



## O. R. CORNER

Edited by: Robert P. Yunick



With the New Year we begin coverage of the 1968 Operation Recovery station reports for New England and New York. Seven reports are included. In going over these, there are several trends that stand out.

First, and most outstanding, is the Chickadee invasion into southern New England. On Martha's Vineyard, Grace Meloney had 133 Black-capped Chickadees out of 281 banded; and at Manomet, Kathleen Anderson reported the astounding increase of 1313 banded in 1968 versus 80 in 1967! In New York the species made its first appearance at Atlantic Beach since 1965. Also in New York at Vischer Ferry, the species reached a new high in numbers with 18, of the 29 banded, captured in August.

Of interest also is the overall abundance picture. Manomet's bird yield rose from 14 birds per 100 net hours in 1967 to 30 in 1968. Since new net lanes were employed, the change of nets may have contributed in part to the marked increase. At nearby Round Hill, Deborah Howard noticed a marked decrease from 59 to 37 birds per 100 net hours. On Long Island, Fred Schaeffer reported that Tobay's yield dropped from 175 to 164 indicating essentially little change, but nonetheless a negative report. Cohen at Atlantic Beach and Raynor at Manorville concurred noting little movement, and a disappointing season. Inland at Vischer Ferry the bird yield was much more favorable with 60 birds per 100 net hours this year versus last year's 45. This prompts the question, why did Long Island get by-passed?

Among some of the other abundance changes, Manomet, Round Hill and Vischer Ferry noted decreases in Blackpoll Warblers. Atlantic Beach and Manorville noted general warbler scarcity. Manomet and Vischer Ferry also noted decreases in Myrtle Warblers, but increases in Yellowthroats, White-throated Sparrows, Song Sparrows and Purple Finches. Tobay and Atlantic Beach also reported high captures of Purple Finches. As a measure of the extent of increase, both Tobay and Vischer Ferry had more Purple Finches this year than in the four previous years combined.

Some thrushes were noted as scarce on Martha's Vineyard and at Vischer Ferry, while the hylocichlids did well at Atlantic Beach, and Gil Raynor at Manorville commented on a good thrush migration. Significant captures of Saw-whet Owls were made at Atlantic Beach and Vischer Ferry, but other stations did not concur. Brown Creepers and Slate-colored Juncos were captured in greater numbers at Manomet and Atlantic Beach. The sparrows did not do well on Long Island. In particular, Dick Cohen's comment on not having banded a White-throated Sparrow agrees with the species' de-

cline at Vischer Ferry. However, there is no agreement on the abundances of other sparrows when one compares their scarcity on Long Island with their record increases in abundance at Vischer Ferry and Manomet.

The station reports follow, for which I thank the contributors very much.

MANOMET - Massachusetts - Kathleen S. Anderson

Manomet's third fall of Operation Recovery was the most successful yet in numbers of birds banded - 4170 in 1968 versus 1997 in '67 and 1783 in '66 - and in number of species (91 in '68 vs. 72 in '67 and 78 in '66), and average number of birds per 100 net hours (30 in '68 vs. 14 in '67 and 17 in '66).

Nine to 36 nets, averaging 30 most of the fall, remained up continuously between September 9 and October 24, being furled all day on Oct. 7 and partially closed on four other days due to rain. Thirty and 36 mm. nets were used in approximately equal numbers. Weather was generally pleasant for field work, with summer-like heat during much of September. Peak flights came on September 22-23 and 28, and October 1, 5-6, 8-9 and 23. The October 5-6 influx saw 456 birds banded with Chickadees, Swainson's Thrushes, White-throated Sparrows and Juncos providing the high counts. All birds were skulled, weighed and fat-classed. Age/character studies were made of the hybrid Flickers and of three species of vireos. Ectoparasites were collected for the Encephalitis Field Station.

