

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update July 20 to July 29, 2008

Our last round of the summer MAPS protocol was this week, and we saw some interesting new developments.

Least Flycatchers were still our most captured species, but if you look at the data table at the end of this report, you'll notice that the ratio of newly banded birds to recaptured birds is going back up again. This is due to the fact that a lot of the young birds are fledging out of their nests and starting to fly around, gathering food for themselves or begging it from the adult birds. The most noticeable family groups are the Black-capped Chickadees—they chatter and call to each other constantly as they slowly move through the canopy, picking insects and larvae off as they go. It was fun to watch a group go by, and notice bands on the two adult birds that we'd put on a couple weeks before.



While it's fun to start seeing the new birds fresh out of their nests, this is also the time of year where, due to the fact that most songbird species are starting to molt into their basic (or, winter) plumage, we are no longer able to tell apart birds that were born last year (second year, or SY) from those that were born in previous years (after second year, or ASY). This means that in the fall, the best that we can do for aging most species is to differentiate between birds born this summer (hatch year, or HY) or in previous summers (after hatch year, or AHY).

Our most exciting catch of the shift was, like our most exciting catch of the first round (a Ruffed Grouse), a bird that we were not able to band. But unlike the Grouse, whose leg was too large for our bands, this one had legs that were too small... a Ruby-throated Hummingbird! We've all seen these tiny little birds at our feeders, but it was still shocking how small this bird was sitting in the net, it looked like a biggish, greenish bumblebee (with a one and a half inch beak!). Thankfully it was not stuck too badly, and after a good look, and a couple of pictures, we had her off on her way again.

On August 1st we start up our fall migration monitoring—it's hard to believe that the summer breeding season is finished already, but we're looking forward to the oncoming waves of new birds as they start their trip back south.



—JMDR

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Least Flycatcher	17	11	0	0	0	28
Black-capped Chickadee	7	0	0	0	0	7
Swainson's Thrush	2	0	0	0	0	2
Yellow Warbler	2	0	0	0	0	2
Alder Flycatcher	1	0	0	0	0	1
Downy Woodpecker	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ruby-Throated Hummingbird	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	30	11	0	0	0	42

- Net Hours: 180
- Capture Rate: 23.3 /100 NH
- ¹ Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO.
- ² Banded at the BBO > 90 days prior to recapture (e.g. in a previous year).
- ³ Banded at a location other than the BBO.
- ⁴ Caught in a mist-net but not banded (e.g. escaped net).



Chickory (*Chicorium intybus*), a common flower on the way out to the WEIR station.