

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update May 1, 2021 – May 7, 2021

As the calendar finally flipped to May, BBO staff woke up half an hour before sunrise to begin their first day of migration monitoring in the 2021 field season. This was an especially anticipated event, because the previous season's banding had been cancelled due to uncertainty surrounding COVID-19. In the time since, we have adapted to its reality and begin the new season confident that we can tackle any challenges going forward.

The first week of migration monitoring brought with it an exciting string of sightings. Willets, last seen for the first time in nearly a decade the previous fall, are a common fixture of this year's spring migration, and have been heard passing overhead on census nearly every day. In addition, we recorded an exciting sighting of an Evening Grosbeak, an uncommon bird with a declining population. On top of all that, shorebirds have come to Lister Lake near the weir, including American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts and Wilson's Phalaropes happily spinning in the water, keeping the unusual Cinnamon Teals great company.



We are also steadily recording a string of first-of-season sightings: birds that at any other time would be considered mundane, but are welcome to see again. The Yellow and Myrtle Warblers, while soon to be numerous, are exciting to hear merrily singing away.

But with the exciting first week of banding also comes the equally exciting chaos of preparing a new building for the field season. The days leading up to the beginning of May were marked by frantically going through equipment, bringing it to the lab, making futile attempts to keep it orderly and organized and debating over what piece should go where. After a full day of frenzied unpacking, the newly built lab and education center was ready to use, and our staff were quite pleased to cook on a proper stove once more and not in a camper trailer.



To continue our outreach and allow people to watch bird banding, we implemented a similar program to what we did in last year's fall with owl banding: visitors could purchase tickets to attend in advance, allowing us to control the number of people on site and offer a more personal one-on-one experience. With the exception of the mild hiccup caused by tightened provincial restrictions, it was an overwhelming success, sold out almost completely within a week. Thank you to everyone who purchased a ticket and helped support us. We look forward to hosting you on site and seeing what the rest of the spring brings!

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Black-capped Chickadee	6	1			1	8
White-crowned Sparrow	1					1
Slate-colored Junco	3					3
American Robin	1				1	2
Swainson's Thrush	1					1
Song Sparrow	2					2
Lincoln's Sparrow	2					2
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1					1
White-throated Sparrow	2					2
TOTALS	19	1			2	22

Net Hours: 386 hrs
Capture Rate: 5.70 birds/100hrs

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).