The irruption of Black-capped Chickadees was the big event of 1968 with 1313 banded (80 in 1967). Brown Creepers increased from 35 in '67 to 76 in '68. Catbirds were up from 215 to 500 and Robins from 56 to 208. Red-eyed Vireos increased for the third year from 25 in '66 to 78 in '67 and 131 in '68. Myrtle Warblers were much decreased from 707 in '67 to 264 in '68. Blackpolls dropped from 72 to 57. Redstarts remained about the same (52 and 59) but Yellowthroats doubled in number from 30 in '67 to 61 in '68. Four common fringillids increased markedly with Towhees up from 22 to 44, Juncos from 18 to 105, White-throats from 81 to 401 and Song Sparrows from 30 to 63. The increase of Purple Finches from 13 last year to 59 in 1968 hinted of the finch invasion to come.

We started the 1968 season with all new nets, abandoning some sites that had not been productive in preceding years and replacing them with new lanes cleared perpendicular to the sea cliff. These changes surely contributed to the increase of birds, but comparative data will be needed in subsequent years to indicate the comparative contribution of new lanes and weather conditions. A new double (80 feet long) aerial net raised about 20 feet above the ground was successful in catching Kingfishers, Pigeon Hawks, Blue Jays and an occasional surprise such as a Lincoln's Sparrow swinging 18 feet above the ground.

Thirteen species were new for Manomet: Pigeon Hawk (51), Virginia Rail, Ruffed Grouse, Least Flycatcher, Mockingbird, Blue-winged, Tennessee, Blackburnian and Hooded Warblers, Tree and Henslow's Sparrows and Pine Siskin. We have banded 102 species during the past three years.

Nineteen individuals of seven species returned from 1966 and/or 1967, including our second return of a Myrtle Warbler. Two of our 1313 Chickadees have already been retrapped, both within a month of banding and both from towns along the south shore of Massachusetts north of Manomet. Three birds from previous years have been reported as recoveries since our last report: a Brown Creeper banded 10/3/67 was netted 10/12/67 at Island Beach, N.J.; a Myrtle Warbler banded 10/8/66 was found dead in Waynesboro, Georgia on 1/7/68 and a Song Sparrow banded 10/3/66 was found dead at Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y. on 3/21/68.

Again this year, approximately 100 people participated in the banding operation and/or Operation Seawatch. Banding demonstrations were given for several bird clubs on field trips, for school classes and for scout troops, and for science teachers. We feel that the educational activities are extremely important, both to the future of the station and to the individuals who see their first living wild birds in the hand.

Perhaps the most significant development at Manomet is the work now underway to raise funds to endow this fine piece of coastal property as the first full-time bird observatory on the Atlantic Coast. Future plans include year-round banding, breeding bird studies, training for new and apprentice banders and an active educational program. A more detailed notice will appear in a forthcoming issue of EBBA News. A complete report summarizing the first three years of banding at Manomet will be available early in the year upon request and receipt of 20¢ to cover mailing costs.

EAST CHOP, MARTHA'S VINEYARD - Massachusetts - Grace Coit Meloney

I literally swam in Black-capped Chickadees from September 5 to October 17, 1968. They not only accounted for 133 of the 281 birds banded, but repeated constantly. Thirty-six individual Chickadees repeated, including three banded in 1967, seven in July 1868 and 26 banded in the O.R. period. The highest number of repeats for an individual bird was 72 (he came the last morning to say good-bye). Other individuals repeated 41, 38 and 32 times, respectively.

I seemed to have flights of off-island Chickadees between September 20 and 23, and October 4 and 15. Most of these birds were caught in five nets, whereas the majority of repeaters were caught in traps baited with wild bird food and sunflower seeds.

There were only eight species of warblers and very few individuals: 13 Palm and 11 Pine Warblers headed the list. The most surprising were

a Northern Water-thrush and a Yellow-breasted Chat. A Yellow-throated Vireo and a young (no red) Scarlet Tanager also added glorious color.

No Wood Thrush, Veery or Swainson's Thrush appeared, and but one Hermit. However, five Gray-cheeked Thrushes were banded. Twenty-five Towhees and 19 Bluejays were a low second and third, respectively, to the 133 Chickadees. As for returns, the recapture of a Bluejay banded as an adult on July 4, 1958 topped the list.

