



O. R. CORNER

Edited by: Robert P. Yunick



With this issue, the Operation Recovery station reports for 1967 come to a close with reports from New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. This brings the total of reports for the year to 21. I hope these reports have helped to give a better idea what O.R. cooperators are doing and have provided an impetus to interest more people in O.R. for the coming season. In addition, I hope that people already involved in O.R. will realize the potential of the effort and improve their coverage this coming year. The response to requests for reports has been high and I thank the contributors for their cooperation.

Among the highlights of this issue's reports is the recovery on September 24 at 1330 by Charles Hacker at Kiptopeke, Va. of a Swainson's Thrush banded the day before at 1720 by Gladys Cole, 95 miles to the north at Ocean City, Md. It took a long time to happen, but this direct recovery coupled with Fred Schaeffer's recovery on September 4 at Tobay (N.Y.) of one of Betty Downs' Yellowthroats of August 31, and the September 9 recovery of Walter Terry's Brookhaven, N.Y. Yellowthroat of September 5, and Brooke Worth's October 3 recovery near Cape May, N.J. of Elise Dickerson's Block Island Yellowthroat of September 14, demonstrate that the original concept of Operation Recovery can be fulfilled. These recoveries are encouraging and with greater banding effort they can perhaps occur with greater frequency.

Also of interest is Fred Scott's note on how various species totals changed dramatically due to a change in size of net mesh. After reading Mary Heimerdinger's paper on this subject recently, the effect was to be expected, but to see it so influential in a station's summary demonstrates the need for careful record keeping regarding the kind and placing of one's nets, as well as such details as the weather conditions affecting the efficiency of those nets.

In looking back at the 1967 season, the flights of October 22 and 23 stand out as most impressive. To those who were out banding along the coast on Sunday, October 22, and who recall how massive the movement was, it becomes all the more inspiring and commanding of attention when one now considers its total magnitude. Birds came in fantastic numbers from Long Island to Virginia. From those stations for which daily summaries are available, the tabulation that follows was made for October 22. The first column represents the percentage of the season's catch that occurred on that one day. Similarly, the percentage of the total netting effort is given in column two, and the take of new birds per 1000 net hours is given in column three.

Station	Year's Take (%)	Net Hours (%)	Birds/1000 Net Hours
Tobay, N.Y.	24.5	4.90	8,800
Island Beach, N.J.	13.9	0.97	19,400
Ocean City, Md.	12.5	0.98	4,639
Damsite, Md.	13.9	-	-
Kiptopeke, Va.	7.0	-	-

Even more impressive was the flight of October 23 as evidenced by the take at Island Beach. There, two banders operated one net for ten hours and banded 1032 birds! One can only speculate what the banding total would have been if the usual weekend crowd had been present to man several net lanes. This lone effort calculates to a bird yield of an unbelievable 103,200 birds per 1000 net hours. That same day Ocean City recorded 6.8% of its year's catch and its bird yield rose to 6024 per 1000 net hours. Damsite had 8.0% of its season total banded on that day.

It is interesting how even though Island Beach's and Ocean City's yields in birds per 1000 net hours differ considerably (season averages of 1350 and 362, respectively), the relative contribution to each station's total made by the flight of October 22 is remarkably similar, suggesting the same order of magnitude of flight at both locations. Tobay's take is understandably higher on a percentage basis because as a weekend station operating fewer days, each day is a bigger fraction of the total.

Next Issue... The next issue's column will be devoted to requests for help from station leaders who desire assistance. Send me a brief note by June 21 stating your needs and giving information on location, accommodations, dates of operation and person to contact for further details.

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CAPE MAY POINT - New Jersey - George Hitchner

Setting up on the heels of a threatened hurricane, CMPOR operated from September 17 to October 3, with 3252 net hours, and 1239 birds banded of 59 species. A continuous line of 20 twelve-meter nets was stretched in the same wooded lane established by Seth Low some 15 years ago in the southernmost patch of woods in New Jersey. Nets were set 24 hours a day, and operated from dawn to dark except when rain forced a shutdown, or the manpower did not permit using all nets. The heaviest flight days were September 23 and 24, and October 1, 2 and 3. Most of the other days had winds from a southerly quarter, and rain forced a shutdown on parts of September 28 and 29.

