

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update August 7 – 13, 2009



Young Eastern Phoebe, with rusty edging to the upperparts

The second week of fall migration monitoring here at the bird observatory has yielded a few more fall migrants, and many more young birds hatched this year. It was quite a ‘flycatcher-y’ week, with many Least’s of course, but also an Alder, Traill’s, and two Eastern Phoebes caught. One of our favourite captures was a Sharp-shinned Hawk that was molting her juvenile plumage, showing a stark contrast between her old and new feathers. This Sharp-shinned didn’t have particularly sharp-shins, as her leg was too big for the recommended size 3A or 3B band. By guaging her leg, we determined a size 4 band would fit her well, and sent her packing with the same size band you would fit on a Magpie or Northern Saw-whet Owl.

The Sharp-shinned capture has gotten us excited about setting the raptor traps around the natural area again. There haven’t been many set since about 2005, except the occasional one to try to catch a Short-eared Owl for Geoff. We are hoping to get a few more set out this year, and have Lisa help to train us on how to handle and band the bigger birds. Lisa was able to come out for one day and help repair the existing traps (Thanks!), and while there is a bit yet to do, we hope to have traps set around the 25th. Daily census is regularly teasing us with sightings of Red-tailed Hawks, Swainson’s Hawks, Northern Harriers, and Merlins that we are not yet able to trap. Hopefully they’ll stick around for a few weeks still!



Sharp-shinned Hawk showing old (brown) and new (blue-gray) feathers

The Long-eared Owls are still around, and Ashley had an amazing sighting one night when three owls were flying around her about 150 m from the lab. They were so curious about her that one flew in quite close and there was nearly a collision!

We have spent some time lately walking through the natural area, and it is extremely dry this fall. There is no water in Sora Pond or Lister Lake at all, and Lister Lake has been completely taken over by Marsh Ragwort. There is a puddle of water just north of the Weir, but barely enough to get your toes wet. There is plenty of foxtail barley out on the dry lakebed that will probably be blowing into the trees again soon.

Thanks to Matt, Anita, Kayla, and Leyton Hanneman for helping to cover one of our days off this week!

Table 1. Results from Fall Migration Monitoring, August 7 – 13, 2009.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Alder Flycatcher	1	0	0	0	0	1
Black-capped Chickadee	3	5	0	0	0	8
Clay-coloured Sparrow	9	3	0	0	0	12
Eastern Phoebe	1	0	0	0	1	2
House Wren	7	2	0	0	1	10
Least Flycatcher	58	5	0	0	2	65
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	0	0	0	0	1
Tennessee Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	1
Traill's Flycatcher	1	0	0	0	0	1
Warbling Vireo	1	0	0	0	0	1
Yellow Warbler	13	4	0	0	0	17
Total	96	19	0	0	4	119

Net Hours: 507 NH

Capture Rate: 23.47 birds/ 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).



All the water by the weir



Ferocious beasts found prowling the natural area. (Ashley's Guinea Pigs enjoying some grass)