



Beaverhill Bird Observatory
Annual Report 2018

By
Sara Pearce Meijerink, Editor

January 2019

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

A special thanks to the following organizations for funding our projects in 2018: Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Community Environment Action Grant, Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission, TD Friends of the Environment, Edmonton Community Foundation, Bird Studies Canada's Baillie Fund, the Wildbird General Store, Alberta Serving Communities Internship Program (SCiP), Canada's Farmers Grow Communities (Monsanto Fund), Wildbirds Unlimited, Aviva Canada Community Fund, Sherwood Park Fish and Game Association and Nature Canada's Charles Labatiuk Nature Endowment Fund. We also gratefully acknowledge a donation in memory of Mary Hughes Weir which will be used to replace our aging lab and education center.

Thank you to individuals who made our work possible by providing cash donations and in-kind support.

Note from BBO Chair, Dr. Geoff Holroyd

The BBO's activities and influence continue to grow as staff and volunteers continue their commitment to our broad conservation goals. Since we created BBO in 1984, our programs have expanded from banding birds, to scientific monitoring of bird populations and specific research on birds and other creatures.

Our education and awareness mission has exploded in recent years. Last winter, BBO staff and volunteers gave 178 school presentations plus numerous others reaching 7,000 students and 2,000 other public. The school presentations address topics from the Alberta Curriculum that are specific to each grade. Most of our talks include time with Ricki or Ray, our Saw-whet Owls, Moxie, a Peregrine Falcon and until his death, Colonel Slade, the Barred Owl. Our four public events, the Young Ornithologist Workshop and groups' visits to BBO, provide hands on experiences for all ages. Our vibrant intern program gives real-life opportunities to students preparing for their future careers in many aspects of conservation. We thank Bill Paulson and Pamela Webb who ferry the birds to the city and back to their rural home.

All of these accomplishments are due to our excellent staff, Sara, Emily, Jeremy, Meghan who left us in March, and Kevin who left in December. We are proud to see Meghan and Kevin take on new challenges after their contributions to BBO and all that they learned here. Thank you!

Our board of directors provide the key support to maintain all these activities. Every organization is only as good as their treasurer. BBO is fortunate to have an excellent Treasurer, Rose Scott who keeps accurate records of our finances, paying staff, depositing funds and paying bills. Helen Trefry, our hard working vice-chair produces three

informative newsletters, the Willet, organized the young Ornithologist Workshop and the Big Birding Breakfasts and a wide variety of other activities including housing the owls and falcon with husband Phil Trefry. Laurie Hunt organizes our intern program ensuring the paperwork with SCiP is on track. Thea Carpenter maintains our membership list and records the minutes of our board meetings. Darren McGregor hosts our informative website. Steve Anderson picks up our mail and distributes to staff and board members as needed. He, Andra Bismanis, Christine Boulton, Rolly Perrot, Emily Upton-Mills, and Jonathan DeMoor review grant proposals, volunteer at events and other lab activities, and provide valuable input at board meetings.

We thank the many volunteers who help BBO in so many ways. Our growing membership, and the wide variety of funders are testament to the value that BBO brings to our society, increasing our collective need to take better care of this Planet Earth. Think Globally, Act Locally.

