

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update, August 1-10, 2013



Migration has begun! The first few days were slow but catch rates have since increased. Species we caught include American Goldfinch, Black-capped Chickadee, Cedar Waxwing, Clay-coloured Sparrow, Downy Woodpecker, Gray Catbird, House Wren, Least Flycatcher, Tennessee Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Willow Flycatcher, and Yellow Warbler. A total of 59 birds across 12 species were processed. I am very happy to be back on migration because I missed the morning census!

Making the transition from MAPS to migration took a bit of work, and we would like to thank the following interns, board members, volunteers, and family members for their support: Henry, Irene + Onyx, Sian, Norma, Steve, Meaghan, Rachel, Nicole, Alexandria, Al, Doug, my parents Rena and Fraser, Am's mom Claude and her relatives from Italy, and others who stopped by on their way through the natural area.

Wood frogs have taken over the natural area! We have been seeing these little guys all over the place. Am found one that was no larger than the tip of her finger. There have also been plenty of snowshoe hare bunnies observed. It was great to finally catch some Tennessee Warblers. We missed them on their way through during spring migration. Another notable first of the season was a Willow Flycatcher. This species is very similar looking to Least Flycatchers, which we catch plenty of. One characteristic we use to tell the two apart is the emarginated wing on the sixth primary feather of Least Flycatchers. The morning census had a big highlight this week.....four Long-eared Owls.....on the same branch! Phenomenal! Our local mushroom expert Irene was blown away, as were the BBO staff. Quite the treat.



Apart from the tremendous birdlife we got a lot of work done in the afternoons and evenings. A foldable sign was erected, shelves were made, a donation box was put up, the lab ceiling was painted, patched nets, and new net lanes were cleared. Al came by on the 5th and shingled the shed for us. We also took care of some data entry, updates, and Am decorated the lab with posters and pamphlets for all of our visitors.

A very peculiar event took place one morning in the middle of mist-netting. We caught a highly unusual looking Black-capped Chickadee. This individual had all of the usual field markings, but displayed a brownish cap and bib! Looking at our main reference book by Peter Pyle the bird could be a hybrid between Black-capped and Boreal chickadees or Black-capped and Chestnut-sided chickadees. Another possibly mentioned in Pyle is an anomalous Black-capped chickadee that displays some brown plumage. We collected some feathers from this unique individual and promptly sent them off to the University of Alberta for DNA analysis.

Table 1. Results from Migration Monitoring August 1-10, 2013.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Goldfinch	1	0	0	0	0	1
Black-capped Chickadee	6	2	1	0	2	11
Cedar Waxwing	1	1	0	0	0	2
Clay-coloured Sparrow	1	0	1	0	0	2
Downy Woodpecker	2	0	0	0	0	2
Gray Catbird	1	0	0	0	0	1
House Wren	0	1	0	0	0	1
Least Flycatcher	19	4	1	0	1	25
Tennessee Warbler	3	0	0	0	0	3
Warbling Vireo	5	0	0	0	0	5
Willow Flycatcher	1	0	0	0	0	1
Yellow Warbler	5	0	0	0	0	5
Total	45	8	3	0	3	59

Net Hours: 504 NH
Capture Rate: 11.71 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).