The wooded location has several effects on this operation. The partial shade afforded by the trees makes the nets effective through most of the day, and the trees also shield the nets from winds. Sharp-shinned Hawks frequently zip through the trees, usually above our nets, and sometimes watch us from overhead perches. We keep alert at such times, and

casualties are surprisingly few. Eight Sharpies were the only hawks captured, while Sparrow Hawks, Red-tails, and sometimes 300 Broadwings soared overhead before starting across the bay.

The single line of 20 nets resulted in few repeats when compared to other stations having scattered net lanes. There were 59 repeats, of which 33 were migratory birds remaining in the area for two or more days. One Catbird stayed for nine days, another for 11. The first bird captured on the first day was a Cardinal return from last year, and the oldest bird captured was a 5-year-old Carolina Chickadee banded by R.D. Benedict in 1962. These were the only returns, and there were no foreign recoveries this year.

The most abundant species was again the American Redstart with 211, followed by 116 Swainson's Thrushes and 102 Yellowthroats. Nine Philadelphia Vireos set a record, most years having two or less. Four Worm-eating Warblers were the first ones captured since 1961, with only one that year. Five Connecticut Warblers were the lowest count since 1961. No new species were added this year.

Assisting banders were Betty R. Hahn, William R. Middleton, and Liz and Bob Teulings. The Teulings collected and forwarded ticks removed from 76 individual birds.

DELAWARE - Newark, Delaware - John T. Linehan

DOR-67 might have convinced one bander that he never really learns anything: why, after five years of looking it up, is it still necessary to turn to that well-worn page 30 in the Workshop Manual to see that immature Blackpoll Warblers have most feathers of the upper tail coverts with dark centers while immature females have but few? The word was out to skull all birds, so skull all birds we did - looking at, into and through skulls with hand lens, with spot lights, with tripod mounted lens and with both the right eye and the left eye, in rain, sunshine and wind. And what about ticks! Well we might not have caught many birds, but ticks we caught. Someone said the record was 32 on one bird, so after nearly reaching 32 twice the first day, we knew we could beat the record. Now, how about the record number of ticks in one ear (and this is ornithology?).

Beside the lengthy processing, which with some birds seemingly resulted in enough data to fill a book, we did manage to band 373 birds of 61 species on 14 days with an effort of 1555 net hours (239 birds per 1000 net hours: an all-time low rate for Delaware).

If species diversity could somehow be combined with numbers of individuals, September 30 likely would be a peak day with lesser peaks on September 8, October 1 and October 12.

American Redstarts were especially numerous in 1967 while Ovenbirds

were relatively scarce. The 23 Wood Thrush bandings, along with an equal number of repeats/returns were scattered from mid-August through mid-October for normal numbers and distribution of this species. The average of the dates for Swainson's Thrush was again slightly later than the average date for Gray-cheeked. There were no foreign recoveries and no surprise catches except for an aberrant Robin (I am tempted to say one exhibiting anti-erythrism, for lack of a better description). Three gaps in an O.R. species list were plugged up this year, when we netted a Mourning Warbler, a Baltimore Oriole and a Purple Finch.

The O.R. station is now located in a small deciduous woodlot that is subject to intensive ecological studies. The netting is one phase of a vigorous year-round study of the bird-life associated with this woodlot.

Our restricted objectives, to be mentioned another time, were nearly met. Dick Burr, our tick-picker, frequently kept things going and others assisted, but we suffer from lack of help; we do however enjoy our fall weekends.

HOOPER'S ISLAND - Dorchester County, Maryland - Henry T. Armistead

My wife, Liz, and I banded on 22 days in September and October at Hooper's Island, Dorchester County, Md., netting 770 birds of 69 species in 1132 net hours. Hooper's Island is a narrow island group about 20 miles south of Cambridge, Md., which extends for over 15 miles from northwest to southeast along Chesapeake Bay. The area where we banded was a young loblolly woods at the far north end of Meekins Neck Road characterized, in addition to the pines, by locusts, red cedars, bayberries, poison ivy, trumpet vine, persimmons, and other plants typical of the lower eastern shore. Numerous white-tailed deer, up to 65 Cattle Egrets, three immature Bald Eagles and a pair of Great Horned Owls shared the area with us during most of the banding period. We had several views of the eagles directly overhead at about 100 feet.