Statistically, 16 days of operation in September yielded 196 birds in 730 net hours, with maximum captures on the 12th, 21st and 23rd. Thirteen days of operation in October produced 85 birds in 536 net hours.

ROUND HILL - Massachusetts - Deborah V. Howard

This year was the seventh consecutive year of operation for the O.R. station at Round Hill. Dr. I.C.T. Nisbet and I began netting on September 19 and, from that date through October 10, we ran ten nets during almost all the daylight hours. They were furled for part of one day when it rained and a few short periods when it was not possible to tend them.

Although we banded 836 individuals of 53 species, the average of 37 birds caught per 100 net hours was lower than it was in 1966 or 1967 (162 and 59 birds per 100 net hours, respectively). Warblers, as usual, comprised most of the catch (57%). In the past, in each year, Blackpoll Warblers have been the most common species; this year almost twice as many Myrtle Warblers (275) were taken as Blackpolls (141).

We banded an immature Blue Grosbeak on October 5. It was a new species for Round Hill but we cannot really claim it for our list. It was taken by Mrs. Jephtha Wade earlier in the day at her banding station in Bedford, Mass., and brought to us for verification of identification.

ATLANTIC BEACH - Long Island, New York - Richard & Shirlene Cohen

This station operates in the garden portion of a plot 85'x120' in a densely constructed barrier beach. All natural vegetation associated with the beach has been replaced with ornamentals, berry-bearing shrubs, evergreens and Norway maples. Nets and traps were operated daily this year beginning in late July, from dawn to dark. In fact, the nets were never furled completely on any day during the O.R. period. It was not surprising, therefore, that we banded more birds than in any other fall season. Totals were:

	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>
August	317 ( 68 warblers)	536 (188 warblers)
September	387 (202 warblers)	583 (239 warblers)
October	<u>1058</u> (190 warblers)	<u>1088</u> (126 warblers)
Total	1762 (460)	2207 (553)

The increased total is due to greater net hours in the months of August and September; October net hours and total birds were virtually the same in both years. Despite the increased totals of birds banded, the 1968 migration here was not very impressive. The August total included 237 House Finches, predominately immatures which were color-banded yellow. The first big flight of migrants occurred on August 27 when 84 birds were taken, including 55 warblers. Highlights that month included a Hooded, Mourning and Worm-eating Warbler, 53 Northern Water-thrushes, and an immature male Cerulean Warbler on the 13th. Red-breasted Nuthatches appeared in mid-August, the vanguard of a large flight.

September was a disappointment. The weather was monotonously the same and there was no damming up of the birds to produce a big flight. We consider 100 birds banded in a day a good flight at this station (168 is our high count), and we never even came close to that in September. The maximum was 57 on the 29th. There was an excellent flight of Brown Creepers with 84 in September and 118 in October producing our best total yet of 202. The Black-capped Chickadee made its first appearance in the garden since 1965. Good numbers of Purple Finches augured well for the northern finches. It was a good season for *Hylocichla* thrushes.

October warbler totals were below last year's. The flight we usually expect during the month's first week never materialized. The Black-throated Blue total for the month best illustrates this: 1968, 4; 1967, 21. We banded our first Orange-crowned Warbler on the 16th, our first Red-headed Woodpecker on the 13th, and two Pine Siskins, another new species, on the 31st. Ten Saw-whet Owls were banded, about half the number banded in 1965's big flight of that species.

Last year's poor White-throated Sparrow flight was followed by a poor spring showing here and an even worse total this fall. September-October totals for this species, and for the Rufous-sided Towhee, since 1965 are as follows:

	<u>White-throated Sparrow</u>	<u>Rufous-sided Towhee</u>
1965	177	24
1966	421	69
1967	117	19
1968	65	14

This was the first year we failed to band a White-crowned Sparrow. Although most sparrows were recorded in fewer numbers than usual, 228 Juncos was a new high for the period. October 14th was the only day this fall that we banded more than 100 birds. Seventy-two of them were Juncos, and not one White-throated Sparrow was banded that day, usually the height of their migration here. October 23 and 24 produced 92 and 88 birds, respectively, the last big days of the season. Evening Grosbeaks flying over in the last days of October gave hopes of an interesting winter.

