

BEAVERHILL BIRD OBSERVATORY UPDATE MAY 22-28, 2007



Female Rose-breasted Grosbeak chewing on a stick

MORE WARBLERS HAVE ARRIVED, including the first Magnolia Warblers and American Redstarts banded this season. We also caught a Baltimore Oriole and Rose-breasted Grosbeak this week- both were females and therefore less flashy than their male counterparts. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks use their large, strong beaks to crack open tough seeds, and it can really hurt if they start attacking our hands while we're extracting them from the nets or during banding. Sometimes we can fool them into chewing on a stick instead of our fingers; however, they are not easily duped.

The Baillie Birdathon kept us busy on May 28 with the goal to see as many bird species as possible in a 24 hour period. Once again it was too windy for a full six hours of banding, so after our daily bird census in the Natural Area we headed out for a day of birdwatching. We stopped at Amisk Creek (always a great place to see several different species), then headed up to Elk Island National Park to see some species that prefer deeper lakes and larger trees. We also made a trip to the black spruce bog at the Wagner Natural Area west of Edmonton and stopped in at Whitemud Park in the city. In the early evening we checked out a Great-horned Owl nest, saw several new species along the grid roads southwest of the Natural Area, and made a one last stop at Amisk Creek where we (finally!) saw some feeding shorebirds.

The highlights of the day were the Red-necked Grebes which were numerous at Elk Island, a Western Meadowlark spotted poking its head out of the ditch near Amisk Creek, and a Horned Lark we heard along a gravel road. In the end we had a total of 88 species. Most of these were seen around Beaverhill Lake- in the Natural Area, at Amisk Creek, or in the wet fields around the lake- which shows that we didn't need to go very far, and could have spent more time scrounging around here for shorebirds! Money raised goes to Bird Studies Canada who use a portion to support the BBO. To find out more about the Baillie Birdathon visit www.bsc-eon.org/organization/birdathon.html. You should definitely consider participating next year!



Ruddy Duck



Black-necked Stilt



Tree Swallow with a feather in its beak

We had some help this week (Rich Krikun, a previous BBO staff member, and Anna's parents) so we spent a few afternoons chasing swallows at the Swallow Grid. These agile birds have excellent vision that allows them to swerve at the last minute to avoid a mist-net, so we use a different method to capture them: we toss feathers into the air. Tree Swallows are attracted to big fluffy feathers for lining their nests, so they will grab the feather midair, show it off or fight to take it from another bird, and try to reach their nest box with the feather in their beak. Then it's our turn to run like mad to cover the entrance of the nest box before the swallow flies out. We banded 15 Tree Swallows this week and caught another 5 birds that had been banded in a previous year. We will be banding Tree Swallows again after the Big Birding Breakfast on June 2 (see the website for more information), so plan to stick around and help us out!



Rich and Anna banding at the Swallow Grid

-Allicia Kelly and Anna Daku

Table 1. Results from Spring Migration Monitoring May 22 – May 28, 2007.

| Species | Banded | Repeat¹ | Return² | Foreign³ | Other⁴ | Total |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| American Redstart | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Baltimore Oriole | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Black-capped Chickadee | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Brown-headed Cowbird | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Clay-colored Sparrow | 16 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 18 |
| Chipping Sparrow | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Common Yellowthroat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| House Wren | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Least Flycatcher | 14 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| Magnolia Warbler | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Myrtle Warbler | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ovenbird | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Rose-breasted Grosbeak | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ruby-throated Hummingbird | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Song Sparrow | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Swainson's Thrush | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Thrush sp. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Yellow Warbler | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Total | 54 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 72 |

Net Hours: 361.50 NH
Capture Rate: 19.92 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).



Male Magnolia Warbler



Male American Redstart



Female American Redstart