Among the more interesting species we caught were Sharp-shinned Hawk, Philadelphia Vireo, Orange-crowned, Connecticut and Mourning Warblers, Lincoln's Sparrow, Eastern Cottontail, and Green Tree Frog. The commonest September birds were American Redstart, 68; Yellowthroat, 36; Magnolia Warbler, 30; and Catbird, 28. Commonest October ones were Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 113; Myrtle Warbler, 36; Catbird, 28; and Golden-crowned Kinglet, 28. Only 30 birds repeated. Over 40% of all new birds were caught on the only two good flight days we experienced: September 23 with 129, and October 22 with 199. We operated up to 15 nets, mostly during the morning hours and over weekends.

I was somewhat disappointed by the low numbers of many birds. However, the good showings we did make on those two good flight days, in addition to the several days of favorable migration weather we missed,

lead me to believe that with continuous coverage, more helpers, and additional nets the area might produce several thousand birds each year.

In addition to swarms of mosquitoes, chiggers and poison ivy, we had to contend one day with a drunken Hooper Islander, impersonating a law officer, who was convinced we were sending messages to the communists on our bands, wore a revolver and told us to leave! In spite of such adversaries, we weighed, measured, aged, etc., the majority of the birds. With the help of mist nets, my year list for this county rose to 244, which is not to say that my banding activities are usually motivated by such idle gamesmanship! My thanks go to Chan Robbins for lending scales and to Will Russell and Earl Baysinger for dropping them off on a visit to the site.

OCEAN CITY - Maryland - Gladys Hix Cole

Through the courtesy of Caine Keys, the 1967 Operation Recovery station at Ocean City, Md., was in the same location, opposite 94th Street, 5½ miles north of Ocean City on the barrier beach.

In 1967 the first birds processed were caught about dusk on Aug. 31. On September 1, forty nets were up and the O.R. station was in full swing. On Sept. 5, 6, 7 and 8, nets were run in the marsh and beach areas where Seaside and Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Black Skimmers, a Laughing Gull, and Semipalmated, Least and Western Sandpipers were caught and banded. Some of these were the first species for the station. September bandings were about average for this time of year. We did have to close the nets and dismantle the station on the night of Sept. 15, when hurricane Doria blew in. By 2 pm. on Sept. 17 we had 44 nets reset and the station back in order. The best day in September was the 26th, with 264 new birds banded and processed. American Redstart was the top species for September.

October started out with a bang. On the second, we had to furl the nets because of too many birds and too few hands. October 22 was the record day of all years when we banded and processed 1350 birds. All nets had to be furled that day for several hours. The top species for October was Myrtle Warbler with 1671. The station tallied 10,819 bandings in 29,850 net hours or 362 birds per 1000 net hours. The species total was 120.

A new project was started this year: an age-character study. Its purpose is to learn more about the plumage and soft part colors as a means of determining age and sex of birds which are banded. Other miscellaneous activities were carried out, such as 10-minute counts of diurnal migrants made from the top of our sand dune, these counts being scheduled on the hour. The purpose of the migration observations was to correlate visible migration with weather conditions and with the birds captured. We continued the collection of warbler outer tail feathers for Chan Robbins' study.

The new daily record forms, designed by Ted Van Velzen, for use at our station, proved very helpful in summarizing weather conditions, net hours and other activities.

This year we had 16 licensed banders and 30 other volunteer helpers. We were privileged in having devoted and able helpers, ranging from 12 to 81 years of age; some famous and outstanding helpers as Dr. & Mrs. Alexander Wetmore of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, and Mr. Arne Aasgaard, Radio Norway, Oslo.

Our sincere thanks to all who made this year possible.

DAMSITE - Maryland - Dorothy Mendinhall

The Damsite O.R. station operates in close cooperation with Chan Robbins and Gladys Cole at the Ocean City, Md. station. Of course we cannot compete with them in numbers but the effort expended is, I'm sure, even greater. The nets are set in continuous lines laid out through wooded areas along a lake bank, some in a marshy section of a gully, and others through a bayberry patch in a mixed forest area abounding in pine, dogwood, sassafras, tulip poplars, hawthorne, etc. We use NEBBA nets of all types and are experimenting with the new ATX ones at present.

