

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update May 1 – 14th, 2011



A pair of White-Crowned Sparrows

A warm welcome to the start of the 2011 season here at the BBO. Katie Calon and I (Meaghan Bouchard) are both back again this year for another summer, and it is great to be back out in the natural area to watch spring bloom.

Despite a low number of net hours because of all the windy weather we have been having, it has been great watching the species come back one at a time. The Song Sparrows were here to greet us on our first day, then trickled in the Savannah's, Clay Coloured's and Chipping Sparrows. We were lucky to catch an American Tree Sparrow on the first day of banding, they

have usually passed through the Natural Area on their way north by the time we start in May. One morning Katie caught a Ruffed Grouse who has been drumming near the lab this spring. We also really enjoyed banding the tiny Orange-crowned Warbler and Red-breasted Nuthatch who were found in net 8.

It is also great to see water in the lakes! Lister Lake is flooded and flowing over the weir into Beaverhill Lake, which has water visible from the swallow grids. This is a big change from last year, when we were hiking out onto a dry lakebed looking for Short Eared Owl nests! There has been a lot of waterfowl and shorebird activity on the morning census. We have regularly been hearing Marbled Godwits, Common Snipe and Franklin's Gulls, and seeing Mallard and Northern Shovelers flying overhead. During the first week of May we were craning our necks to count the hundreds of birds in the large flocks of Snow Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese.



Red-Breasted Nuthatch



Erin and Meaghan with the Ruffed Grouse

On the 12th we did our first round of nest box checking, and found three Mountain Bluebird nests with eggs. The Tree Swallows have repopulated the nest box grids, and are pairing up and working on devouring the emerging mosquito population.

We have had lots of visitors out these first few days; great to some familiar and new faces out enjoying the birds. Thanks to Anna and Micah for coming out to visit and help with the banding. A big thanks to Erin Low for volunteering at the lab for a couple of days to see what the BBO is all about.. Irene and Onyx also paid a visit, as did Treva and her boys.

Table 1. Results from Songbird Banding, May 1 - 14, 2011.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Tree Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Black-capped Chickadee	6	0	0	0	3	9
Clay-coloured Sparrow	6	0	0	0	2	8
Eastern Phoebe	2	0	0	0	1	3
Hermit Thrush	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lincoln's Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Myrtle Warbler	3	0	0	0	0	3
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ruffed Grouse	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	1	1
Slate-colored Junco	2	0	0	0	0	2
Song Sparrow	3	0	0	0	4	7
Tree Swallow	0	0	2	0	0	2
White-crowned Sparrow	5	0	0	0	3	8
White-throated Sparrow	3	0	0	0	0	3
Total	35	0	2	0	15	52

Net Hours: 546 NH

Capture Rate: 9.52 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).



Release of a Slate-colored Junco