

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update, May 1-15, 2013

The Beaverhill Bird Observatory opened on May 1st this year, despite all the snow! The lab was opened but banding didn't start until May 2nd, due to sub zero temperatures. The staff this year is composed of Amélie Roberto-Charron, and Kevin Methuen who are very excited for the summer of birding ahead!

They will be joined on site by a number of interns, Alexandria Tiffinger, Sian Ford, Roy Tian, Carly Lynch, Nicole Boucher, Emily Cicon, Norma-Jane Young, Alec Forest, Rebecca Himsl, Erin Campbell, Caroline LeCourtois, Alexandria Burt, Sara Friske, Michelle Zarowny, Meagan Bulter, Cassandra Durocher and Steve Andersen. These interns will be involved in a number of projects, such as re-establishing the House Wren grid that was monitored by Mike Quinn in the late 80s, maintaining and monitoring the Tree Swallow grids and the Elson Bluebird trail, conducting butterfly counts, surveying the breeding birds in the natural area and observing the behaviour of the Tree Swallows.



The summer staff: Kevin Methuen (above) and Amélie Roberto-Charron (below)



Bird Box Building Blitz!

The staff didn't catch anything for the first few days of May, but caught 6 Slate-coloured Juncos and a Fox Sparrow on May 4th! Overall the first two weeks at the BBO have been slow; only 7.30 birds were caught per 100 net hours in comparison to the first two weeks of May last year when 14.63 birds per 100 net hours. It has been a bit of a late spring, but we're hoping that things will pick up! The staff did have an interesting capture though: an Oregon Junco! The second to be caught at the BBO is the past twenty years! On May 4th the staff also organized a Bird Box Building Blitz.

Approximately 170 boxes were built. Thanks to everyone who joined the staff in building bird boxes!

Kallal Meadow is flooded this year, which has resulted in a lot of great birding! Tons of Shovelers, Blue Winged Teals, Eared and Horned Grebes, Pelicans and other shorebirds have been spotted there. The staff has really enjoyed birding there. A number of raptors have also been spotted on the fence posts including a female Peregrine Falcon!



The meadows on the way into the lab.

The Tree Swallows and the Mountain Bluebirds are back. None of the swallows had started nesting yet, but several Mountain Bluebirds have started nesting along the Elson Bluebird trail. With the help of interns the staff are slowly replacing the aging bird boxes. The golondrias-style boxes, that open on the side, are being replaced by new boxes that open from the top. The staff is hoping to build over 400 so as to replace all of the golondrias-style boxes on site, as well as replace all of the broken boxes on the Elson Bluebird trail and to re-establish the House Wren grid. Should be a busy summer!



Pete the Red Squirrel.

The regular gang of mammals have also been spotted in by the staff on their first few weeks. The Porcupine, White Tailed Deer and Snowshoe Hare have all been seen around the lab, as well as a pesky Red Squirrel. The Red Squirrel, that the staff has named Pete, has been getting into all kinds of trouble. He's been eating all of the bird seed from the feeders, has taken over a Northern Saw Whet Owl nest box. He's even taken to cashing the staff's produce in trees. He got into the solar panel batteries, but this was quickly dealt with. Odd little critter, but so long as he stays away from the nets and the wiring he won't be deported.

The lab has been incredibly busy with visitors and volunteers over the last couple weeks as well! Besides all of the interns, the staff has enjoyed visits from Irene Crosland and her gorgeous dog Onyx, Lisa Priestley and her dogs, Buttons and Rose, Jim Beck, Al Degroot, Margaret Takats, Pat Nolan and his dog Jasper, Geoff Holdroyd and his dog Gemma, Renee and Bob Howard, Donna and Ted McKen, Melissa Chisolm, Anna Daku, and her kids Joel and Micah Daku, Katie Chestnutt, Meaghan Bouchard, Crystal and Jeremy Payne and their three kids, and dog Kittn. The staff has really enjoyed all these visitors, especially making crafts with the young ones, and interpreting their work! Hopefully everyone will return to visit and will be joined by new visitors and volunteers. Thanks to all of the volunteers for all of their help getting the lab ready for the 2013 field season!

Table 1. Results from Migration Monitoring May 1-14, 2012.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Robin	6	2	0	0	0	8
American Tree Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Black-capped Chickadee	1	0	1	0	0	2
Chipping Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clay-coloured Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Downy Woodpecker	1	0	0	0	0	1
Fox Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hermit Thrush	1	0	0	0	0	1
Least Flycatcher	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lincoln Sparrow	1	0	0	0	3	4
Myrtle Warbler	6	0	0	0	0	6
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	0	0	0	1	2
Oregon Junco	1	0	0	0	0	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	1	1
Slate-coloured Junco	12	0	0	0	2	14
Swainson's Thrush	2	0	0	0	0	2
White-crowned Sparrow	3	0	0	0	0	3
White-throated Sparrow	3	0	0	0	0	3
Total	41	2	1	0	7	51

Net Hours: 698.5 NH

Capture Rate: 7.30 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).