Banding started September 3 and ended (after 24 days in September and 27 in October) on October 31. The number of new birds banded was 528 in September and 2621 in October for a total of 3149 birds of 87 species. Species banded in greatest numbers were Myrtle Warbler, 761; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 399; and White-throated Sparrow, 282.

My major support came from Mr. Mendinhall, Mel Garland, Arline and Tony Delano, Maryanne Emerine and Hilda Kane.

KIPTOPEKE BEACH - Virginia - Frederick R. Scott

Kiptopeke Beach lies roughly three miles north of the southern tip of the mainland of the eastern shore of Virginia, commonly known as Cape Charles or Wise Point. The banding station, which has now been operated for five years, lies in a fairly narrow strip of vegetation (mostly loblolly pine with heavy undergrowth) between some agricultural fields and bluffs overlooking Chesapeake Bay.

In the first year of operation, 1963, the station ran only one week (Sept. 24-30). Since then, as more banders have become interested and joined the station, the period of operation has increased each year. It ran 16 days in 1964, 32 in 1965, 37 in 1966, and, finally, 50 days in 1967. Total numbers of birds trapped have also increased, from only 216 in 1963 to 8590 in 1967. All of these operations, except that for 1967, have been reported in detail (with daily totals) in the pages of The Raven, the

bulletin of the Virginia Society of Ornithology. The latest report, for 1966, appeared in Volume 38, pp. 57-64, December 1967.

In 1967 the station was operated continuously from September 2 to October 22, with one day of rest on September 16 while Hurricane Doria swept by. As in prior years the station was under the supervision of one licensed bander each week, although he usually had other banders and assistants on hand. Nets were kept open throughout the daylight hours except during the few periods of heavy rain and wind. This past year the supervising banders were Mitchell A. Byrd, Charles W. Hacker, H. Brad Hawkins, Mrs. Dorothy Mitchell, Sydney Mitchell, F.R. Scott and Walter P. Smith.

The 8590 birds of 96 species trapped in 17,725 net hours came to 484 birds per 1000 net hours, about normal for this station (this calculation was made after the few birds caught in wire traps were subtracted from the total). The most numerous birds trapped were Myrtle Warbler (1737), American Redstart (1044), Yellowthroat (998), Catbird (412), Swainson's Thrush (396), and Gray-cheeked Thrush (324). This year for the first time a number of the smaller-mesh nets were used in addition to the ones with the regular 1½-inch mesh, and the results were dramatic, with most birds that take size 0 and 1 bands in larger numbers than in previous years, and most birds taking 1B or larger bands in smaller numbers. Compared with 1966, House Wrens jumped from 5 to 134, Yellowthroats from 167 to 998, and Redstarts from 413 to 1044. Conversely, Bluejays dropped from 197 to 21, Brown Thrashers from 175 to 94, and Swainson's Thrush from 635 to 396.

The best flight days of 1967 were September 11 (386 trapped, including 237 Redstarts), October 1 and 2 (524 and 537, respectively, with 176 Yellowthroats on the 1st), October 7 (440 trapped, with 65 White-throated Sparrows and 60 Yellowthroats), and October 20 and 22 (967 and 1197, respectively, about half of which were Myrtle Warblers). Unfortunately, as in past years the station had to close just as the big flights of winter residents were getting underway. No particularly rare birds were trapped except for several considered to be locally so in this area during the fall. One Blue-winged Warbler was trapped on September 15, five Mourning Warblers were caught, and a Lark Sparrow was trapped on September 23.

Hawks are generally considered a feature of this station, and banding totals this year were Red-Shouldered, 1; Sharpshin, 33 (44 in 1966); Cooper's, 1; and Sparrow Hawk, 13. All were caught in mist nets except for the Sparrow Hawks, caught with Bal-chatri traps when time permitted.

There were two foreign retraps, the first for this station. A female Redstart originally banded at Tilghman Island, Md., on Sept. 24, 1963 by Jan Reese was retrapped at Kiptopeke on Sept. 17, 1967, by Scott; and a Swainson's Thrush banded at Ocean City, Md., on Sept. 23, 1967 (1720 EDT) by Mrs. Gladys Cole was retrapped the following day at Kiptopeke (1330 EDT) by Hacker, some 95 miles away.