

Woodcock
Study

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PRELIMINARY DATA (MARCH-JUNE 1981), AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDY APPROACH

IMPROVEMENTS.

by

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Table 1. American woodcock captured March-June 1981.

Band number	Sex	Age	Capture site	Date captured	Singing	Band colors	
						left	right
1023-32504	M	A	S. ground A	3-28-81	YES	Y/G	-
" 32506	M	A	S. ground A	4-2-81	YES	-	-
" 32507	F	A	S. ground C	4-5-81	NO	-	-
" 32508	M	SA	S. ground C	4-5-81	YES	G/B	-
" 32509	M	A	S. ground B	4-9-81	YES	B/Y	-
" 32510	M	A	S. ground E	4-29-81	YES	B/G	-
" 32511	M	A	S. ground F	5-1-81	YES	Y/B	-
" 32512	M	A	S. ground G	5-7-81	YES	G/Y	-
" 32513	M	SA	S. ground A	5-9-81	YES	Y/Y	-
" 32514	M	A	S. ground C	5-31-81	NO	B/B	-
" 32515	F	A	S. ground C	6-1-81	NO	G/G	-
" 32516	M	SA	S. ground F	6-3-81	YES	G/Y	B

M - male, F - female.

A - adult, SA - subadult.

Y - yellow, G - green, B - blue.

Table 2. Mist netting success March-June 1981.

Singing ground	Net nights ^a	Captures	%
A	4	4	100
B	3	2	67
C	10	7	70
D	2	1	50
E	2	1	50
F	3	2	67
G	6	1	17
Totals	30	18	60%

a - 1 net set for 1 performance.

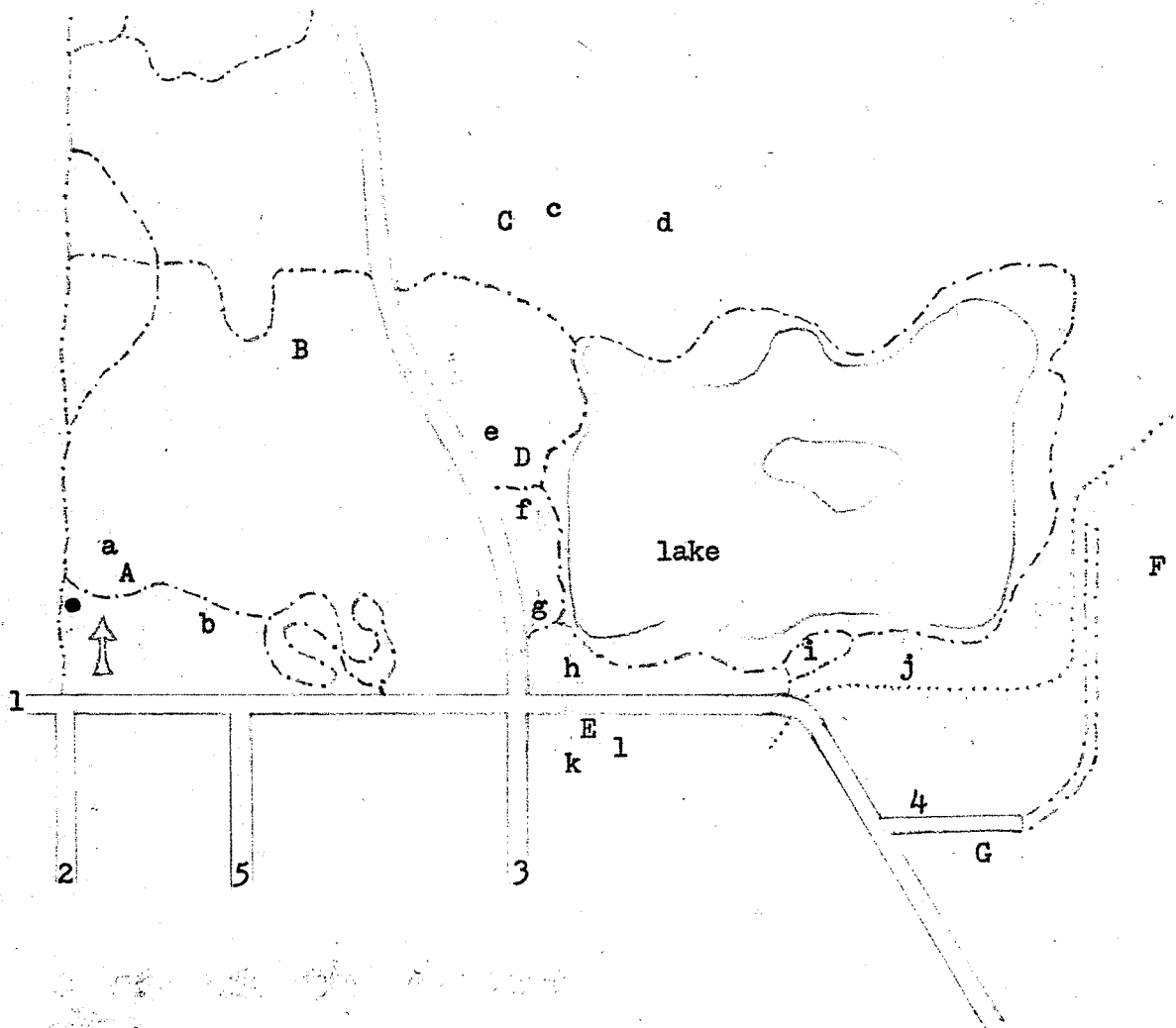
Table 3. Trapping success March-June 1981.