Note from BBO's New Head Biologist, Sara Pearce Meijerink

This year has been a year full of changes for the BBO! Early in March, before the lab had re-opened, Meghan Jacklin left us to continue her career with the Edmonton Area Land Trust, we wish her well with this new chapter of her life. BBO staff and two new summer students then had an amazing season together, with a phenomenal diversity of birds captured this year (highlights included Cooper's Hawk, Sora, Black-throated Green Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Bay Breasted Warbler and a Pileated Woodpecker). With the amazing generosity from the Sherwood Park Fish and Game Association in the form of a \$10,000 donation, the BBO was able to replace the old, deteriorating Raven's Roost with a brand new bunkhouse! With hammers and saws in the air, we also insulated the Nuthatch Nest bunkhouse. Staff will get to sleep in insulated buildings from now on! A huge thank you to Al Degroot, John Scott and all the volunteers who put in so many hours of labour and love over the 2-month construction period to bring this beautiful new building into creation! We were thrilled this fall, to have one of our summer students, Emily Grose, accept the position of assistant biologist and she will be helping to run our education outreach program this winter! Lastly, as the year came to a close, Kevin Methuen, who has been head biologist at the BBO for the last 2 years, and assistant biologist 2 years prior to that, left the BBO in December to brave the rugged arctic tundra where he will be working as a District Wildlife Manager for the territorial government of Nunavut. Kevin's passion and commitment to the BBO is something to be admired. He tirelessly worked to continue improving this organization that we all love, and he excelled in every aspect that he tackled. We will miss him dearly. I am by no means Kevin, but I too love the BBO and will do my best in this new position to help the BBO continue to grow and flourish.

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List of Executive and Contact Information

First Name	Last Name	Position	Year Joined the Board
Geoff	Holroyd	Chair	1988 (1984)
Helen	Trefry	Vice-Chair	2014
Rose	Scott	Treasurer	2016
Thea	Carpenter	Recording/Membership Secretary	2013
Andra	Bismanis	Director at Large	2018
Christine	Boulton	Director at Large	2006
Rolly	Perrot	Director at Large	2017
Laurie	Hunt	Director at Large	2015
Darren	McGregor	Web Designer	2005
Steve	Andersen	Director at Large	2016
Emily	Upham-Mills	Director at Large	2016
Caitlin	Mader	Director at Large	2016
Jonathan	DeMoor	Director at Large	2016
	STAFF		
Kevin	Methuen	Staff	
Sara	Pearce Meijerink	Staff	
Emily	Grose	Staff	

Contact Information:

Geoff Holroyd - chair@beaverhillbirds.com

Sara Pearce Meijerink - biologist@beaverhillbirds.com

Spring Report

Migration Monitoring

Thirteen mist-nets (2, 2X, 8, 9, 9X, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, and 57) were operated from May 1st to June 9th on days that were above zero degrees Celsius, relatively calm (wind below 20 km/h), and free of precipitation. A total of 2594 net hours were accumulated, due to relatively few ‘weather’ days during the monitoring period this spring. A total of 607 birds were captured, of which 443 were newly banded. Both of these numbers were the lowest since 2013, the year before new net lanes were established. Species diversity was also lower this spring with 44 species (Table 1).

Table 1. Numbers of captures, mist-netting effort, capture rates, and number of species caught during spring migration monitoring at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory since 2003.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total Captures	754	532	276	242	408	382	500	497
Birds Banded	546	424	196	169	318	288	351	333
Net hours (NH)	2219	1809	1570	1615	1813	1828	1608	2016
Capture Rate (birds/100 NH)	34.0	29.4	17.6	15.0	22.5	20.9	31.1	24.7
Species	44	38	32	31	44	38	39	38

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Captures	412	459	324	841	810	849	996	607
Birds Banded	241	307	211	561	641	663	802	443
Net hours (NH)	1884	1997	1884	2615	2859	3432	2031	2594
Capture Rate (birds/100 NH)	21.9	23.0	17.2	32.2	28.3	24.7	49.0	23.4
Species	40	39	36	43	45	54	51	44

May 20th to 26th was our busiest week of spring migration, with 205 captures and the highlight being a Canada Warbler! Our single busiest day of banding occurred on May 31st when we caught 60 birds of 16 species, including three gorgeous Magnolia Warblers. Other notable captures this spring included 20 Baltimore Orioles, 13 Mourning Warblers, and one Gadwall duck!

Big Birding Breakfast

The Big Birding Breakfast was a fun event with great weather and enthusiastic kids! We had 58 guests with 23 children on June 2nd and 3rd, making for an unforgettable fundraiser. Ricki (Saw-whet Owl) and Zeus (Peregrine Falcon) entertained guests between net checks.



