twenty-two of our returns of 1966 birds, including two White-eyed Vireos, were presumably breeding birds in the area, but the 23rd return, a Myrtle Warbler banded Oct. 18, 1966 and recaptured Oct. 25, 1967, was surely a returning migrant.

Four recoveries of 1966 birds have been reported by the Banding Office. An immature Catbird was found dead locally in June, 1967; an immature Downy Woodpecker was recovered in South Hanson, Mass. in November, 1966; a Saw-whet Owl was recovered in South Kingston, R.I. in November, 1966 and an immature White-throated Sparrow was recovered in Columbus, Georgia in February, 1967.

A full-length report of our 1967 activities will be sent to all participants as soon as possible and will be available to anyone interested upon request and the receipt of 20¢ to cover postage and costs. (RFD #2, Winter St., Middleboro, Mass. 02346. -Ed.)

BLOCK ISLAND - Rhode Island - by Elise Lapham

For the first time there were four banding stations on Block Island and all four reported on O.R. as a single unit. Elise and Stanley Dickerson ran the most nets at "Harrier Hill", banding continuously for six weeks; Merrill Slate, a Block Island resident with one net lane, banded evenings and weekends; Michael Wagner, a sub-permittee and also a resident,

banded weekends near his home or assisted the Dickersons; and Elise Lapham, also a sub-permittee and her daughter Helen ran two lanes at "Blueston", (a mile south of the Dickersons) off and on for a total of about 30 days. In addition, Maureen Whitman, another Block Island resident, was invaluable in helping clear the nets, and Frank Frazier Jr. banded at the Dickerson's station for a week. The grand total for the O.R. season was 4624 birds of 100 species in 5417 net-hours. The number of nets in operation varied from one to 17.

The impression of Block Island growth is a mass of bayberry, poison ivy, beach rose and honeysuckle. The only trees are a few locusts, wild apple, introduced black pines and a few swamp maples. The Dickersons ran three nets around an old peat hole, dug out to make a pond; these were more productive than any others. One of the Lapham lanes near a swampy area netted most of the woods birds, thrushes, catbirds and towhees.

Out of the 4624 total, Myrtle Warblers arriving in a mass on Oct. 2 accounted for about one-fourth of the total. In fact they were so numerous the banders couldn't keep up with them and over two hundred were released without bands. Yellowthroats were the next most numerous species with 788, then Song Sparrows with 343.

The Yellow-throated Vireo banded on October 5 was the first ever banded on the island. The most exciting catches were the Clay-colored Sparrow on October 6 and Blue Grosbeak on September 30. A Pied-billed Grebe was banded after a neighbor had called Elise Dickerson to come and see "the baby swan in her yard". Another day Elise Dickerson, on investigating a shaking net, found a Loggerhead Shrike that had become tangled after killing a warbler. That shrike was transported to the mainland hoping it would find no nets nearby. A woodcock in the net early one morning was a surprise and a Long-billed Marsh Wren was an exciting addition. The biggest day was October 3 with 227 birds banded from 12 nets, though there were good flights all during the first two weeks of October.

TOBAY - Long Island, New York - by Frederick S. Schaeffer

For its fourth consecutive year, Tobay O.R. did very well, despite its slow start in August. The Tobay O.R. Station is located in the John F. Kennedy Memorial Wildlife Refuge, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of the Jones Beach State Park intersection with Wantagh State Parkway. The refuge, where we conduct this operation with the support and cooperation of the New York State Conservation Dept. and the Town of Oyster Bay Beach Dept., is unique in its ecology. It presents us with a shallow brackish pond and large amounts of bayberry, catbriar and poison ivy, the latter being fine for attracting birds and good for keeping away banders. Tobay O.R. was in operation every weekend of August, September and October and also Labor Day and the last two days of October. Tom Davis and I were banding

practically all the time, and we had the help of Harvey Farber, Frank Enders and Doug Van Riper on several weekends. Will Post and Bob Paxton worked with Tom and me, respectively, as sub-permittees. There were too many assistants to list here, but I do want to mention Tony Lauro and his family who went all out to bed us down in his home in Amityville when it was not possible to stay at the refuge.

August was a very slow month with a total of 182 mainly due to inclement weather. September started slow, but picked up and by the end of the month we totalled 789, still a little below average. October with 3142 was near our usual average, but wouldn't have been if Oct. 22 had not been such an extremely fine day when we banded 1006 birds.