Trap site	Trap days ^x	Captures	%
a	14	0	0
b	15	0	0
c	16	0	0
d	18	1	.06
e	15	1	.07
f	14	0	0
g	17	1	.06
h	12	0	0
i	16	0	0
j	16	0	0
k	10	1	.10
l	12	0	0
Totals	175	4	.023 ^y

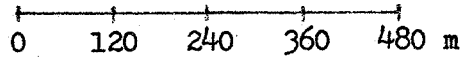
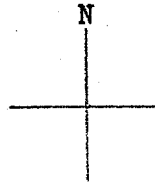
x - 1 trap set for 1 day.

y - 1 capture/43.75 trap days.

Figure 1. Map of study area.



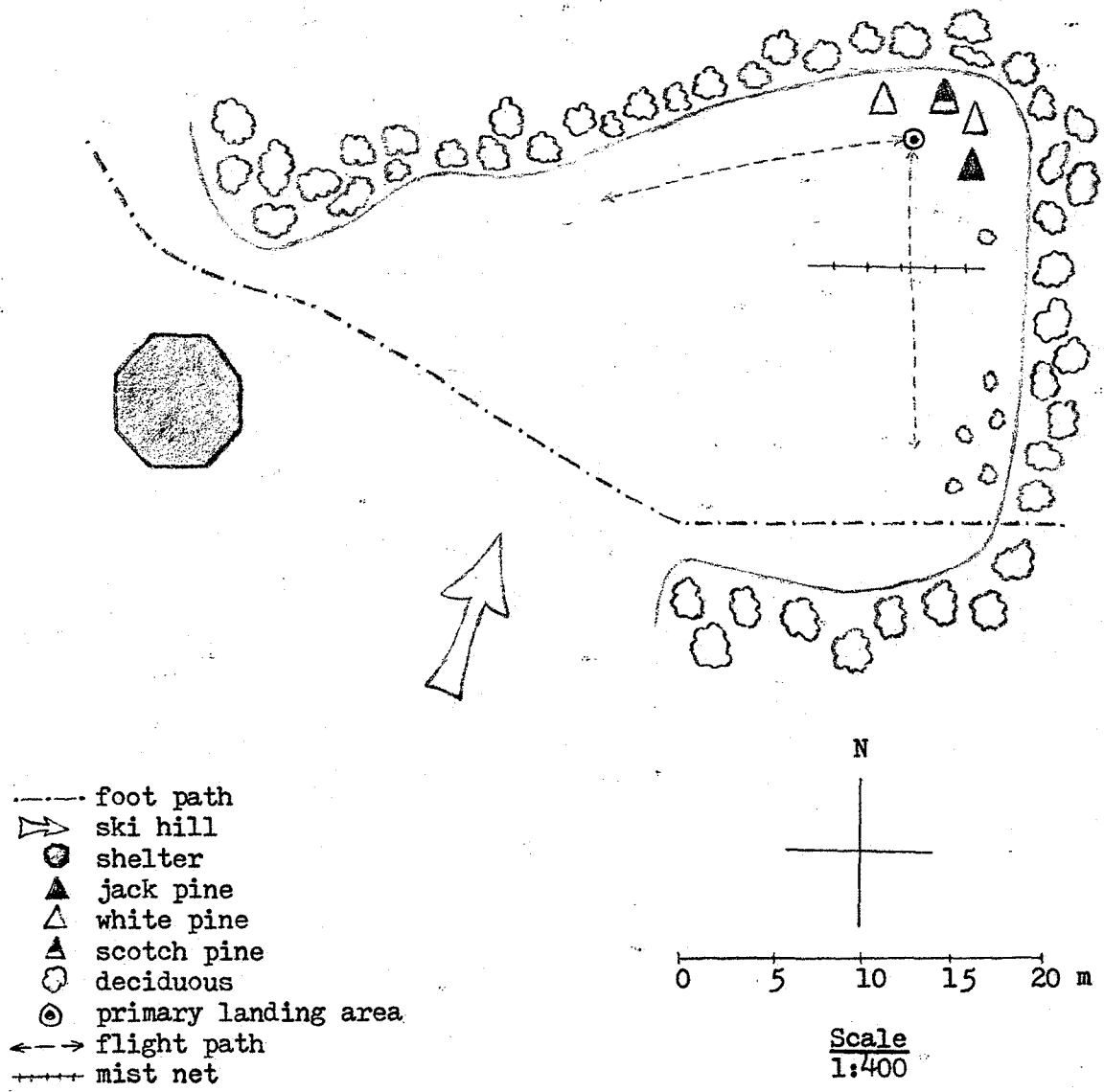
- - - - dirt road
- creek
- - - - footpath
- shelter
- ⇨ ski hill
- A-G singing ground
- a-l trap site