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

Tobay banding station's staff of seven banders and four helpers outdid itself this year with a new high of 5534 individuals of 89 species. In August the two sets of net lanes used were approximately 1.1 mile apart in the John F. Kennedy Memorial Wildlife Refuge. However, in September, we joined together in two sets of four net lanes in the center of the refuge.

With an average of 15 nets (including one 60-foot 2-3/8" mesh net for raptors) we managed such totals as 749 of 50 species on October 25; 722 of 26 species in Oct. 12; 491 of 51 species on Sept. 29; 484 of 23 species on Oct. 13 and 460 of 20 species on Oct. 27. Although we are primarily a weekend station, Mondays (Sept. 16, 23 and 30, and Oct. 28) were used for banding by Dr. Donald Cooper, Tony Lauro and Darrel Ford. This was a tremendous help in obtaining expanded coverage. On weekends the station was manned by Davis, Lauro, Cooper, Farber, Paxton, and Schaeffer, and on two days by Paul Buckley whose lanes were some distance west of ours, in an area frequented by sparrows.

The raptor net did not do too well, but I am sure better results would have been had if a higher net had been used. On September 22, we had a very photogenic Pigeon Hawk in that net. Davis almost had a Peregrine Falcon but despite his mad lunge at the net, the bird was not sufficiently entangled to be caught.

Species totals were headed, of course, by our Myrtle Warbler of which we had 2907 with 634 of these on October 12. The next species in line was the Catbird with a total of 213 including 41 on September 28. Our best bird was a Clay-colored Sparrow which Davis caught on September 22.

Other interesting catches were a Whip-poor-will on Oct. 6; three Saw-whet Owls on Sept. 29, Oct. 13 and Oct. 27; one Belted Kingfisher on Sept. 16; one Hairy Woodpecker on Oct. 12; a total of 151 Tree Swallows, 133 of which came nearly all at once into one net on Sept. 2, partially with the aid of a tape recorder. We had a White-eyed Vireo foreign retrap on Sept. 7 and another new banding on Sept. 29. Also of interest were five Philadelphia Vireos with the earliest on Sept. 8 and the latest on Sept. 28; and a Warbling Vireo on Sept. 28.

Among the warblers, we had ten Tennessee Warblers with the earliest on Sept. 2 and the latest on Oct. 6 and most, five, on Oct. 5. We also had a Blackburnian on Oct. 5, Pine on Sept. 16, Connecticut on Sept. 21 and a Mourning on Sept. 8. Out of ten Yellow-breasted Chats, the earliest was on Sept. 7 and the latest on Sept. 28 with a total of three on that date.

Five Indigo Buntings were banded, one each on Sept. 23, 28, 29, 30, and Oct. 5. The Purple Finch total of 61 was higher than all 1964-67 com-

bined. They were banded from Sept. 8 through Oct. 28 with the highest total, 20, on Sept. 21. Four Lincoln's Sparrows were banded.

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

I banded some each day from August 18 to October 31 except for September 6 due to rain. The total is fairly high for me but only because of good weather. The birds per net hour figure is one of the lowest in ten years. I considered the warbler movement almost non-existent, the thrushes good and the sparrows fair.

The best days were September 1, 7, 14 and 27-29, and October 5-6, 22, 29 and 31. A definite absence of migration and a scarcity of birds occurred from about October 9 or 10 to October 22.

As usual, all new birds and returns were weighed and measured and all repeats weighed. No really rare species were taken. The best were Connecticut Warbler and Lincoln's Sparrow.

(From the author's tabular summary, which could not be included in its entirety due to space considerations, the following was taken. The total list of captures included 899 birds of 46 species in 2881 net hours, or an average rate of 31 birds per 100 net hours. The three months of August, September and October averaged 25, 28 and 37 birds per 100 net hours. Thirty-six returns were captured. The most common species were White-throated Sparrow, 183; Catbird, 113; Slate-colored Junco, 111.)