One bird I think is worthy of mention is the immature Cerulean Warbler which Tom Davis banded on August 6. It is a real rarity for Long Island's south shore in the fall, and for that matter in other seasons as well. We had four foreign retraps whose data are summarized below.

Barn Swallow	Trapped 8/6/67 - Banded 7/2/63 at Sandy Hook, N.J.
Yellow Warbler	" 8/6/67 - " 8/24/64 at Brookhaven, N.Y.
Yellowthroat	" 9/4/67 - " 8/31/67 at S. Londonderry, Vermont
Yellowthroat	" 9/9/67 - " 9/5/67 at Brookhaven, N.Y.

No particular projects were undertaken this year, but we tried to steer our efforts into public education. All visitors who stopped at the net lanes were told in detail what we were doing, how we did it, and an exhibit with seven 8"x10" color prints was rigged up to add some impetus to our work. In all, I feel that the education part of our work is by far the most important, as it will, in time, cut down appreciably the bad criticism toward the entire banding effort. Although I did not make an actual count, I would estimate that about 400 different persons visited us in 1967, and with the exception of a few, they left with the satisfaction that they had learned something new.

MANORVILLE - Long Island, New York - by Gilbert S. Raynor

The Manorville O.R. station was operated by Gilbert S. Raynor for the ninth consecutive year at the home banding station located in central Long Island. The area of several acres includes oak woods, a strip of wooded swamp along the Peconic River, shrubbery, garden and grassy field. Nets were placed mostly in lanes through the swampy woods and along the boundaries between garden and field and the woods. Due to the height of the vegetation, many birds remained too high to be caught. Nets were operated only on evenings and weekends except for a one to two week vacation period in early October when they were operated daily.

In 1967, little banding was done in August due to the extreme scarcity of birds in the area. In September, two business trips prevented

operation for two weeks, but in October, the nets were used almost daily. Birds were judged very scarce in August, scarce with no good flights in September, and near normal in October with the best flight on October 22nd. The season's operation can be summarized as follows - total birds banded are given, with birds per net hour in parentheses: August: 10 (0.14); September: 66 (0.26); October: 392 (0.40); Total: 468 (0.36).

The October total would have been larger, but 81 White-throated Sparrows had to be released unbanded since the Fish & Wildlife Service was unable to supply 1B bands for several weeks. Species banded in largest numbers were Slate-colored Junco 108, White-throated Sparrow 45, Rufous-sided Towhee 35, Chipping Sparrow 33 and Catbird 31. The only uncommon species was a Dickcissel on October 12.

ATLANTIC BEACH - Long Island, New York - by Richard Cohen

If your fall birding didn't live up to expectations, don't feel you were in the wrong place at the wrong time. From our banding operations at Atlantic Beach, the fall migration of land birds was the poorest in the last four years, and others agree. For the period Aug. 1 to Oct. 31, 1966 we banded 1691 birds of 79 species, in 2200 net hours. This year for the same period, 1762 birds of 80 species were banded, a small increase that does not begin to reflect over 4200 net hours of operation. In October alone, net hours almost equalled last year's three month total, yet the big finch flights usually associated with that month failed to materialize here. These peak flights generally come after a period of bad weather, the passage of a cold front and northwest or northerly winds. This fall, clearing weather in October brought southwest or west winds and our banding totals for the following species show the effect of this weather pattern.

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>
White-crowned Sparrow	8	2
White-throated Sparrow	421	117
Rufous-sided Towhee	70	19
Song Sparrow	38	19

Peak flights in October with number banded were: Oct. 6, 103; Oct. 22, 129; Oct. 23, 115; Oct. 29, 90; and Oct. 30, 80. October 6 would have been the best date numerically had not half of the nets been closed for three hours. As it was, we banded a good variety of late warblers on that date, including nine of our season's total of 24 Black-throated Blues.

Highlights included six Lincoln's Sparrows and ten Saw-whet Owls banded, and the welcome sight of three Bluebirds in the garden on Oct. 29. In early November we became familiar with the Woodcock's whistling wings as we startled him into flight. Each netting season, new species are recorded here for the first time and this fall we added the Great Crested Flycatcher, two Vesper Sparrows on Oct. 29 and a Warbling Vireo on Oct. 1.

