

Weekly Update: June 1 - 10

Well folks another wonderful ten days have come and gone at the BBO and there has been some very exciting moments!

The month of June started off with a bang. Although we had heard the cat like meow of the Gray Catbird for a few days, we hadn't had any visual evidence of the species. However, on June 1st we caught and banded a beautiful Gray Catbird, blackish cap and all. It was the first net check of the day; I just knew it was going to be a great day for birds. Also on this day we heard, saw, and finally banded the first American Redstart of the season. Despite being quite vocal over the past few days, the Ovenbird had remained unseen; however, on this day it made its debut appearance. I quietly watched as the bird bathed in fresh rainwater that had collected on top of a five-gallon pail lid. We have yet to band an Ovenbird, but when we do, you'll be sure to know ... I quite like this species.

As you can see, the first day of June was quite eventful, and just when I thought it couldn't get any better, nature surprised me again. Not a day goes by without a Ruby-throated Hummingbird visiting our feeder. It is always a wondrous sight to see their delicate bodies hovering near the feeder. I will never become tired of hearing the sound of their wings beating. I was also fortunate enough to have a female Ruby-throated hummingbird in hand this day ... I told you it was a good day! I found the whole event very moving as this tiny bird sat motionless between my fingers. It is such an exquisite bird... definitely the highlight of my summer so far.

Actually the next little story is also included in my top highlights of the summer. On June 8th, a calm, clear, and bright Alberta summer day, we banded a male and female Baltimore Oriole! They were so colourful in the nets, and I could barely contain my excitement as I spoke to Crystal through the radio. "Come quick to 43, we caught the oriole pair, hurry." She only heard, amongst my high pitched squeals of excitement, "come quick and hurry." I can only imagine what Crystal thought was going on, but when she rounded the corner to net lane 43, her face lit up. What a wonderful day!

Some other highlights include the banding of a Mourning Warbler on June 4th, making this the first and only of the 'gray headed warblers' to be banded at the BBO this spring. We also banded a female Brown-headed Cowbird and two female American Goldfinches. These two species sing throughout the day at the BBO and the American Goldfinches are frequent visitors at the feeder ... and I mean frequent! But it wasn't until June 8th that we banded these birds, and although these birds aren't the most rare, we were elated to finally have these familiar birds in our hand.

The swallow grid is also bustling with energy and activity. The majority of the pairs are on eggs now, and Crystal and I spent an afternoon banding. We could

not believe how aggressive and territorial these birds are. As you reach into the nest box to remove the female and/or make note of the progress of the nest, any surrounding males and females will dive bomb your head. It's quite the experience, and I have now taken to wearing a wide brim hat while we check the boxes, just to add another few inches of space between the swooping swallows and me. Although there haven't been any incidents of the swallow actually coming in contact with the banders, I am not going to take any chances!

There has also been a citing or two of Bobolinks near Kallal Field. It would be amazing to see these birds. With luck a Bobolink will enter the Beaverhill natural area and we will be able to see one up close. Keep your fingers crossed!

June 10th marks the end of our spring migration monitoring program here at the BBO. It was interesting to note that the day was filled with six recaptures and only three new individuals. One of the new birds banded that day was a male Red-breasted Nuthatch, which is always a delight. I guess it is the perfect time to wrap up this program and start the summer program: M.A.P.S (monitoring avian productivity and survivorship). The M.A.P.S program will take place from June 11 to July 31 and includes five rotations. We will band in three different areas in the natural area and do numerous point counts throughout each rotation. I am really looking forward to seeing all the resident birds, although I will miss the migrants flying through. I guess we will have to wait until fall migration before we possibly see the colorful Western Tanager or the sweet singing Rose-breasted Grosbeak. But I hope we don't have to wait until fall to some of you bird lovers out for the day! The natural area has so much to offer, and Crystal and I love to demonstrate the banding process.

I have included a chart which includes the species we have handled in the past ten days. Notice the totals for the Least flycatcher, Clay-colored sparrow, and Yellow warbler as these are some of our resident birds. Naturally, these species have the highest number of individuals at the end of migration.

So grab your binoculars, scopes, field guides and smiles and come out to the BBO to see the wonders of nature first hand!

Cheers,
Jill and Crystal

Species	# New birds	# Recaptured	# Recovered	Total
American Goldfinch	1	0	1	2
American Redstart	3	0	0	3
American Robin	1	0	0	1
Baltimore Oriole	2	2	0	4
Brown-headed Cowbird	0	0	1	1
Chipping Sparrow	2	0	0	2
Clay-colored Sparrow	7	5	1	13
Gray Catbird	1	0	0	1
Hermit Thrush	1	0	0	1
House wren	2	1	1	4
Least flycatcher	14	6	5	25
Mourning Warbler	1	0	0	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	0	0	1
Ruby crowned Kinglet	1	0	0	1
Swainson's thrush	5	0	0	5
Tennessee warbler	1	0	0	1
Traill's flycatcher	3	0	0	3
Warbling Vireo	1	3	0	4
White-throated sparrow	1	0	0	1
Yellow warbler	5	11	3	19
Total	53	28	12	93