

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update May 15-21, 2009



Savannah Sparrow

Wow, what crazy weather this week! We lost a few banding days due to the snow and wind, but despite that we had a total of 36 birds caught, so all in all not too bad. Seemed like BBO was sparrow central this week, with Clay-coloured, Chipping, Vesper, Lincoln's, and White-throated Sparrows hopping around in large numbers, and even one Savannah Sparrow captured and banded.

The BBO staff has some company for the next month and a half, Jenny and Tyler are two visiting researchers from Cornell University who will be doing detailed studies on the Tree Swallow grids. If you've noticed the huge number of additional nest boxes in and around the natural area, this is why! Jenny and Tyler are part of an international swallow project and informed us that the Beaverhill Lake Tree Swallows are the most productive known swallows – having clutches of up to 8 young is truly outstanding in comparison to other parts of the world. Who knew?!



A chilly Tree Swallow peeking out at the snow



Northern Waterthrush in the morning light

Exciting captures for this week include an adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, a Northern Waterthrush, and an integrate Yellow-rumped Warbler with characteristics of both the Myrtle and Audubon's subspecies. Perhaps most exciting of all was the Evening Grosbeak! Well, okay, it wasn't a real one. We have a toy Evening Grosbeak in the lab which we used to demonstrate the banding process to the Smokey Lake Junior Forest Wardens when they came out for a visit on a cold wet day when we weren't able to band. What troopers!

Raptor sightings this week included a Peregrine Falcon over the weir, and a Broad-winged Hawk that hung around near the lab, maybe looking for an easy meal at the feeder? The Broad-winged was very shy and flushed easily, so often all we saw was it flapping away.

We had many visitors this week, including Anna Daku, Isaac Calon, Irene, as well as the Smokey Lake Junior Forest Wardens (10 people). We hope that spring is now really and truly here, as we see the female Mountain Bluebird is on eggs already!



Integrate Yellow-rumped Warbler
Note partially yellow throat, partial supercillium, eye-ring and weak face mask

Table 1. Results from Spring Migration Monitoring May 15-21, 2009.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Robin	1	2	0	0	0	3
Black-capped Chickadee	0	1	0	0	0	1
Brown-headed Cowbird	0	0	1	0	1	2
Clay-colored Sparrow	7	0	0	0	2	9
Chipping Sparrow	7	0	0	0	1	8
Hermit Thrush	0	0	2	0	0	2
Least Flycatcher	1	0	1	0	0	2
Lincoln's Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Myrtle Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Waterthrush	1	0	0	0	0	1
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	0	0	0	0	1
Savannah Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Swainson's Thrush	2	0	0	0	0	2
Unknown Yellow-rumped Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	1
White-throated Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	25	3	4	0	4	36

Net Hours: 184.5 NH
Capture Rate: 19.51 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).



Jenny and Tyler admiring the male Rose-breasted Grosbeak



The first eggs we have found this year, the Mountain Bluebird eggs in a swallow box