

## Atlantic Flyway Review

A REVIEW OF OPERATION RECOVERY AND RELATED SUBJECTS

Edited by Frederick S. Schaeffer



O.R. Corner, now "Atlantic Flyway Review", has always been a particular inspiration to me. I have enjoyed reading about the successes of others and this has been a help in the operation of my station Tobay Banding Station, located in the J.F. Kennedy Memorial Wildlife Refuge. As Bob Yunick explained in O.R. Corner in the previous issue, he was unable to continue editing this column along with his other duties as President of EBBA, and so, I was asked to take over the column. To you Bob, our sincere thanks for the fine job you've done.

Why the name change? In the first place, we did not like the name. Any title with the word "corner" reminds one of those trite titles used when one cannot think of anything else. The new name reflects the purposes and goals of this column more clearly. We are all studying migration...hence, Atlantic Flyway! States represented by EBBA cover most of the Atlantic Flyway, and we review stations in the NEBBA states also in this column. One of my aims in editing this column is the increase at every station in the system of meaningful study, under the auspices of Operation Recovery. My other aim is that of establishing better communications between stations in the system.

The first three issues of the year are customarily devoted to station reports while the fourth is used for requests for assistance. This leaves two issues, Nos. 5 and 6, which are not always fully used by this column. My plan is to devote these issues to questions and answers. Some stations are now involved in very commendable and meaningful studies, while other stations are trying to start such studies, but cannot seem to find their way. The objective of the coverage in the last two issues of the year is to review questions asked by such banding stations, be it questions on techniques, aging and sexing or any other operational matter, and, at the same time, to publish replies to these problems. Suppose we let the Atlantic Flyway Review become an exchange point; submit your questions, as well as newly discovered solutions to current problems to me at any time, and this can be published in Nos. 5 and 6, as well as possibly in other issues. Meanwhile, anyone who has a solution and/or other comment on the publish items, can answer the bander asking the question directly (if so, please send me a copy) or send the material directly to me for publication. In this way, Atlantic Flyway Review becomes a trading post of ideas and information and we'll all learn something, in the final analysis. The basic reason behind this plan is to bring greater unity of purpose into the present Operation Recovery system in the EBBA region. Such news items submitted to me, should reach me on the 20th of the month preceding the issue, e.g. for July-August, no later than June 20th.

If there are questions which are not answered in due time, they will be submitted to Chan Robbins or Earl Baysinger (whichever department is the most appropriate) for further clarification.

In this issue, reports of some of the middle atlantic stations as well as Ontario and Brookhaven, N.Y. will be reviewed. Before going into the reports, I would like to thank Mary June Wolcott (Bradley Marsh, Ont.), Ronald Leberman (Presque Isle, Pa.) and Mrs. Bradley Fisk (Homestead, Florida - to appear in the next issue) for their reports. They submitted their reports before either Bob or I had a chance to solicit them. Here are three station leaders whose enthusiasm to submit reports should be an example to all of us. It's never too late to join the bandwagon. Next issue will include all of the stations not yet covered (Delaware, Maryland and Virginia) - so if you don't have your report in as yet, here's your chance. If, at the EBBA annual meeting, someone sticks a piece of paper in your pocket, you'll know it is I (trying to save on postage!)...all kidding aside, I hope to meet you all and have a productive chat, about Operation Recovery and this column.