Great Canadian Birdathon

The BBO staff and volunteers had an epic Birdathon this year! 121 species were identified in a 24 hour period, starting with banding followed by birding at Amisk Creek, Tofield Llama pond, and Elk Island. Highlights included Common Loon, 15 species of duck, Black-bellied and American Golden Plovers, Dunlin, and a Broad-winged Hawk. We raised \$825! A big thank you to all who donated and participated! Amelie Roberto-Charron also led a Birdathon team for BBO, raising over \$5300! Geoff and Helen also completed a Birdathon to support BBO, identifying 111 species (between the two of them!) and raising over \$1500!

Many other monitoring programs and maintenance activities were completed by staff, board members, dedicated volunteers, and student interns. To view the spring report in its entirety, visit <http://beaverhillbirds.com/media/1756/2018-spring-report.pdf>

Summer Report

Highlights

The 2018 summer season covers the period from June 10th to August 8th. During this time the Beaverhill Bird Observatory (BBO) programs were operated by Head Biologist Kevin Methuen, Assistant Biologist Sara Pearce Meijerink, and Summer Students Emily Grose and Jeremy Lambe. Six rounds of the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program were conducted, with a total of 593 birds captured. This has been the third year the Geoff Holroyd Young Ornithologist Workshop has been held and seven youth spent a week with us learning about bird banding, biology and conservation. BBO staff also banded Tree Swallow nestlings, conducted nest searches, provided interpretive talks at the lab to the visiting public and volunteers and participated in a Purple Martin banding marathon. Twelve interns were surveying bats, butterflies, breeding birds, as well as nesting Tree Swallows and House Wrens in the natural area this summer.

BLAB

BLAB had another record slow season in 30 years of banding, with a total of 54 birds captured, of 10 different species. With an effort of 310 net hours, we had a capture rate of 17.4 birds per 100 net hours. Least Flycatchers were dominating this station with 36 captures, representing 65% of all birds caught. We also caught a few American Robins (5), Black-capped Chickadees (4), Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (3) and only one of the following: Baltimore Oriole, Cedar Waxwing, House Wren, Red-winged Blackbird, Warbling Vireo and a Tennessee Warbler.



Least Flycatcher caught at BLAB (photo credit: Sara Pearce Meijerink)

SOPO

At SOPO we captured 317 birds over 330 hours, producing a capture rate of 96.1 birds per 100 net hours. A total of 29 different species were caught, the two most common were Black-capped Chickadees (63) and Least Flycatchers (63). The next most abundant species captured this year was Yellow Warbler (51), followed by Song Sparrow (27), Warbling Vireo (14), Clay-coloured Sparrow (11) and Red-winged Blackbird (11). Other species of interest included Cedar Waxwing (4), Marsh Wren (4), LeConte's Sparrow (3), Lincoln's Sparrow (3), Northern Waterthrush (3) and Sora (1).



Sora caught at SOPO (Photo credit: Irene Crosland)

LILA

The LILA nets caught a total of 222 birds this year, with 330 net hours producing a capture rate of 67.3 birds per 100 net hours. Least Flycatchers were once again the most frequently captured birds representing 35% of our captures with 77 individuals processed. The second most abundant species were Yellow Warbler (20), followed by Red-winged Blackbird (17), Black-capped Chickadee (13) and Song Sparrow (13). Other species of interest include; Clay-coloured Sparrow (5), Gray Catbird (4), a Baltimore Oriole, an Ovenbird and one Cooper's Hawk.



Cooper's Hawk caught at LILA (Photo credit: Emily Grose)

Other Banding

Five interns monitored our 205 Tree Swallow boxes, which are located in the road grid, spiral grid, and new grid. 293 Tree Swallow chicks were banded at the nest boxes along with 9 adult Tree Swallows, and 4 Mountain Bluebird chicks.

Geoff Holroyd also banded Ruby-throated Hummingbirds using a special feeder trap during the Young Ornithologists Workshop. He banded five individuals this year.

For a second year, BBO staff along with Geoff Holroyd assisted Glen Hvenegaard in a Purple Martin Marathon! For 2 days we travelled across central Alberta, re-trapping as many banded adult martins as possible in order to gain more information about their movements, and dispersal patterns. We banded 7 adults and had 32 recaptures in those two days as well. We also attended the evening mass trapping of Purple Martins at Ellis Bird Farm two weeks later in July and banded 41 adults and got 37 recaptures. It was a successful effort!

