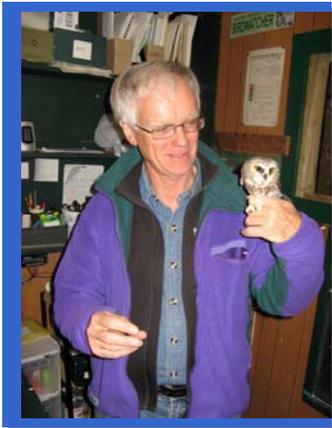


BEAVERHILL BIRD OBSERVATORY UPDATE OCT 12-26, 2007

THE SAW-WHET OWL MIGRATION season is starting to slow as we near the end of October. These last two weeks we captured 50 saw-whet owls, bringing our total to 160 for the year. Geoff and Helen could not contain their excitement when one of the owls they captured on the 19th of October was wearing a band. Upon going back through our data we discovered that the owl was banded October 23, 2005 at BBO by me. It is thrilling to see ones we have banded alive and well two years later. And isn't that what it is all about..... well, not exactly. We do monitor populations overall and determine adult to young ratios and timing of migration. But, it is exciting to have band returns.



Our coverage was not as good this past session, with four nights missed due to weather. Wind was the major problem, with gusts on some nights up to 60 km/hr. We also had a night where I had to close



early due to unforeseen circumstances..... on October 14th Buttons was acting particularly odd (this is not unusual, she does act strange sometimes). When we arrived at the lab to begin work, she would not get out of the truck. Then when I did get her out I went around the other side to get the gear and she jumped back in. So I pulled her out and headed out to set nets. Well, an hour later checking nets she was barking furiously at something, so I decided to close, and on my walk back to the lab I happened upon a Black Bear!! Yes, that middle-sized bear is still around I guess. Luckily it saw me, turned, and bolted. Geoff Holroyd was kind enough to volunteer the next night with me. I also had Fish and Wildlife officer Stacey Hunt come out from Vegreville to check out the situation, as it is very unusual to see a bear in the area (there are no berry crops so no food for it to fatten up on).

No signs were found around the lab and netting area, and we have not seen the bear since, so it must have been passing through. We do have our 'Critter Gitter' for protection!!! No, I'm not joking about the name, this is a motion detector that gives off a siren sound if something passes in front of it.

Other species encountered during our forays to the nets include flying squirrels, Tundra Swans, White-fronted and Canada Geese flying over in huge flocks, and four deer that bolted through the trees and scared me silly when I was coming back from a net check a few days after seeing the bear. The coyotes continue to serenade us at night, there are at least two packs. The Ruffed Grouse are plentiful.

Volunteers Jim and Barb Beck, Gerry and Robyn Beyersbergen, Katie Cameron (with friends, family, and her dog Annie), Geoff Holroyd, Blaine McGowan, Alisa Metro (job shadowing from Tofield school), Bryn Spence (with Piper), and Helen Trefry helped on various nights. And of course Buttons continues to be my companion throughout it all. This is the second last instalment of the summaries, as BBO closes down for the winter season November 12. If you don't make it out before the end of this season, we hope to see you in 2008.



Cheers, *Lisa Priestley*