Scale
1:9660

- 1 Maria Drive
- 2 Reserve Street
- 3 Michigan Avenue
- 4 Fifth Avenue
- 5 Illinois Avenue

Figure 2. Singing ground A.



- foot path
- ➔ ski hill
- shelter
- ▲ jack pine
- △ white pine
- ▲ scotch pine
- ☁ deciduous
- ⊙ primary landing area
- ↔ flight path
- ++++ mist net

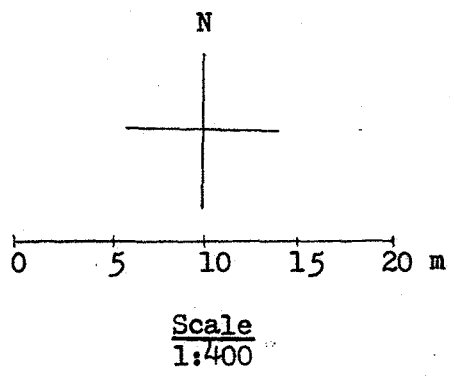


Figure 3. Singing ground B.

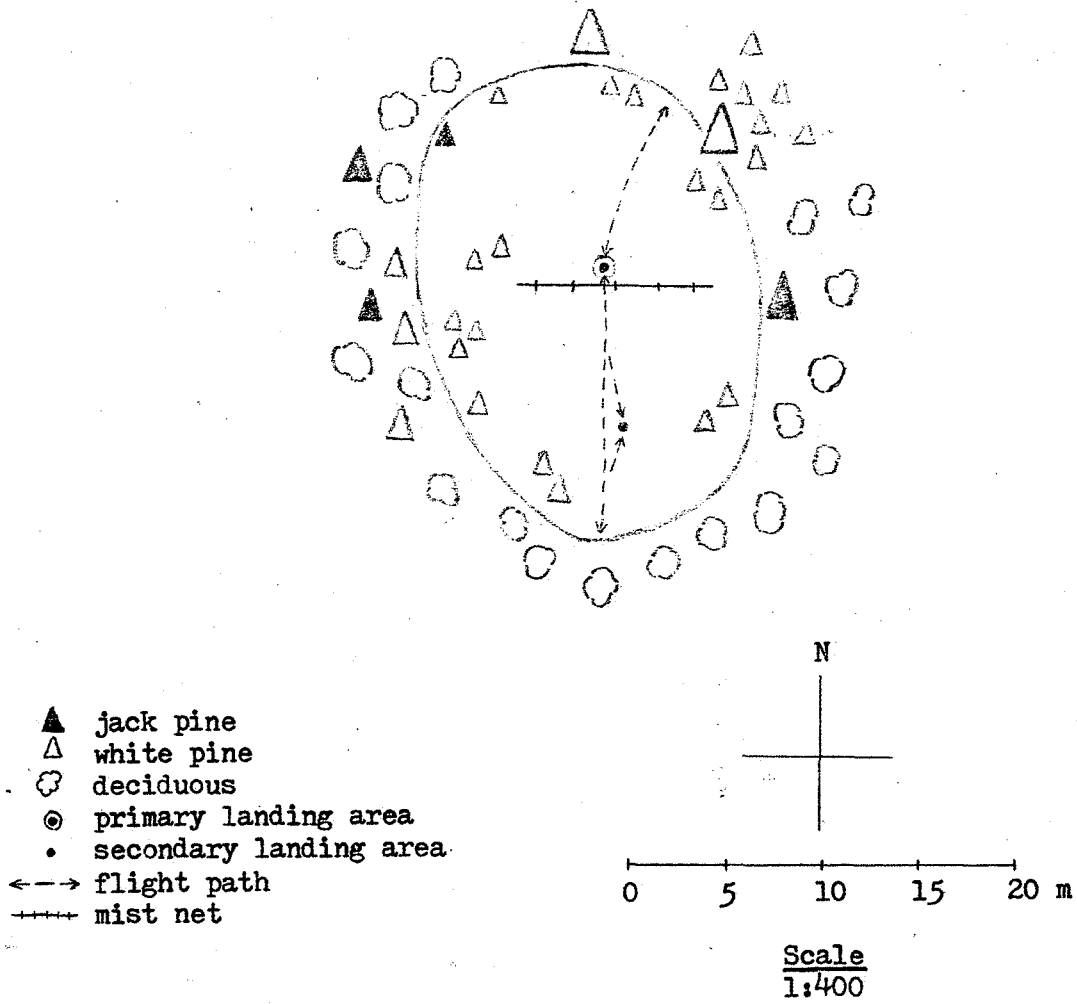


Figure 4. Singing ground C.

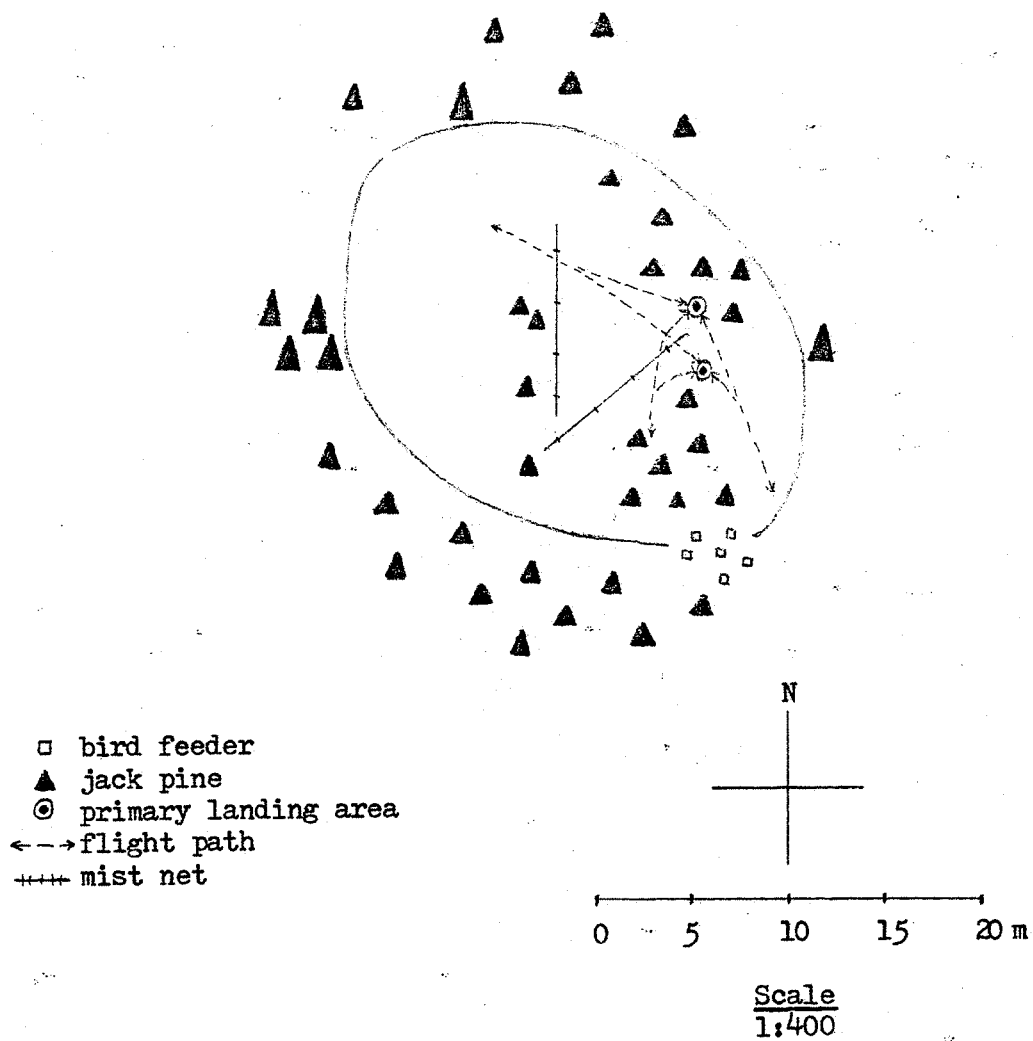


Figure 5. Singing ground D.