Geoff Holroyd Young Ornithologist Workshop

This is the third consecutive year the BBO has hosted The Geoff Holroyd Young Ornithologist Workshop for youth. This year's participants came from all over Alberta as well as one participant from British Columbia to attend the workshop to learn how to identify and band birds. Everyone participated in our Migration Monitoring and MAPS banding program and by the end of the week, almost every youth was banding and able to extract birds from the net with supervision. In the afternoons, guest speakers came out to share their knowledge and experience with the young birders. Guest speakers included Geoff Holroyd (Hummingbird Banding), David Lawrie (Moths and Butterflies), Helen Trefry (Peregrine Falcon Conservation), David Duncan (Ducks), and Kim Bloome (Wildlife Rehabilitation). Staff led the Young Ornithologists on a Big Birding Day around the BBO, Tofield wetlands and locations in Elk Island National Park. Even with all the thick smoke present due to forest fires in British Columbia, the group found 90 different bird species! The Canadian Wildlife Service was kind enough to loan an extensive bird specimen collection which the youth studied and practiced their aging/sexing skills. As well, all Young Ornithologists participated in a duckling release with Kim Bloome from Wild North and collected butterflies to identify with David Lawrie. By participating in this week long workshop, the Young Ornithologists got to experience what it is like to be a field biologist, and learned about bird conservation issues and threats facing our feathery friends.



The 2018 Young Ornithologists! (photo by Geoff Holroyd)

During the course of the Geoff Holroyd Young Ornithologist Workshop, we saw the participants grow in their self-confidence and bond with other youth that shared an

interest in nature. After the workshop had ended, a week later we received word from one of the participants that she plans on changing her university major from veterinary to conservation biology. We hope that this workshop continues to inspire participants to further increase their appreciation for the natural world and the animals we share this planet with.

Though this is the third year the workshop has been held, it has yet to receive a secure, long-term source of funding. Currently this workshop is free to participants, making it available to all who love nature, no matter their background. If you are interested in helping to sponsor a Young Ornithologist to attend next year's workshop, contact Helen Trefry at helentrefry@gmail.com. A \$400 donation covers the cost of one participant attending the workshop.

Thank you once again to guest speakers Geoff Holroyd, David Lawrie, Helen Trefry, David Duncan, and Kim Blomme. A huge thank you to Helen Trefry for meal planning and groceries for the entire event, thank you Brenda Dale for making a delicious soup and thank you to Irene Crossland for a wonderful dessert! Thank you to Geoff Holroyd for helping Helen organize this workshop and for your expertise.

This is a shortened version of the summer report. You can find the full version on our website: <http://beaverhillbirds.com/media/1778/2018-summer-report.pdf>

Fall Report

Migration Monitoring

Thirteen mist-nets (2, 2X, 8, 9, 9X, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, and 57) were operated from July 20th to October 10th and then reopened from October 17th to October 19th on days that were above zero degrees Celsius, relatively calm, and free of precipitation. A total of 4127.65 net-hours was accumulated, despite a snowy September which did not allow staff to achieve full hours on several days (Table 1). 2029 birds were captured, of which 1692 were newly banded. This marked the highest number of captures in autumn since 2001, and the highest number of banded birds since 2001! Species diversity was high this year, with 62 distinct species captured, the most since 2006!