VISCHER FERRY - New York - Robert P. Yunick

The Operation Recovery Station at Vischer Ferry was operated for the fifth year, with a record take of 1607 birds of 68 species in 2373 net hours, or an average take of 68 birds per 100 net hours. Ten new species were added to the composite list of 95 species during the operation period running from August 9 to October 27.

Operation was again on a weekend basis involving setting up equipment and banding after work on Fridays, and returning before dawn to band until activity diminished on Saturdays. Typically the equivalent of 30 to 45 12-meter nets was used. As in past years the banding centered near the N.Y. Conservation Department barn. The cultivated field behind this barn, known as East Field (EF), provided one netting area, while the cultivated field across the road from the barn, known as West Field (WF), provided another netting area. Both of these fields are planted in corn each spring to aid the stocked pheasants. This year's crop was almost a complete failure due to a very wet June when the seed was planted. Thus, the fields had abundant weed crops.

In addition to these two areas, which have been used since the start

of the program, a new netting area was opened to netting. In the southwest corner of the management area in thick alder-willow-poplar cover, a new lane was cut along a flood control dike. This area accommodated 12 12-meter nets and was referred to as the Southwest Corner Dike Lane (SWCD). This area is low-lying brushy habitat and has a much different bird assortment than the more open field edges of EF and WF. Warblers, especially, were more abundant in this area, and seven of the ten new species on the composite list were taken from this area.

The 2373 net hour effort is comparable to last year's 2114, yet the bird yield was 68 birds per 100 net hours versus last year's 45. In part this was due to the addition of the SWCD lane with its above-average bird yield. If one combines only the results of EF and WF to compare more equitably to the 1967 results, the bird yield was 60 birds per 100 net hours, which is 33 percent over last year's.

In addition to the captures of new birds, there were 53 returns and 645 repeats, thus giving a total of 2305 captures. Of these 2305, 1979 or 86% wing chords were measured, 2273 or 98.6% were fat-classed and 2248 or 97.7% were weighed. No foreign-banded birds were captured. Two foreign Recoveries of VFOR birds have been reported in the past year. One was a Rusty Blackbird banded as an AHY female on Oct. 21, 1967 and recaptured by Dr. P.H. Fluck on Nov. 4, 1967 at Washington Crossing, Pa., a distance of about 195 miles to the south-southwest. The second was a Red-winged Blackbird banded as an adult male on Aug. 27, 1966 and found shot December 2, 1967 three miles south of Suffolk, Virginia - a distance of about 495 miles southward.

The August yield was 54 birds per 100 net hours, with the best catches on the 10th and 31st when 97 and 106 birds, or 72 and 61 birds per 100 net hours, were captured. In September the yield increased to 67 with the best catches on the 7th with 136 birds, 20-21st with 202 and 27th with 52. The flight of the 7th had 31 species, the most for any one day during the season. That of the 21st had 25, the second highest. The flight of the 21st was the heaviest September flight yet encountered. It would have been an all-time record day's take for the station had the banding activity not been curtailed at mid-morning by other commitments.

In October, as usual, the bird yield rose to its peak for the 3-month period, of 75. By far, October 12-13, with a take of 272 birds, was the most active time. In fact, on October 12 the bird yield rose to an unprecedented 229 birds per 100 net hours when 123 birds were captured prior to dusk. October 5 was the next most active day with a yield of 95 birds per 100 net hours when 90 birds were captured.

Among the unusual or unexpected were an early Saw-whet Owl on Sept. 17; an early Yellow Palm Warbler on Aug. 17; a late Traill's Flycatcher on Sept. 27; and a rare Orange-crowned Warbler on Oct. 13; Connecticut Warbler

on Sept. 21, Mourning on Aug. 31 and Golden-winged Warbler on Aug. 18.

From an abundance standpoint, the unprecedented capture of 11 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers (four aged AHY) on August 24 headed the list of increases. Other increases noted were the capture of five Saw-whet Owls versus a previous take of only one in 1966; a Black-capped Chickadee take of 29 versus a previous maximum of 18 in 1966. Eighteen of the 29 were caught in August and it is not known whether these were local birds or migrants. Swainson's Thrushes were at their scarcest in three years. The Yellow Warbler take was more than double any previous year's, in part due to added August coverage. Myrtle Warblers were scarce with only 13 birds banded compared to last year's 70 and 1966's 42. Similarly, Blackpoll Warblers were rare with only one banded, versus five in 1967 and 14 in 1966. Yellowthroats reached a new high of 77, exceeding 1966's 65 and almost double last year's 34.