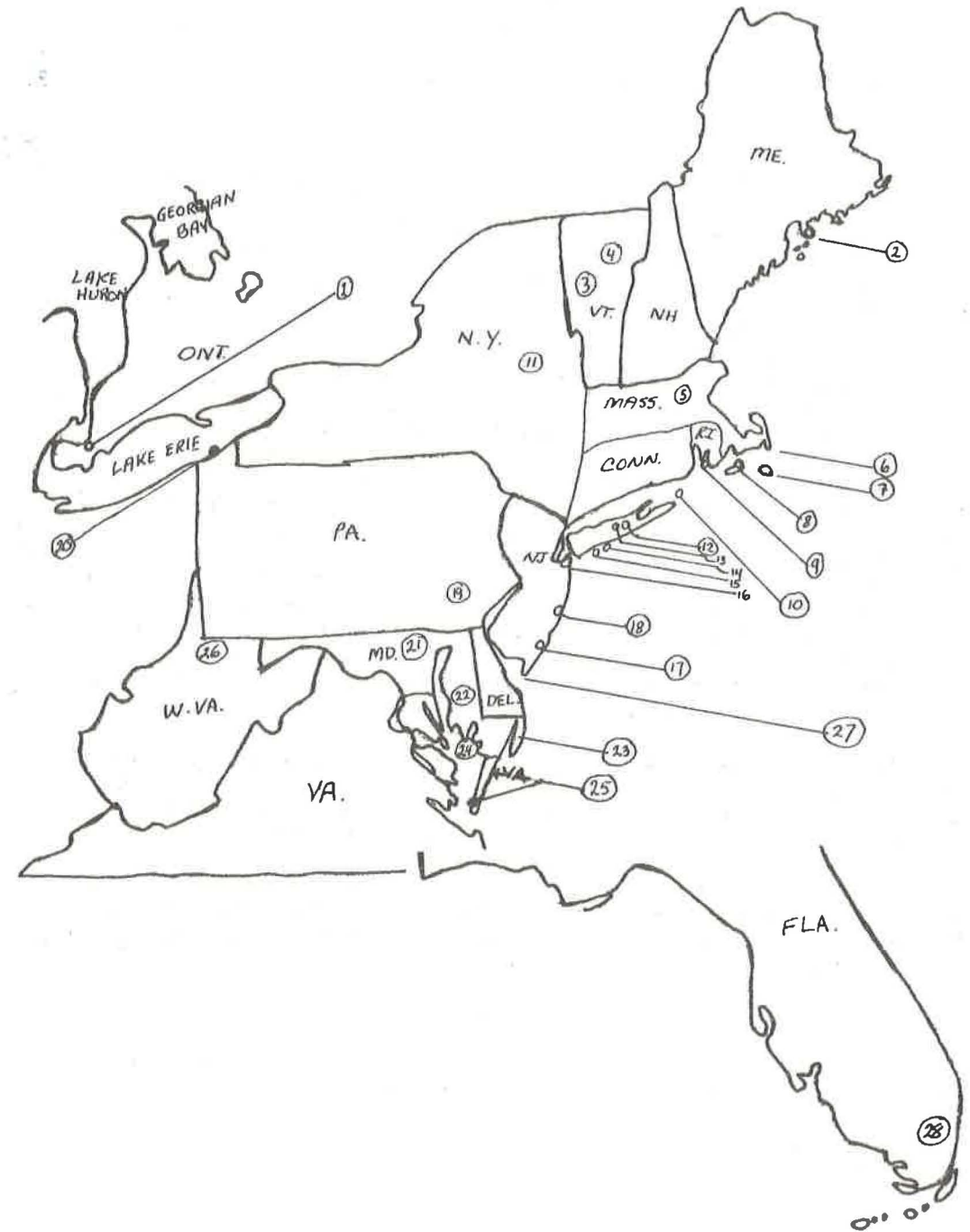
With the help of Frank Frazier, I've prepared a map of all the O.R. stations in EBBA territory. It will help to evaluate the reports in Atlantic Flyway Review when you know just where they are located. Since then, two changes have occurred. The Linwood, N.J. station was not used in 1968 and neither was the Mariedor Sanctuary station which is not shown on the map. Mariedor is located in southern New Jersey and will probably be staffed again this year by John and Mary Schmid. The map appears on the opposite page, and a key to numbered locations follows.