Table 1. Numbers of captures, mist-netting effort, capture rates, and number of species caught during fall migration monitoring at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory since 2003.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total Captures	1315	975	1256	1969	1079	892	875	880
Birds Banded	1093	818	1089	1525	952	723	718	708
Net hours (NH)	3818	3229	2787	3476	3534	3400	3671	3190
Capture Rate (birds/100 NH)	34.4	30.2	45.1	56.6	30.5	26.2	23.8	27.6
Species Captured	57	60	59	63	52	58	51	60

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Captures	701	978	631	738	1641	1721	1918	2029
Birds Banded	589	776	628	618	1393	1390	1620	1692
Net hours (NH)	3678	3683	3144	2565	4478	4174	4202	4128
Capture Rate (birds/100 NH)	19.1	26.6	20.1	28.8	36.6	41.2	45.6	49.15
Species Captured	53	57	45	46	58	53	52	62

As always, there were certain days of migration that made for unforgettable experiences at the banding lab. Noteworthy captures this fall included a Cape May Warbler, a Bay-breasted Warbler, a Black-throated Green Warbler, and a Pileated Woodpecker! All four of these species were very rare captures that have not been seen at the lab for a few years. Further, on September 18th, 19th and 20th we were rushing from net to net in order to process a total of 608 captures, 437 of which were Myrtle Warblers! The middle day, September 19th was most unusual. We caught 12 birds in the first 5.5 hours. Then on the last net check to close the nets we caught 154 birds!

Owl Monitoring

Head Biologist Kevin Methuen and Assistant Biologists Sara Pearce Meijerink and Emily Grose led BBO’s owl monitoring program this fall, along with owl interns Jeremy Lambe, Jonathan Farr, and Stephanie Thunberg. Four mist nets with a Saw-whet owl audio lure were utilized from September 1st to November 5th, two mist nets with a Boreal owl audio lure were set from October 15th to November 5th, and one mist net with a Long-eared owl audio lure was set from September 1st to November 5th. Nets were only operated on evenings that were calm, warmer than minus 15 degrees Celsius, and relatively free of precipitation.

825.35 playback hours were accumulated (357.4 playback hours of the Northern Saw-whet Owl call, 336.95 playback hours of the Long-eared Owl call and 131 playback hours of the Boreal Owl call) this autumn. For a total of 322 owl captures (295 Northern Saw-whet Owls, 26 Long-eared Owls, and 1 Great-horned Owl) which resulted in a capture rate of 39 owls/100 playback hours (Table 3).



A Great-horned Owl that was banded at BBO this autumn.

Table 3. Total number and type of capture per species during 2018 owl migration monitoring at Beaverhill Bird Observatory (BBO). Repeat captures were banded in 2018 at BBO, Return captures were banded at BBO in a previous year, foreign captures were banded at a location other than BBO, and Other captures were caught in a mist net but released un-banded, or caught more than once in a single day.

Species	Banded	Repeat	Return	Foreign	Other	Total
Northern Saw-whet Owl	284	6	1	3	1	295
Long-eared Owl	24	2				26
Boreal Owl						0
Great-horned Owl	1					1
Total	309	8	1	3	1	322

Education and Outreach

Both nights of our annual fall fundraiser, Steaks and Saw-whets, sold out on September 28th and 29th. Everyone had a great night at the observatory and enjoyed interacting with Ricki, one of our Northern Saw-whet education owls. Guests that stayed later in the evening got to enjoy all the stars and were thrilled to see wild Saw-whet Owls go through the banding process, as well as flying squirrels near the bird feeders. A very special thanks to all board members and volunteers who contributed this year!

A representative from Telus Edmonton Community Board Fund presented BBO with an oversized cheque on September 27th for \$20,000! This money will help support BBO's outreach events throughout the winter. We are extremely grateful for their contribution to our Education Program!



Steaks and Saw-whets event on September 28th. Everyone intrigued watching Sara band a wild Northern Saw-whet Owl.

Emily and Stephanie (intern) represented the BBO at the Wildbird General Store promoting BBO's programs with Rickie, the Saw-whet. The following weekend Emily and Martijn (volunteer) promoted the BBO at Wild Birds Unlimited with Ray, the Saw-whet, alongside Gord Court and the Colonel, a Barred Owl. A big thanks to both stores for their continued support!

