

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update June 20 to 29, 2008

The second MAPS round was again dominated by Least Flycatchers, but we did have a few different species show up. The most notable banding records this round were the five Veerys that we caught on the 20th at the MAPS station closest to the banding lab. The Veery is in the Thrush family, and looks (and sounds) very similar to the more common



Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes. A Veery can be distinguished by its entirely rust-coloured back and tail, and by the much more pale spots on its chest. Also, if you're not sure if it's a Veery, but are lucky enough to have it in the hand (come down to the lab sometime to give this a try), a Veery's 6th primary feather (counting inwards from the outermost feather) is slightly emarginated (notched at the tip), whereas a Hermit Thrush has a fully emarginated p6, and a Swainson's p6 is not emarginated at all. These are the kind of neat little ID tricks that I enjoy learning as a bander, but you'd sure need a good pair of binoculars and a steady hand to use this tip in the field!



The interesting thing about these Veerys is that we had only caught four of them during the entire spring migration, and three of them had been caught in previous years. The oldest return (see definition below the table) was originally banded as an adult bird (SY) in July 2005, and he's been caught five times since then. Veerys are considered to be "Transient" in the area, according to previous year's MAPS data, which means that although they're breeding

range overlaps the station, and they are occasionally observed, no individual has ever set up a territory and been resident over the summer. My guess is that these five birds were a late migrant push, and that they'll be trying to find territories yet further north.



My favourite bird of the round did not actually hit our nets (despite me asking it very nicely). While banding at our southernmost MAPS station I heard a familiar song, that I just could not place. After listening for a while, and following it

around with my binoculars, I realized that it was a Connecticut Warbler—a very strange bird to see during the breeding season this far south, and in a young deciduous forest. But there he was, singing away—Connecticut Warblers are very loud singers—in gorgeous full yellow plumage with a blue-grey hood and white eye-ring. He stuck around so I could listen to him one more time during point-count surveys the next day, but we haven't heard him since. You never know what you're going to find out here...

—JMDR

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Least Flycatcher	12	10	0	0	0	22
Veery	1	1	3	0	0	5
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	2	0	0	0	3
American Goldfinch	2	0	0	0	0	2
Hermit Thrush	0	2	0	0	0	2
Yellow Warbler	2	0	0	0	0	2
Song Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Warbling Vireo	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	20	18	0	0	0	38

Net Hours: 180

Capture Rate: 21.1 /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).

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Hermit Thrush photo by Jonathan Martin-DeMoor (www.borealisimages.ca) © 2008