- |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Bradley Marsh, Ontario           | 15. Atlantic Beach, L.I., N.Y.    |
| 2. Mount Desert Island, Maine       | 16. Sandy Hook State Park, N.J.   |
| 3. South Londonderry, Vermont       | 17. Linwood, N.J.                 |
| 4. Marshfield, Vermont              | 18. Island Beach State Park, N.J. |
| 5. Lincoln, Massachusetts           | 19. Elverson, Pennsylvania        |
| 6. Monomoy Research Sta., Mass.     | 20. Presque Isle State Park, Pa.  |
| 7. Nantucket, Mass. and Siasconset  | 21. Monkton, Maryland             |
| 8. East Chop, Martha's Vineyard     | 22. Chestertown (Damsite), Md.    |
| 9. Kingston, Rhode Island           | 23. Ocean City, Maryland          |
| 10. Block Island, Rhode Island      | 24. St. Michaels, Maryland        |
| 11. Vischer Ferry, New York         | 25. Kiptopeke Beach, Virginia     |
| 12. Manorville, Long Island, N.Y.   | 26. Allegheny Front, W. Va.       |
| 13. Brookhaven, Long Island, N.Y.   | 27. Cape May, New Jersey          |
| 14. J.F. Kennedy Refuge, L.I., N.Y. | 28. Homestead, Florida            |

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BROOKHAVEN - New York - Dennis Puleston

The late Walter S. Terry and I have operated an O.R. banding station in Brookhaven, on the south shore of Long Island, since 1963. With his passing in mid-1968 (see EBBA News 31:5, pp 196), I decided to carry on



to my best ability, though my time is limited by the demands of my work at Brookhaven National Laboratory. Since, however, the station is located on our property only about 200 yards from my home, I am able to operate during the week from dawn until about 8 am., while birds are at the peak of activity.

The station is located on the west bank of the Carmans River, at the borderline between thickets of oak, catbriar and high-bush blueberry, and the open salt marsh. Thus, one of the most abundant birds, both as a summer resident and in migration is the Yellowthroat. We net a fair number of Northern Waterthrushes and later, Myrtle Warblers. Swamp Sparrows are also common during their October migration. We do not get many of the treetop warblers, but just enough to add variety.

The greatest surprise in the fall of 1968 was a big influx of Pine Siskins, starting in the last few days of October and continuing on into late November. The habitat was anything but typical for them, but they have learned, along with Goldfinches, to feed on the seeds of the high-tide bush (Iva). One can never tire of the sight of a tight flock of hundreds of siskins performing their aerial ballet over the marsh. The flock rises and falls, swirls, separates and quickly joins up again as the birds appear to be deciding on where to drop down to feed. They will then swarm over the bushes briefly, feed, and rise again to resume their complicated but perfectly coordinated convolutions. They are so sociable that when a few land in a net, many more will join them. On several occasions when a net was becoming overloaded, I had to chase off the remainder of the flock. Fortunately, they are one of the most docile birds to handle and rarely become badly entangled in the nets.

Aside from several absences due to business trips and two rainy mornings, I was able to operate during the entire O.R. period, missing only 14 days. A total of 2488 birds were banded for 2399 net hours (Yield increased from 63 to 103 since 1967, unlike other Long Island stations).

The best days were October 30 and 31. On many days in November I was able to band well over a hundred birds, mostly siskins and goldfinches, before leaving for work. Unfortunately, those big days are beyond the O.R. period.

My son Peter, an experienced bander himself, was able to render valuable help whenever he was home, and a number of the local high school students were available from time to time, mainly on weekends. One of them, however, deserves special mention: Cheryl Regalmuto rose before dawn every morning to assist me, and then went straight to her classes. How she managed to remain a straight A student and one of the top girl athletes under this rugged regime is beyond me!

PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK - Erie, Penna. - Ronald F. Leberman

Presque Isle, a 3000-acre peninsula jutting out into Lake Erie, is connected to the mainland at its southern end forming a natural harbor for the city of Erie. Over three million people visited the several miles of beaches, woodlands, marshes and lagoons this summer. Visitors to our O.R. station, however, were down somewhat.