We had several groups visit the lab this fall for songbird banding. Laurie Hunt's class joined us from NAIT, and Chris Olsen's class visited from Lakeland College in Vermillion. We also had a number of groups visit for owl banding this fall: Tofield Junior Forest Wardens, Friends of Elk Island Society, the Tofield Library, University of Alberta Zoology Club,

University of Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society Club (2 nights), University of Alberta Outdoors Club (2 nights), University of Alberta Wildlife Society, Augustana Campus Wildlife Club, Augustana Campus Wildlife Diversity of Alberta Class, and a small private group. In addition, families and other members of the public drop in to watch owls being banded. Thank you to everyone for the support!

BBO hosted five interns this autumn who studied bats, songbirds, and owls. Watch for a couple of their reports which will be posted on the BBO website later.

The BBO's winter education program continues to grow every year. Last year, between October 2017 – May 2018, BBO staff gave 178 presentations at 71 different schools across Alberta, to audiences ranging from pre-kindergarten up to seniors. Presentations topics varied depending on the audience, but mainly focused on bird conservation, research and climate change issues. BBO staff gave these presentations and attended educational events in Edmonton and the surrounding area, Fort Saskatchewan, Calgary, Cochrane, Camrose, Millet, Andrew and even as far as Drayton Valley and Hinton! Approximately 6920 students and 1200 adults were reached through these programs!

School presentations for the 2018/2019 winter already began this fall and will continue to operate throughout the winter. There have been some noteworthy highlights thus far. Emily dressed up as a Hogwarts professor from Harry Potter and gave a presentation to Strathcona Grade 10 high school students. The students absolutely loved it! Sara and Meghan (volunteer) also dressed up as witches for a Harry Potter festival they attended with Rickie and Ray (Northern Saw-whet education owls) in Edmonton. Emily also gave a presentation to university students from Augustana on the Owls of Alberta. Kevin represented BBO at the University of Alberta Alumni open house with Rickie the Northern Saw-whet Owl. He also represented BBO at the annual local "Don't Hibernate Fair" in Tofield with Rickie. Emily went to an owl themed birthday party with Colonel, the Barred Owl, and gave a brief educational presentation. All the guests in attendance really enjoyed petting Colonel. Kevin, Sara, Emily, Geoff and owls Ricki and Colonel attended the Edmonton Oil Kings hockey wizards-and-witches night to the delight and education of hundreds of hockey families.

New Bunkhouse

For over 30 years, Raven's Roost, the affectionate name of our first bunkhouse, has kept staff and overnight visitors safe from the elements and most mosquitoes. However, Raven's Roost's exterior cover of pressboard allowed other occupants to enter at will including flying squirrels, bats, house wrens and assorted wasps among other critters. Thus, the BBO board decided it was time to replace the bunkhouse. The Sherwood Park Fish and Game Association heard about our funding needs and very generously gave BBO \$10,000 towards the building. We had already budgeted \$6,000 from our savings. BBO members made up the difference so that we could proceed with the \$24,000 purchase. We contracted Knotty Pine Cabins, who gave us a generous 10% discount, to supply the building pieces on the 18th of August. Then the real work began. Al Degroot and John Scott stepped into the role

as carpenters. They both devoted two or more days per week over two months to assemble the beautiful and very functional new bunkhouse. A HUGE THANK YOU to both of them, to Wes Olson who helped and loaned his generator, scaffolding, compressor and nail guns. And a big thank you to the many other volunteers, staff, and board members who helped Al and John complete this large project.



The demolition of Raven's Roost took only 4 hours of effort with a dedicated group of volunteers to be loaded onto John Scott's trailer and headed to the Ryley dump. Some of the lumber and insulation was saved and used to insulate Nuthatch Nest.



Left: Al DeGroot and John Scott with the completed new Raven's Roost bunkhouse. Right: Douglas Burton, President of the Sherwood Park Fish and Game Association, presents the BBO's Geoff Holroyd with a cheque for \$10,000.