The Cardinal take at 15 was more than double the previous maximum. The capture of 19 Purple Finches was about double the previous combined total. Last year's American Goldfinch decline to nine rebounded to a more normal 25. White-crowned Sparrows continued a steady four-year decline with a take of five, down from a maximum of 25 in 1965. White-throats were much more common than last year's maximum of 69, with a capture of 148. Lincoln's Sparrows set a new record of 31 versus a previous high of 14. Swamp Sparrows staged a remarkable increase from 93 in 1967 to 244 this year. The capture of 477 Song Sparrows was also a new record, far and above any previous year.

Again it is a pleasure to acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Asa Smith, Region 6 Game Manager of the N.Y. Conservation Dept., for permission to use the area for banding purposes, and for aid in cutting net lanes, and special privileges. I also want to thank Margaret and Bill Pepper, Bob Pantle and especially Will Merritt for their assistance. Without Will's assistance, it would have been impossible to operate the SWCD lane along with the other areas.

Station Summaries Available: To date, word has been received that the following summaries are available:-

ISLAND BEACH - 25¢ to cover postage and printing. Write Mrs. Mabel Warburton, 300 W. Trenton Ave., Morrisville, Pa. 19067.

RED CREEK - limited supply from Dr. George A. Hall, Dept. of Chemistry, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va. 26505.

MANOMET - 20¢ to cover postage and printing. Write Mrs. Paul T. Anderson, RFD 2, Winter Street, Middleboro, Mass. 02346.

DAMSITE - available at a later date. Write Mrs. Edward Mendinhall, Damsite, RD 2, Chestertown, Md. 21620.

VISCHER FERRY - 15¢ to cover postage. Write Robert P. Yunick, 1527 Myron St., Schenectady, N.Y. 12309.

New O.R. Corner Editor - Starting with the next issue, Fred Schaeffer will take over my duties as compiler of the Operation Recovery Corner. I have enjoyed the contact made with various contributors, and thank them profusely for their fine cooperation in making this column what it is. I have also greatly appreciated the comments that readers have offered on O.R. Corner. The time required to maintain these contacts is considerable, and it is because of the time needed to handle other EBBA matters that I have decided not to continue editing this column. I suggested that Fred be asked to take over for me because of his keen interest in Operation Recovery and trust that you will be pleased with his efforts.

(We are indeed sorry to have Bob Yunick relinquish this column, which he began and on which we feel he has done a really outstanding job; but we recognize his greater responsibilities as EBBA President and join, we are sure, all our readers in thanking him for a job very well done. We are also grateful for his excellent suggestion of a successor who has agreed to take up editing this column and who is bound to do an excellent job of it. All future correspondence and 1968 reports not yet submitted, should be sent to Frederick S. Schaeffer, 139-48 85th Drive, Jamaica, N.Y. 11435. --Ed.)

#### EBBA NET SALE

From now until May 1, 1969, the EBBA Net Committee is conducting a sale on several sizes of non-tethered nets. Both 9- and 12-meter nets with meshes of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " or  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " are on sale at greatly reduced prices. All that is asked is that you make your orders for \$10.00 or more; Pennsylvania residents add 6% tax.

Length: 9 meter	Mesh: $1\frac{1}{4}$ "	Sale Price: \$2.50
" 9 meter	" $1\frac{1}{2}$ "	" " \$1.60
" 12 meter	" $1\frac{1}{4}$ "	" " \$3.00
" 12 meter	" $1\frac{1}{2}$ "	" " \$2.00

Remember, these nets are NOT TETHERED, but with a few minutes of your time they can be tethered. Send your orders and checks to: EBBA Net Committee, Dept. of Biology, Indiana University of Penna., Indiana, Penna. 15701.