From five to 20 nets were used in the same locations as in the past year, near the new administration building on the bay side of the peninsula. As usual, wild grapes, poison ivy, bayberry, bittersweet and button-bush provided excellent feeding conditions for migrating birds - along with plenty of gnats and mosquitoes. The weather remained good throughout the period from August 4 to October 20; mostly weekends during the fifteen days of operation. Most of the birds were skulled, measured and their fat condition noted; about 600 were weighed before release. The best day was October 5 when 202 birds were banded. The top five species taken were: White-throated Sparrow (176), Slate-colored Junco (141), Golden-crowned Kinglet (125), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (121) and Winter Wren (92). This year no particularly unusual species were banded, but four Carolina Wrens were the first of that species since 1960 and 92 Winter Wrens were most unusual. Flycatchers were poor in numbers, perhaps reflecting the fact that operations were limited to only two days during the month of August. Total birds banded: 1150; total net hours: 1272; total species banded: 61. Banders were: Mary N. Leberman, Ron Leberman, and Mr. & Mrs. James G. Stull.

(Since I do not have figures on this station for 1967, it is not possible to compare 1968 with 1967 as I would like to do in other locations in terms of yield. It should be noted that the yield, i.e. birds per 100 net hours, can only be used effectively when comparing year-to-year of the same station. -FSS.)

SANDY HOOK STATE PARK - New Jersey - Richard & Dorothy Rosche

A total of 891 individuals of 68 species were banded at the rate of 130 per 100 net hours. Although close to the 147 figure of 1967 it is nonetheless down and compares well with the negative trends set on Long Island.

Coverage extended from August 29 through October 31, a total of ten days in September and eight in October. 97 birds were caught on September 28 and 29, which were peak days. Brown Creepers lead the list with 111 and Golden-crowned Kinglet with 104. A Sparrow Hawk was banded on October 10, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on October 3. Gnatcatchers breed in several counties in northern New Jersey but not at Sandy Hook. Nine White-eyed Vireos were banded between August 29 (4) and September 26 (1), the most being the four on August 29. October 6 was the day with the most

species, 27. Net lanes are on the edges of a mature holly forest, in and among red cedars - see EBBA News 31:2, p. 75. (Mr. Rosche sent me a summary, similar to Form 1.2, so I'm attempting to write up the review without full knowledge of Sandy Hook's ecology. Looking at John Bull's "Birds of the New York Area", 1962, I find that the White-eyed Vireo is 'a rare migrant, local and uncommon breeder at lower elevations; rare to absent elsewhere'. Where Mr. Bull refers to the New York area, Sandy Hook State Park is included. Nine White-eyed Vireos is therefore a very nice number. -FSS.)

BRADLEY'S MARSH - Paincourt, Ontario - Mary June Wolcott and Ruth C. Erickson

The Bradley's Marsh O.R. station has operated for ten consecutive years. It is located near the mouth of the Thames River on the south shore of Lake St. Clair, about ten miles southwest of Chatham, Ontario. Robert L. Wright began the station in 1958 and started contributing to Operation Recovery in 1959. We have maintained the station since Mr. Wright moved away in 1961. We now have the capable assistance of Mrs. Marian Norris, sub-permittee.

The Bradley's property consists of 2000 acres - 600 acres in farm land. The term "Bradley's Marsh" refers to three miles of lake shore - about 1400 acres of dikes, waterways and rushes. The small section used for netting lanes is covered with willows, poplars, sumac, elderberry and grapevines, plus an abundance of luxuriant fall wildflowers and cattails.

Nets are operated on weekends in late August and the months of September and October. Net hours each weekend might total between 200 and 300. Weather was especially delightful. We never had so many absolutely beautiful fall days. There were a few cold days, but it didn't approach a freeze. There was a little precipitation and often cold, gusty winds, but seldom was it enough to hamper net activity.

