

## Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update May 1 to 9, 2008

Welcome to another year of updates from the banding lab here at the Beaverhill Lake Natural Area. This year it's me, Jonathan Martin-DeMoor acting as the bander-in-charge and Robin Pimm is the assistant bander. Robin has just finished a bachelors degree in zoology at the UofA and is very excited about her first summer of banding. I'm working on my masters thesis in forest ecology, and hope to wrap it up by this fall. I've been banding birds in the boreal forest since 2000, including last year's fall migration monitoring here at BBO, but this will be my first summer spent out here in the aspen parkland—it should be a very interesting summer.



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Banding this year started off with a bang, Lisa Priestley and I set up the nets for the first time on Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> and caught a pile of birds, mostly Slate-colored Juncos (the Dark-eyed Junco subspecies that's most commonly found in this area). The Juncos could be seen moving in large numbers through the bare understory of the forest, and a few were lucky enough to hit our nets and be rewarded with a shiny new bracelet. We also caught a Black-and-white Warbler, which was really great to see this early in the season.

By Saturday—a foggy, chilly morning—the Juncos were all but gone, but my wife Lisa who'd come out for the day, found the first Myrtle Warblers (the Yellow-rumped Warbler subspecies found here) of the year. I always enjoy seeing these birds come back, it means that spring is really finally here, and the rest of the warblers are on their way.



Katie Calon covered the Sunday banding and caught a couple Black-capped Chickadees and thrushes (Hermit and Robin). She noted in the logbook that there were hardly any geese overhead—apparently they were all taking the day off too.

Monday was Robin's first day on the job, and while the banding was a little slow, (a few American Tree Sparrows and a Song Sparrow) the sky was full of large flocks of Tundra Swans,

Greater White-fronted Geese, Sandhill Cranes, and all kinds of other waterfowl species.

Banding remained slow the rest of the week, we caught some sparrows, a few warblers, and a Purple Finch. A small wave of Myrtle Warblers on a very chilly morning (-8°C at sunrise) ended the week for us, 9 of them “stopped by the lab” via bird bag, along with a Swainson’s Thrush, a White-crowned Sparrow, and our first Yellow Warbler of the year—a stunning adult male in full-out spring yellow with red streaking—a great way to end our first week out. Thanks also to Anna and Brent Daku who covered Saturday (and caught the first Lincoln’s Sparrow for the year).

—JMDR



| Species                 | Banded    | Repeat <sup>1</sup> | Return <sup>2</sup> | Foreign <sup>3</sup> | Other <sup>4</sup> | Total     |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Myrtle Warbler          | 18        | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 18        |
| Slate-colored Junco     | 13        | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 13        |
| American Tree Sparrow   | 7         | 1                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 8         |
| Black-capped Chickadee  | 4         | 3                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 7         |
| White-throated Sparrow  | 5         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 5         |
| Song Sparrow            | 4         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 4         |
| Hermit Thrush           | 3         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 3         |
| American Robin          | 2         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 2         |
| Black-and-White Warbler | 2         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 2         |
| Swainson's Thrush       | 2         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 2         |
| Hairy Woodpecker        | 1         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 1         |
| Lincoln's Sparrow       | 1         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 1         |
| Orange-crowned Warbler  | 1         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 1         |
| Purple Finch            | 1         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 1         |
| White-crowned Sparrow   | 1         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 1         |
| Yellow Warbler          | 1         | 0                   | 0                   | 0                    | 0                  | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>66</b> | <b>4</b>            | <b>0</b>            | <b>0</b>             | <b>0</b>           | <b>70</b> |

*Net Hours:* 583  
*Capture Rate:* 12.0

<sup>1</sup> Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO.  
<sup>2</sup> Banded at the BBO > 90 days prior to recapture (e.g. in a previous year).  
<sup>3</sup> Banded at a location other than the BBO.  
<sup>4</sup> Caught in a mist-net but not banded (e.g. escaped net).

*All photos by Jonathan Martin-DeMoor (www.borealisimages.ca), Lisa Priestly or Robin Pimm © 2008*