It is through the help of our wonderful and generous volunteers that the BBO is able to continue to do all the research and conservation work we are able to do! The construction of the new Raven's Roost took 744 volunteers hours to be completed. 16 volunteers made over 97 visits to help staff construct this new building. In 2018 an additional 70 volunteers visited us over 225 visits, contributing 1356 hours of work while helping with banding, trail maintenance, public events and more. Our phenomenal board members, who help in

making long-term decisions for the BBO, keeping track of our finances, and assisting us during many events, contributed 1895 volunteer hours this year! If you tally up all the volunteer hours from 2018, the BBO received over 3,995 hours of support from volunteers! This is the equivalent of two additional fully employed staff working year round! We are amazed, humbled and are so grateful for the continuous support we receive from all of our volunteers. From the bottoms of our hearts, with thank you for helping to make the BBO such a wonderful place.

If you are interested in reading more about our fall activities, please see the full report here: <http://beaverhillbirds.com/media/1782/2018-fall-report.pdf>

Weekly Updates

BBO's summer students completed a banding summary weekly to keep you up to date on our activities at the observatory. These updates were a fantastic way for the public to monitor our progress through the field season and find out when the migrants were arriving. Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Twitter where we post these updates in 2019! To view weekly updates from 2018, visit the banding summaries page of our website: <http://beaverhillbirds.com/updates/banding-summaries/>



Intern Reports

The BBO was happy to have fifteen student interns this year. Five interns monitored Tree Swallow nest boxes, two monitored House Wren nest boxes, two conducted breeding bird surveys, two monitored bats, one conducted butterfly surveys, and one assisted with fall migration banding before joining the other two interns in assisting with owl monitoring and interpretation. Every intern group had a mentor to help guide them throughout the study period to ensure each project was successful. Board member, Laurie Hunt, organized the BBO internship program, which was funded by SCiP (Serving Community internship Program). These interns allowed the Observatory to complete many more projects than the staff would have been able to do on their own, which we are very grateful for. Intern reports produced in 2018 can be viewed on our website:

<http://beaverhillbirds.com/publications/student-interns/> once they are loaded in early 2019.



Willet Newsletters

The Willet is the official newsletter of the Beaverhill Bird Observatory. With three editions produced annually, this newsletter contains information about upcoming events, stories from the field, and more. In 2018, the 3 issues of the Willet were once again produced by BBO board member Helen Trefry and sent out to our membership. If you would like to read editions of the Willet from 2018, click the following link:

<http://beaverhillbirds.com/publications/the-willet/>



Colonel Slade – A Great Legacy

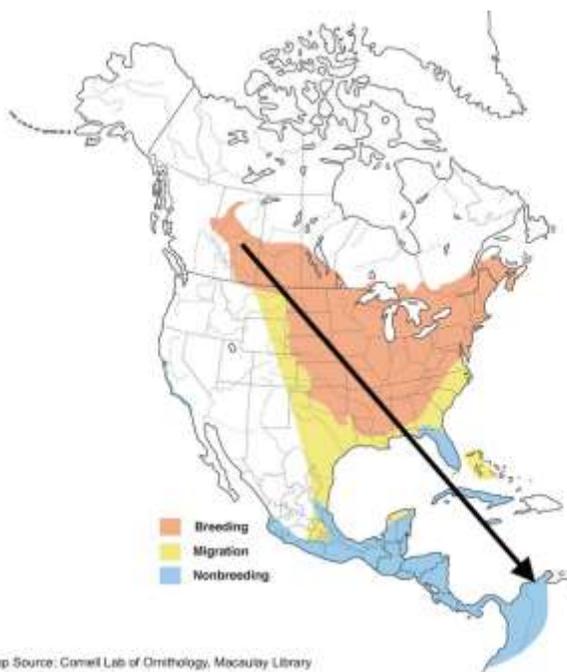
BBO sadly expressed goodbyes to Colonel Slade, the Barred Owl, cared for by Dr. Gordon Court (Alberta Environment and Parks) as an educational owl and generously loaned out to many for educational talks. She died November 21st, 2018 at the age of 16 - the cause of death is believed to have been a stroke. Colonel Slade was a beloved owl in the Edmonton community for over 14 years. Originally found after being struck by a car, she lost her eye lens and with it, her depth perception. When found she was so light in weight that she was thought to be a male - when her weight doubled to 1100 grams they knew she was a female. By then the name Colonel Slade had stuck - named after the character played by Al Pacino in

“The Scent of a Woman”, a blind character purported to make the sound of a Barred Owl as well. She was used by Dr. Susan Hannon from the University of Alberta for graduate students to trap Barred Owls for research.