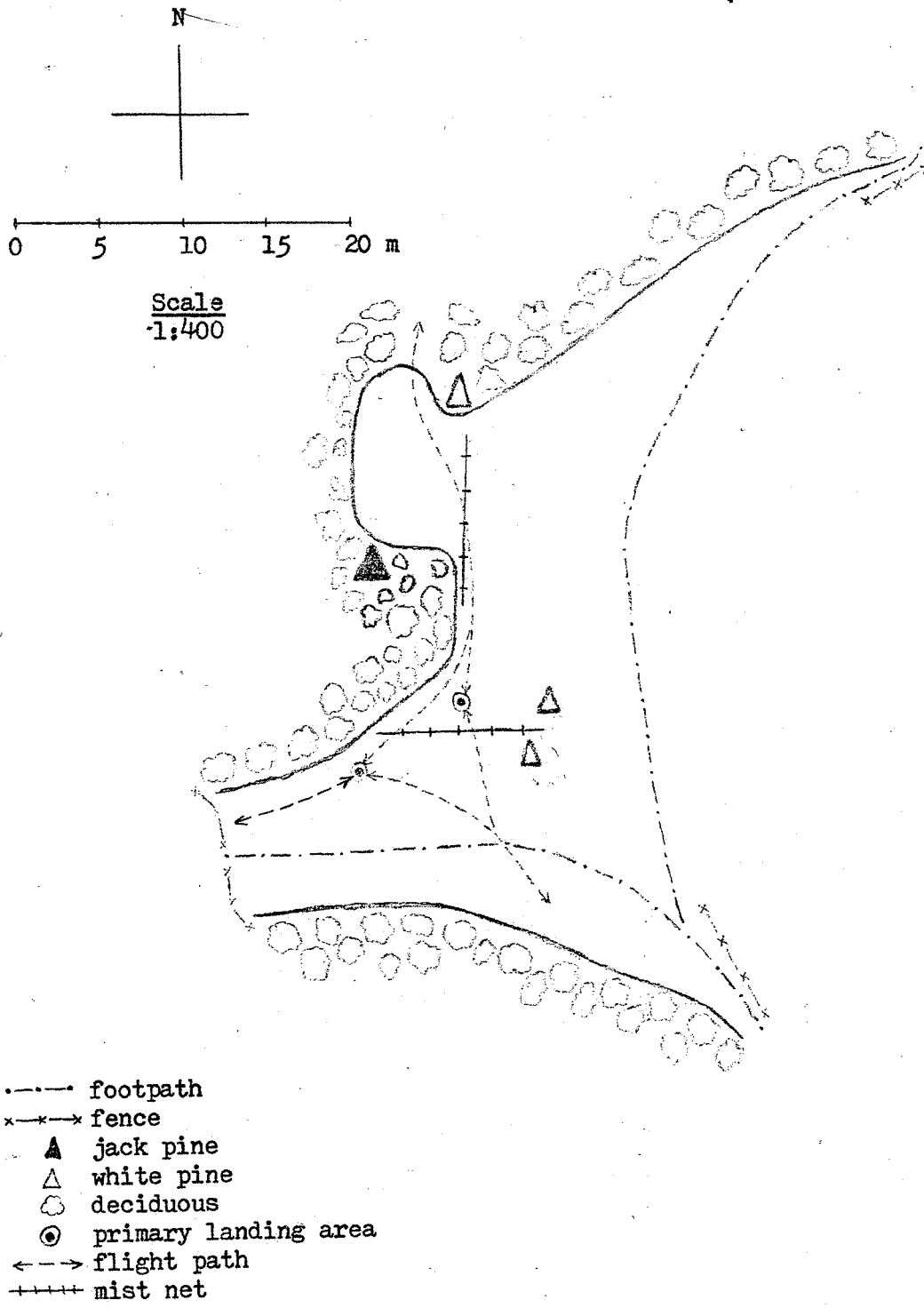


Figure 6. Singing ground E.