On August 30-31, we banded 38 birds. This is consistent with the same dates in previous years.

In September we banded both days of every weekend, and totalled 448 birds. The highest number for September previously was 1247 in 1963 and the lowest was 576 in 1962. It seemed that most birds were the local birds and none were in a hurry to leave. The last weekend in September, 28-29, we banded 236, which is almost equal to the total of the other four weekends.

Banding both days of each weekend in October up to Sunday, Oct. 27, we had a total of 1340. The previous high for October had been 1518 in 1966 and the low was 798 in 1964. The best single date was October 12 with 324. However, three weekends tallied very close with 429 on Octo-

ber 5-6; 431 on October 12-13; and 394 on October 19-20. The best remembered date was Saturday October 12, when the three of us banded 181 Black-capped Chickadees with countless repeats, and our badly nipped fingers could barely take the nets down. The chickadees were so numerous on that day that they seemed to crawl across the fields and hurl themselves into the nets deliberately. At one time, the net filled with chickadees behind me as I removed each bird across the length of the net. At another time, when the net was furled ready to be gathered into its plastic bag, two chickadees jumped into the many thicknesses and a third waited until they had flipped and tangled the meshes thoroughly before it, too, flew in. Our 288 chickadees this fall is unusual, as our accumulated total for seven years had been 141. (Please refer to Bob Yunick's remarks about the Black-capped Chickadee invasion in New England, EBBA News 31:1, in the introductory paragraphs of O.R. Corner. Evidently this invasion movement occurred along a broad front. -FSS.) This fall the numbers of Brown Creepers were high, too. We had 152 in 1968 and the only other high was 144 in 1963.

The most exciting species was the Yellow Rail banded on September 1. We've known Yellow Rails lived there but they are usually heard, never seen, and here was one in our hands. We also banded our fourth Sora Rail.

In general, we had less than half as many warblers as we have had in other years. Especially low were: Black & White, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Myrtle, Chestnut-sided, Blackpoll (although there were even less in 1967), and American Redstart.

To date, we have banded 29,975 birds of 120 species. We handled no foreign retraps this fall. Several of "our own birds" returned and this adds to longevity statistics, but they were most likely resident birds, not migrants.

SOUTH LONDONDERRY - Vermont - Betty Downs

Betty Downs did not write a report, but sent a statistical summary for each month, showing the amount of birds banded and the weather. South Londonderry is unique for Operation Recovery, as it is probably the only such station where no nets are used, rather seven water-traps and three seed-traps. Betty did not mention habitat, but having visited friends at nearby Wilmington, Vermont, I envisage rolling hills, heavy wooded areas and much farmland.

In her letter accompanying the summaries, Betty wrote: "My station is a one-man operation (except when I can persuade my husband to help) - you will note my big months are the early ones. Usually I have few migrating birds after the first week or so in October. Our freezes come early... But this was an unusual year for me and for the birds, and I am sure if I had not been away (Manomet O.R. Oct. 7-14) I would have

banded 100 or more birds this October. It was also an exceptionally good warbler year for me - and for Marion Metcalf (100 miles north of here). You must remember that living in the country as I do where natural foods are plentiful and everywhere, birds do not 'funnel' as they do along the coast." Betty's comment that it was an unusually good warbler year is noteworthy, because at the coastal stations it was not.

To present her summary in its entirety is impossible because she banded nearly every day of the month and space limitations preclude reproducing it. I will, however, select certain species and show the early, late and high dates.