The Colonel later became an ambassador for wildlife rehab and the old boreal forest her species depends on. She went to schools and events, was on TV and in newspapers, all in order to teach the public about conservation issues. In her last couple of days she spent her time teaching the next generation, kindergarten students, about owls. Before she died she had her favourite meal (quail and a field mouse). She has been loved by so many people. Her legacy will forever live on.

Bird Recovery in South America!

Early this year, the BBO was informed of an exciting band recovery from a bird banded at our observatory. Back in May 26, 2017 our staff banded an after-second-year male Baltimore Oriole, a bright orange and black blackbird that was at least 3 years of age. Measurements were taken, a lightweight aluminum band with a 9 digit serial number was placed on its leg and then the oriole was released back into the wild with the hope that someday, it might be recaptured and then we could learn more about their migration routes and wintering locations. Luckily, that “someday” occurred on October 22, 2017 and this handsome bird was recovered in Servillano, Columbia! That is over a 5850km of distance traveled! This mark’s the Beaverhill Bird Observatory’s farthest bird recovery ever and it’s first bird recovery from South America.



This Baltimore Oriole was recovered just 10 km south of the Caribbean Sea, at the southern tip of the species’ winter range where it was likely taking advantage of the forested areas near the town. Previous recoveries of Baltimore Orioles in their wintering ranges come from Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador, but it is uncommon to get one from Colombia which makes this recovery all the more special.

Baltimore Oriole populations have been in decline here in Canada for the last 50+ years. According to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, their population has decreased by 24% since the 1960s. These birds are vulnerable to deforestation and habitat loss, which is occurring across their range in North, Central and South America. Insecticides, especially neonicotinoids, used by farmers are killing and poisoning their insect food supply. They

also migrate at night and become disoriented by lights left on in buildings and hit windows. What's more, sometimes people try to help these birds by putting cut oranges out to feed on (which they love) and they are being attracted into people's backyards, where pet cats hunt and kill them.

This particular Baltimore Oriole was unfortunately found dead after hitting a window. Window strikes are one of the most frequent causes of death for our feathered friends and it is estimated that here in Canada, between 16-42 million birds die each year from hitting windows.

Baltimore Orioles have been having a rough time, which is why it is so important for the Beaverhill Bird Observatory, as well as other bird observatories, to continue to study birds and learn more about their movements and habitat usage. With more understanding, we can better tackle the challenges these birds face and work towards conservation efforts to help protect Baltimore Orioles for future generations to enjoy.



Beaverhill Bird Observatory Society

Financial Statements

December 31, 2018

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Society Income and Expenses 2018

January - December 31, 2018

INCOME

Casino Carry over on January 1	48,063.06
400 Donations	89,184.55
401 Memberships	1,750.00
402 Presentations and Talks	21,680.00
403 Events - BBB & S&S	4,779.70
404 Grants	64,528.00
405 Casino Interest Income	207.17
406 Miscellaneous - GIC & Savings Interest	314.97
407 Casino (Portion of \$74267.37)	7,040.08
Accounts Receivable	1,311.98
Total Income	238,859.51

EXPENSES

500 Small Equipment and Supplies	266.59
501 Bank Charges	521.53
503 Conference Expenses	824.70
505 Events Expenses - BBB & S&S	1,719.18
506 Young Ornithologists' Workshop	1,373.59
507 Occupancy Costs	1,006.08
508 Laboratory Supplies	2,271.62
509 Office Expenses	4,718.21
510 Licenses, Dues and Memberships	70.00
511 Repairs, Maintenance	26,368.62
512 Salaries	133,555.11
513 Travel	15,421.44
514 Bursaries/Honoraria	700.00
Accounts Payable	2,097.50
Building Fund	50,000.00
Total Expenses	240,914.17