That day we netted a species we often look for in fall migration but saw only once in the Adirondacks in July - the Clay-colored Sparrow. Reported in fall migration regularly, few are banded each summer along the east coast. Our individual was an immature as are more than 75% of the fall birds we handle, and it was weighed, measured and examined for fat before banding and release. This processing was also done on over 500 of the birds handled. Even in years of few large migratory waves, there's plenty to do.

VISCHER FERRY - New York - by Robert P. Yunick

With Walt Sabin and myself as banders and Will Merritt as assistant, the Vischer Ferry O.R. station was operated every weekend from August 11 to October 29. Once again for the third consecutive year, operation was possible through the cooperation of the N.Y. State Conservation Department, in particular through Asa Smith, Region 6 Game Manager. The Vischer Ferry Game Management Area engulfs 810 acres of river bottomland including about 200 acres of ponds and 200 of wetlands, and is bordered on the south by the Mohawk River and on the north by the abandoned Erie Canal bed. It is located about ten miles east of Schenectady at about 190 feet elevation.

During August and September, nets were typically set on Friday evening about 5 pm., manned until after dusk and again on Saturday from pre-dawn until about noon when bird activity diminished. During October, the same general schedule was kept on a Saturday-Sunday basis in order not to conflict with hunting in the area. Occasionally operation would involve the period from Friday to Sunday. On six days in August, 472 net hours and 200 birds of 24 species were tallied. Similarly, ten days in September totalled 797 net hours and 357 birds of 34 species, while nine days in October yielded 396 birds of 26 species in 845 net hours. This gave an overall average of 45 birds per 100 net hours, or averages of 42, 45 and 47 for the three respective months. The total take of 953 birds of 57 species in 2114 net hours compares to 1273 of 59 species in 3230 net hours in 1966. Twelve new species were added to bring the species list to 85.

The equivalent of 20 to 25 12-meter nets was used at all times but one. All nets were set in an east-west direction either adjacent to alder-willow hedges bordering cultivated corn fields abounding in weeds, or along a dike leading to one such field. These fields and dike were surrounded by cattail marsh and pond. As such, the habitat abounded with Song and Swamp Sparrows. These two species gave over 40% of the catch and the nine species of sparrows banded totalled 490 or over 51%, down from last year's 56%. Commonest were Song Sparrow 294, Swamp Sparrow 93, Catbird 78, Myrtle Warbler 70, White-throated Sparrow 69 and Cedar Waxwing 59. The catch of the season was a Sharp-tailed Sparrow of the Nelson's race on October 1. It was the second in as many years. While Vischer Ferry is primarily a "sparrow station", the open-field species of sparrows are rare or non-existent in the fall.

The first foreign retrap for the station involved a Song Sparrow banded at Island Beach, N.J. in 1966 as mentioned in this column two issues ago. In addition, 298 repeats and 29 returns were recorded. About 95% of more of the total captures were fat-classed, wing-measured and aged. Of particular interest are fat class, weight, weight change and age ratio data on Song, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows. Some interesting patterns of change in these data through the migration season have been obtained.

From an abundance standpoint, Myrtle Warblers were twice as common as in 1966, while Yellowthroats were one-half their 1966 numbers. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were markedly less common, as were Swamp Sparrows. This year 18 hummers were released unbanded as compared to 48 last year.

Banding demonstrations were given for a group of zoology students from the State University of N.Y. at Albany, a field group from the Schenectady Bird Club and a variety of other individuals varying from duck hunter to birder to weekend roamer when the occasion arose.

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More 1967 Summary Lists. Since the last issue, word has been received that O.R. summaries are available for the following stations:

1. Round Hill, Mass. from Mrs. Frank A. Howard, 34 Fairfax Street, West Newton, Mass. 02165. Send 20¢ for postage.
2. Red Creek, W. Va. from Dr. George A. Hall, Dept. of Chemistry, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va. 26506.

Daily Summaries. Some of the contributors of station summaries in this issue submitted daily tallies which regrettably could not be included because of space limitations. These tallies add much to one's report, and the matter of somehow including them will be considered. Any suggestions from readers will be considered.

Next Issue. With some of the material on hand and that which is anticipated, the next issue will cover reports from stations in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Please send your material to me as far ahead of March 1 as possible. (Any very-last-minute material should be sent directly to the Editor, but material should, preferably, reach Dr. Yunick at least a week ahead of March 1. -Ed.) The May-June issue will cover reports from Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and points south. I'd like to have these reports by March 1 also, so as to relieve some of the last-minute strain on assembling and typing. Thanks for your help.

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