Species	Early Date	Late Date	Peak Date & No.
Purple Finch	August 1	October 22	September 24 (20)
White-throated Sparrow	" 5	" 28	September 16 (9)
Song Sparrow	" 5	" 25	see note A below
Myrtle Warbler	" 1	" 24	October 6 (19)
Canada Warbler	" 1	September 4	August 23 (5)
American Redstart	" 1	" 21	August 22 (3)
Nashville Warbler	" 1	October 5	September 4 (5)
Blackpoll	" 31	" 2	week of Sept. 20
Black-throated Green Warbler	" 21	September 26	September 4 (4)
Black-capped Chickadee	" 1	October 19	see note A below
Catbird	" 1	" 1	see note A below
Slate-colored Junco	September 2	October 31	October 24 (22)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	" 10	" 22	October 15 (8)

Note A: For these species, no particular peak dates are evident. The birds came in throughout the whole period in numbers of one or two. Under "Early Date" August 1 merely represents starting date of the project.

Her most numerous bird is Purple Finch, with 248 in August, 167 in September and 29 in October. The four stations at which the Purple Finch catch was high this year are, from north to south: South Londonderry, Block Island, JFK Refuge (Tobay) and Chestertown, Maryland. The peak catch in all of these four stations occurs in a similar period, namely from September 20 through 25. I would like to think that something significant hides behind this information, but not knowing the habitat at each station, it certainly needs more investigation. At Tobay, certain cedar trees seem to attract this species.

#### ALLEGHENY FRONT MOUNTAIN - West Virginia - George A. Hall

The eleventh year of the bird banding operation on Alleghy Front Mountain (commonly called the Red Creek station) gave promise of being one of the most successful seasons yet. However, circumstances forced us to operate the station without the long continuous coverage during

September that we have had in recent years. But even though the operation this year was essentially a weekend one the results were very satisfactory. The station was in operation for 15 days in September and seven days in October. A total of 2111 birds were banded in a station effort of 1879 net hours giving a capture ratio of 1125 birds per 1000 net hours. Six birds banded here in earlier years including two from the 1964 season were recaptured.

This fall we also learned that a Red-headed Woodpecker banded at Red Creek in September 1967 was recovered in southeastern Kentucky in January 1968. This is the fifth recovery of a bird banded at our station out of over 11,000 birds banded through 1967. The total after the present season is 13,725.

For once, the weather was very favorable and most days the station was in operation were pleasant ones, except for the sub-freezing cold experienced by Morgan on October 26-27. The migration started early and the heaviest captures came in early September, which is rather out of the ordinary here. On September 13, Williams and Bell banded 406 birds, an all-time high. This was followed by 210 birds banded on September 14. This represents the heaviest flight of the season. On September 7 Hall banded 245 birds using only three nets (omitting one important net). This too was a very heavy flight day and may have actually been heavier than the 13th. Another possible heavy flight day was September 27. The weather conditions were extremely favorable, but no one was at the station. On September 28, 189 birds were banded and the flight that day had all the characteristics of the "echo" flight which comes the day after a really big flight. On six days the captures exceeded 100 birds. One new species was added to the station list when a Red-bellied Woodpecker was banded on September 21. The station list now stands at 101 species.

Besides project leaders Ralph Bell and George Hall, other banders who participated were Cora Williams, Maxine Kiff, John Morgan, Connie Katholi, Anne Shreve and Jack Linehan. Special thanks is due the last three who provided us with our only mid-week coverage. Tom and Ginny Olsen again left their trailer at the Campground for the use of the banders. As in the past numerous other members of the Brooks Bird Club provided help and companionship during the project. While it is not possible to list all of them, their services were appreciated. (A species list appended to this report is regrettably omitted, due to limitations of space. -Ed.)

#### FRENCH CREEK PARK - Elverson, Penna. - Joseph M. Cadbury

The French Creek Park station is located in French Creek State Park near Elverson, Pa. A good variety of habitat draws many species. Large areas of overgrown fields and brushy swamp border mature woodland on one side and a lake on the other. There is also an excellent variety of

fruits and seeds available including dogwood, wild grape, Virginia creeper, spicebush, staghorn sumac and persimmon.

