

## Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update May 1 – 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010

We are back at it! It is great to walk out of the bunkhouse here at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory in the early morning and go open the nets, all the while listening to the various birds that are singing away. I (Katie Calon) am back again as the head bender and this year we have Meaghan Bouchard as the banding assistant. Meaghan is a fourth year ENCS student from the U of A, we are very happy to have you working with us Meaghan, welcome to BBO!



Meaghan releasing her first bird, a Song Sparrow

A typical chilly spring morning at the BBO goes something like this; wake up, crawl out of your warm and comfortable sleeping bag, stumble sleepily into the lab, realize the temperature is too cold to open the nets, light a fire in the woodstove to warm up the lab, boil some water for tea and eat some breakfast, and wait for the temperature to rise above 0 degrees. When it does, zip out and open the nets!

The nets themselves have been relatively quiet these past two weeks, with a total of 61 birds caught. Some highlights for us include Song Sparrow (Meaghan's first bird!), a flashy male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a large and flappy Robin, and a collection of Hermit Thrushes and Myrtle Warblers.

Aside from the nets however, there are definitely lots of neat birds around! On May 2<sup>nd</sup> we had the nets open for a short while before a storm blew in. While we were closing the nets we were bombarded with low-flying Sandhill Cranes trying to keep ahead of the storm, we counted 4500 in all, and many stopped to rest near the swallow grids north of the lab. We have also been having some fun watching Short-eared Owls out on the dry Lister Lake bed. They have been very reliably sighted around 8 pm each night we have been out, and we have been running some traps to try and catch one, so far without success. We will definitely be spending some time nest searching out there in the coming weeks, hoping this year to get a satellite transmitter on one of these elusive birds.

On May 6<sup>th</sup> we decided to follow the beautiful sounds of the raucous ravens that we have been hearing daily, and were quite excited to find them building a nest a few hundred meters behind the lab. We are looking forward to monitoring the development of this nest; hope they will lay some eggs there! Other birds that are well on their way with nesting are the Mountain Bluebirds, we went to check boxes on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. The status of the nests ranged from just started building to one that had 7 eggs already!



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

A number of visitors have been out to the lab, including Kathy St. Laurent, Marie-Christine Belair, and a group of about 8 from the Edmonton Nature Club. Al DeGroot also put some time into getting the tarp set up over the deck so that we have a bit of shade on the hot and sunny days.

**Table 1. Results from Songbird Banding, May 1 - 14, 2009.**

Species	Banded	Repeat <sup>1</sup>	Return <sup>2</sup>	Foreign <sup>3</sup>	Other <sup>4</sup>	Total
American Robin	2	0	0	0	0	2
Black-capped Chickadee	0	5	7	0	0	12
Clay-colored Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Eastern Phoebe	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hermit Thrush	4	0	0	0	2	6
Lincoln's Sparrow	1	0	0	0	1	2
Myrtle Warbler	25	0	0	0	3	28
Song Sparrow	1	0	0	0	2	3
Unknown Yellow-rumped Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	1
White-throated Sparrow	3	0	0	0	1	4
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>61</b>

*Net Hours: 672.25 NH*

*Capture Rate: 9.07 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).



Top right: Mourning Cloak Butterfly; Top left: Male Myrtle Warbler; Bottom: White-throated Sparrow