

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update September 15 to 30, 2008

Well, the songbird numbers continue to drop as our fall migration becomes later, however we still have a good diversity of birds coming through (21 species). We had another new species banded at the lab, a Townsend's Solitaire. This species is more closely associated with high mountains than any of the other thrush species. Other unusual species included an Oregon Race Dark-eyed Junco and two Varied Thrushes (that makes three Varied Thrushes for the fall, another species more associated with the mountains and foothills). The American Tree Sparrow (that breeds near tree line in the north) made its first appearance in our nets on September 15, a sure sign that colder weather was on its way, however, we have been pleasantly surprised at how sunny and warm the days have been. For example September 29th and 30th had a temperature of 25°C by 1 p.m. and low temperatures at night were still pleasant. I can't remember ever banding saw-whets in a short sleeved shirt at 10:30 p.m. Snow Geese are now plentiful.

Table 1. Banding results from Beaverhill Bird Observatory September 15 through 30, 2008.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Robin	1	0	0	0	0	1
American Tree Sparrow	9	0	0	0	0	9
Black-capped Chickadee	17	21	1	0	1	40
Brown Creeper	1	0	0	0	0	1
Downy Woodpecker	2	3	0	0	0	5
Hermit Thrush	8	1	0	0	0	9
Magnolia Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	1
Myrtle Warbler	78	3	0	0	1	82
Orange-crowned Warbler	10	1	0	0	0	11
Oregon Junco	1	0	0	0	0	1
Purple Finch	2	0	0	0	0	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6	0	0	0	1	7
Ruffed Grouse	0	0	0	0	1	1
Slate-colored Junco	25	2	0	0	2	29
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	0	0	0	0	1
Tennessee Warbler	1	1	0	0	0	2
Townsend's Solitaire	1	0	0	0	0	1
Varied Thrush	2	0	0	0	0	2
Wilson's Warbler	2	0	0	0	0	2
White-crowned Sparrow	0	0	0	0	1	1
White-throated Sparrow	6	0	0	0	0	6
Total	174	32	1	0	7	214

Net Hours: 656.5
Capture Rate: 32.6

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).

The Saw-whet Owl numbers are on the rise. We were able to band on 11 nights and captured 40 saw-whet owls. Our top capture night is 9 saw-whet owls, although on one particular night I was very excited to find two Long-eared Owls in one net. They can easily escape the net so I did not want to leave them to go and get different sized bags. It was quite amusing to try and fit them in the little saw-whet bags to carry back to the lab, and in the end, their tails and feet were sticking out (photo right). Other species observed during the night include White-fronted Geese, Long-eared Owls, northern flying squirrels, a pocket gopher, a skunk, and the ever present coyotes. Also a Ruffed Grouse had taken up a drumming log south of the nets and we hear him beating his wings each night. Wrong time of the year buddy!



In other news, we had a BIG scare at the lab when a fire broke out at Francis Point on September 28 and spread quickly east towards the Natural Area. Over 6000 acres burned and it came within 100 meters of the lab. I was away in Montana when it happened, but we had Jim and Barb Beck show up to band saw-whets and they were turned away at the Natural Area. However, being persistent banders, they managed to get approval from the fire crew to still get to band on Sunday night and set up on time. Cause of the fire was either hot exhaust from an ATV or a carelessly tossed cigarette. Please, if you come into the Natural Area for a visit, do not park in tall vegetation or seeds piles, and be very careful when smoking. We are very thankful to the fire crews that prevented the fire from crowning in the trees and protected our lab. The good news out of all of this is that the fire took down alot of the grasses that have been building up in the swallow grids.



We are excitedly preparing for the Steaks and Saw-whets event this coming weekend. Our Saturday is full and Friday is filling quickly so if you are still interested in registering please do it soon. I need to thank Jim and Barb Beck for covering on 4 nights while I was away at the Raptor Research Conference. Also Chuck Priestley covered one night.



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