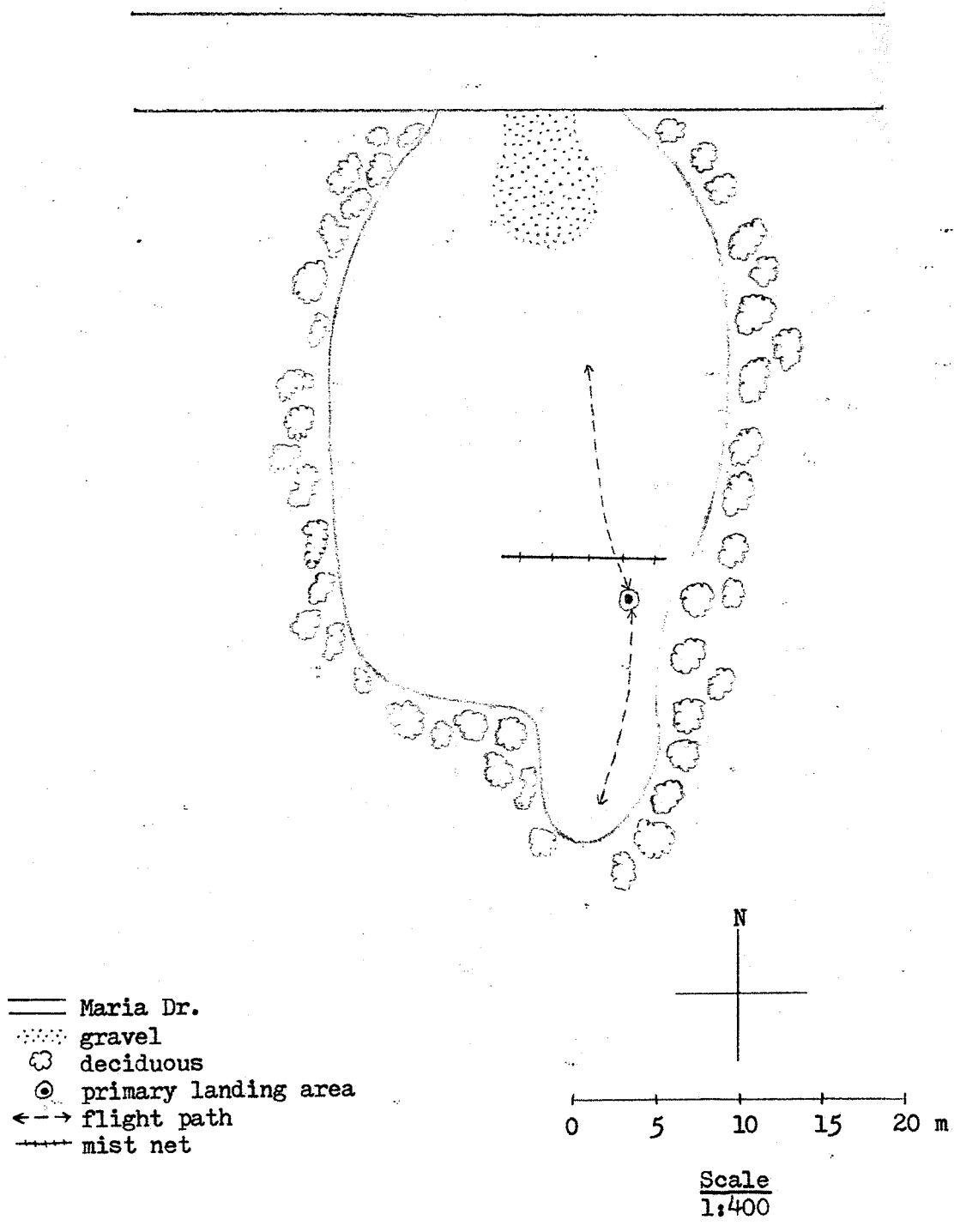
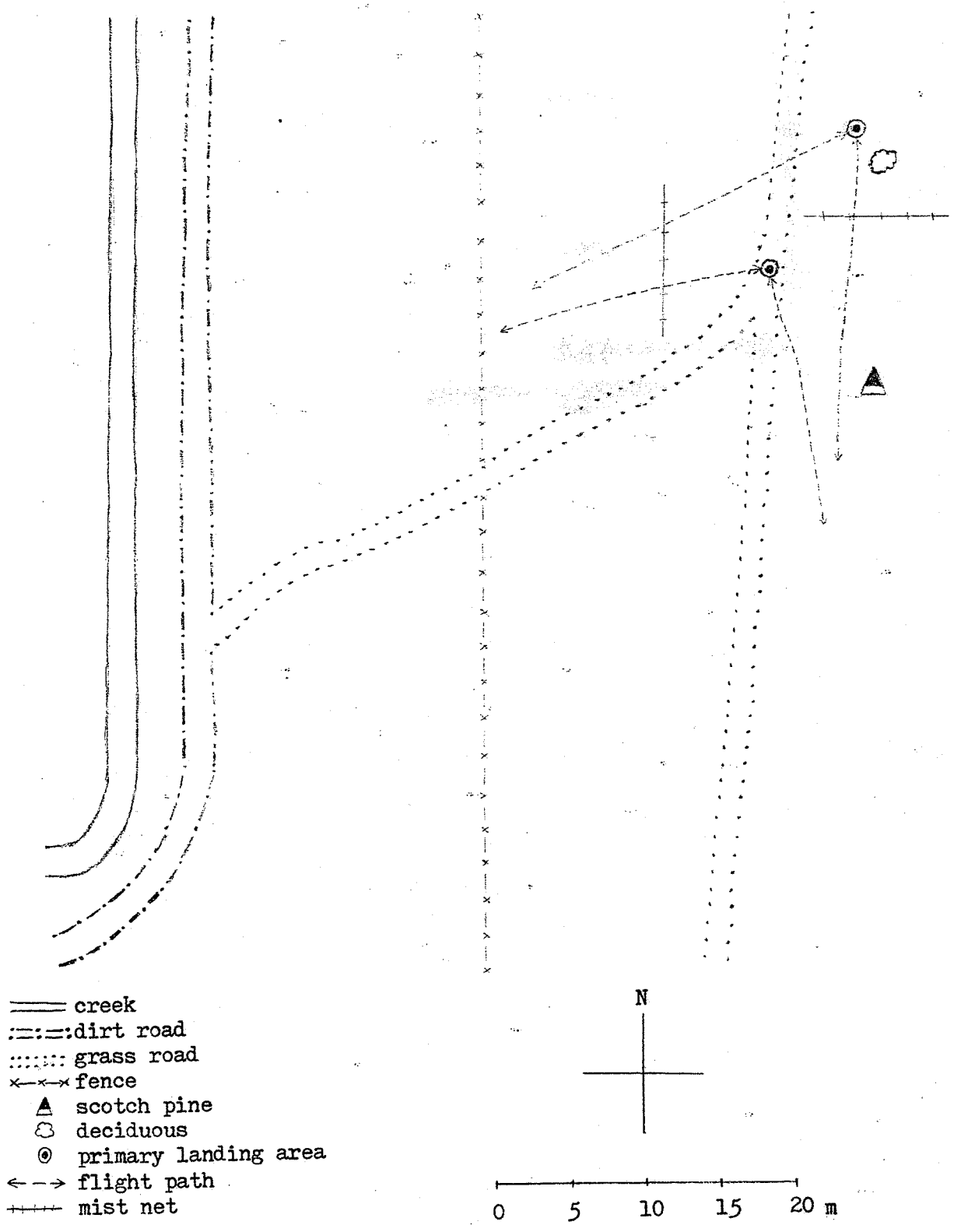