The operation was started one week earlier than in previous years. Dates of operation were from September 16 through 19 and 23 through 26, a total of eight days. A total of 31 species, 297 individuals were banded "fully processed" in 871 net hours. In 1967, 207 birds of 37 species were banded in 650 net hours, which is about 32 birds per 100 net hours. In 1968 the yield is about 33. The difference is very little by comparison particularly since different dates were used. An early Hermit Thrush was banded on September 16. Only one Cedar Waxwing was captured, as in 1967, despite larger numbers in years previous to 1967.

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Manomet Bird Observatory: At the end of Kathleen Anderson's review of Manomet O.R. in the last issue of EBBA News, in O.R. Corner, she mentions and I quote: "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."

Well, it's happened! As I was putting the final touches on this issue's column, an attractive brochure appeared in my mailbox and here, in short, is what it says: "First on the Atlantic Coast... Manomet Bird Observatory is the product of spontaneous generation. It started in 1966 as a part of 'Operation Recovery'... Eighteen acres of land, with a quarter mile of shore front and a house to serve as headquarters has been offered by Mrs. Roger Ernst to a tax-exempt trust. A highly qualified director is available to take charge as soon as the Observatory gains adequate financial backing. We need your help! With your support as a charter member the Observatory can make a wonderfully useful contribution to the scientific and educational world."

The remainder of the brochure consists of statements by Chandler S. Robbins, praising the wonderful location of the station and the great variety of habitats and a note by Earl Baysinger stressing how the Observatory can be helpful to other banders as a training center.

I will not dwell further on this subject as I expect that Mrs. Anderson plans to publish more information in this or future issues of EBBA News. But I am sure all banders can understand the importance of a station such as this, the first Atlantic coastal bird observatory in the New World.

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Finally, if any bander wishes to begin an Operation Recovery station, please write to Mr. Chandler S. Robbins, Migratory Non-Game Studies, Migratory Bird Populations Station, Laurel, Maryland 20810.

I received a request early this year from an interested party in

Pennsylvania, but I am not in a position to approve or disapprove such a station: this is up to Chandler Robbins as the "chief" of the Operation Recovery movement. Once the station is established, however, I'll be glad to work on any problem as is stated elsewhere in this column.

I might add, as a personal observation, that it is somewhat disappointing that there are no stations in Virginia (except on the Delmarva peninsula), North and South Carolina, and Georgia. It seems to me, for example, that Pamlico Sound, N.C. should be an ideal location for another coastal station, and I hope that a few interested banders can be found, who are accustomed to working in this area. The greatest concentration of stations, as indicated on the map, exists between the Mass.-Maine border, along the coast, south to and including the Chesapeake Bay area in Maryland and Virginia. If we're going to fulfill the basic goals of Operation Recovery, viz. to trace migratory direction by means of recoveries at many coastal locations, it would seem to me, that we should have twice the number of stations we have now, in this concentrated area.

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UNUSUAL CAUSE OF HOLES IN NET  
By G. Hapgood Parks

If small, ragged holes which involve approximately a half dozen meshes have been appearing mysteriously in some of your nets, you will appreciate the explanation we chanced upon one day this summer.

We had found several such holes in a 12-meter net set in a mixed stand of mature red, white and black spruces which grow adjacent to the open ocean. Then, on August 26, 1968 Mrs. Parks and I were walking along beside this net when we noticed what seemed to be a small brown bird flying back and forth among the tree trunks. The flight path was almost a perfect arc as if the "bird" were the bob of a pendulum suspended by an invisible string from an attachment somewhere in the canopy high overhead. After four or five "swings" the brown object flew directly toward us and struck the net.

Especially because the midday sun was shining in a cloudless sky we were surprised to discover a small, brown bat lying in the net pocket. The bat did not struggle at all against the confining net fibres. Instead, it merely chewed them and within a very few seconds it slipped from the resulting ragged hole and flew away.

The entire process was just as simple as that.

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