

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Summary for October 1-15, 2004

Ahh, the fall is in its late stages, and as I look out the window at the 20+ cm of fresh fallen snow, with more coming down, I think we are nearing the end of the season . . . but wait what is that I hear, toot, toot, toot, toot, toot, toot, and on and on and on . . .

Songbird Migration Monitoring Results

Well, we reached species number 60 for the fall season with one of Matt's favourite birds, a lovely White-breasted Nuthatch. However, Matt finished working the day before so he missed it. A total of 55 birds were captured during this last 10 day period, with 12 species being represented. I was happy to catch a second Brown Creeper (I wasn't hear for the first one), a really cool bird with that tiny curved bill. The Fox Sparrows continued to show up, with another 3 banded bringing the total to six for the season. We were also excited to catch another Nashville Warbler. That Western Flycatcher was recaptured and we spent some time photographing and measuring it, definitely looks different than the Least Flycatcher.

Table 1. Fall migration captures October 1 to 10, 2004 at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory.

Species	New	Recapture	Recovery	Total
Downy Woodpecker	1	0	0	1
Western Flycatcher	0	1	0	1
Black-capped Chickadee	5	8	0	13
Brown Creeper	1	0	0	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	0	0	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	1	0	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	0	0	1
Nashville Warbler	1	0	0	1
Myrtle Warbler	4	0	0	4
Fox Sparrow	3	0	0	3
American Tree Sparrow	17	1	0	18
Slate-colored Junco	8	1	0	9
TOTALS	43	12	0	55

Raptor Traps

Only one Great Horned Owl (photo right) was caught in the raptor traps for the first half of October, however, a whopping 9 Black-billed Magpies were caught. This brings the total number of birds captured for the fall to 38!! Incredible since we only had less than half the number of traps running this year compared to previous years.



Saw-whet Owls

We've surpassed almost everyone's expectations for number of owls caught at BBO this year. Only Baby Hanneman and Rich Krikun are still in the running for guessing the number caught this year. We caught 161 saw-whets in the first 15 days of October. Of these, 149 were banded and 12 were recaptures. This brings our total to 220 owls, for 2004 and counting. Hardy Pletz began monitoring saw-whet owls at his acreage south of Millet, and has been capturing many owls as well.

We had many more visitors out to see the saw-whets. This included a group of 21 students from the Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society student chapter (1), Gerry and Robyn Beyersbergen (2), Patti and Martin Potvin (1), Martina Frey (4), Rob Stavne (1), Bev and Kevin Chomyn (1), Pat and Anita Hanneman (1), Sandra Opdenkamp (1), Juanita Mumby (1), and Kate Holley from Vancouver (1). I need to thank Matt for coming out

on the Thanksgiving weekend to cover so I could have a nice turkey dinner with my family. Bryn Spence and Chuck Priestley helped out a lot, particularly in the last few days when I needed an earlier night or help with the crazy numbers of owls.

Other Work

The BBO was asked to participate in the Homecoming Weekend celebrating Edmonton's Centennial. We put up a display board at the John Janzen Nature Center and had some banding demonstrations. Around 1500-2000 people a day came by the display board during the course of the day. I also was invited to speak to the Grade 8 classes from Ardrossan Junior Senior High School, and with Napi the Burrowing Owl it wasn't hard to keep the students attention.

So, things are still running at the BBO, and if you can plow your way through the snow, come and visit us at the lab, the saw-whets are still moving through and the geese and swans are making a racket. Also keep a lookout for the four horned owls and a Northern Shrike, the Juncos and Tree Sparrows that are around the Natural Area.

Cheers,

Lisa Priestley



Photo from the BBO October 17, 2004