Figure 7. Singing ground F.



- ==== creek
- :---: dirt road
- : grass road
- x-x-x-x fence
- ▲ scotch pine
- ☁ deciduous
- ⊙ primary landing area
- ←- -> flight path
- + + + + mist net

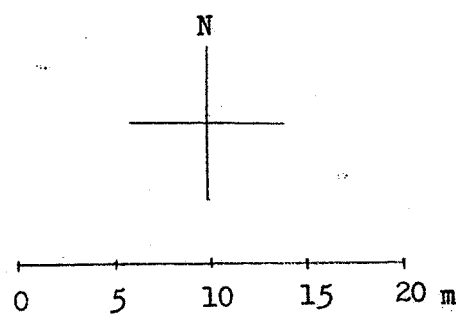
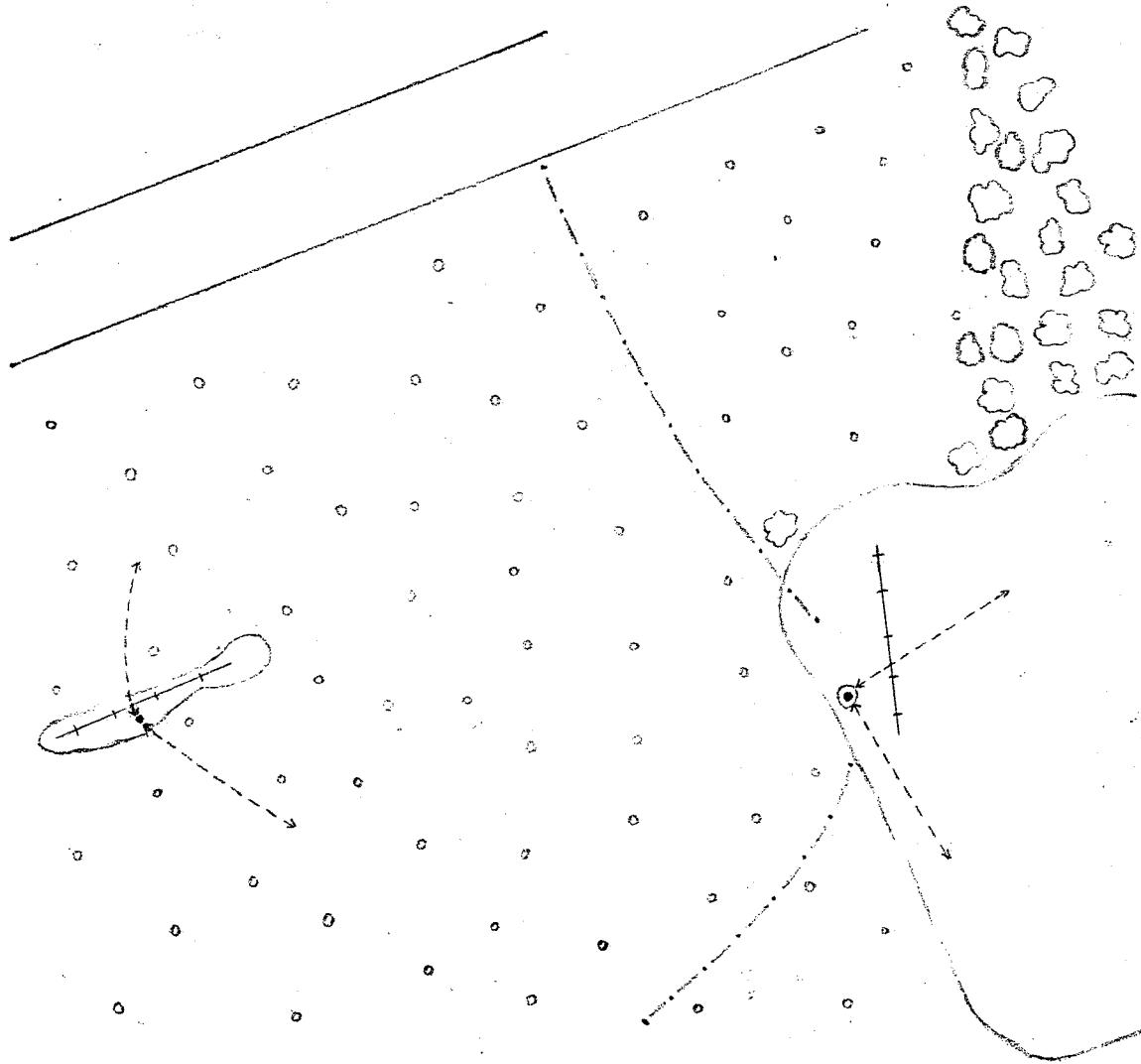
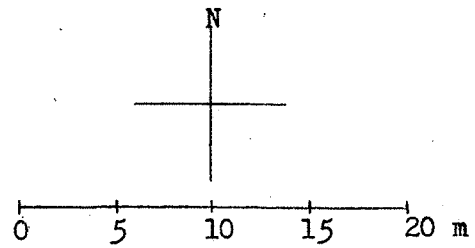


Figure 8. Singing ground G.



- ==== Fifth Ave.
- footpath
- ☁ deciduous
- °°° shrubs
- primary landing area
- ←--> flight path
- ++++ mist net



Scale
1:400

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDY APPROACH IMPROVEMENTS

1. Use only single compartment, double lead fence ground traps:

Several of the burlap covered trap compartments were readily visible in areas where they were by necessity located as close as 10 m from existing footpaths. These footpaths are used quite heavily during the early spring. Four separate instances of trap vandalism, including 2 occasions where a captured woodcock was removed from the trap and decapitated caused the author to prematurely conclude the study. Making the traps less visible by placing the single compartment further from the footpath, and extending the 2 lead fences out at appropriate angles will hopefully reduce the possibility of their being located, and interfered with.

2. Increase the number of ground traps used from 4, to 10:

The desired final product of this investigation is a ratio of singing to nonsinging males. Capturing all singing males on the study area posed no problem during the spring of 1981. However, little success at capturing nonsinging males via use of ground traps was achieved. Increasing the number of traps used, along with more judicious trap placement, should increase the number of nonsinging males captured.

3. Do not move the ground traps, leave each trap at its specific site throughout the study.

During the spring of 1981 it took from 2.5-4.0 hours to dismantle, transport, and reset each ground trap. This was necessary in order to ensure complete coverage of all potential diurnal coverts on the study area while using only 4 traps. If as suggested in recommendation #2, 10 traps are used instead of 4, and care is taken to set traps only where woodcock

sign (probe holes, whitewash) has been previously located, this movement of traps should be unnecessary.

4. Begin mist netting performing males as soon as they arrive on the study area, and continue until courtship activity on the singing grounds stops:

In 1981, capturing performing males on the singing grounds with the use of mist nets was found to have no adverse affect on their subsequent performances. Four singing males were recaptured a total of 7 times, only once was the recapture site different from the original capture site. Visual identification of singing ground occupants via colored leg band combinations was achieved 3 times. On each occassion the male was found to have remained on the same singing ground where it was originally banded.

Initiating banding as soon as singing males arrive may increase the number of individual woodcock banded by capturing males who are not resident breeders.

5. Use red, yellow, and blue colored leg bands:

It is too difficult to make a positive distinction between the blue and green leg bands when viewed under low intensity light. This problem was anticipated, but the only colors available when the bands were first ordered, were green, yellow, and blue.