

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update May 8, 2021 – May 14, 2021

The past week could be best described as “quality over quantity.” The first few days saw early net closures because of poor weather, and single digit daily catches after the weather cleared. However, even with low bird numbers we logged some very exciting captures, including a recaptured Yellow Warbler that had originally been banded as a Hatch Year in 2013, making it eight years old. This is old for a small warbler and makes it one of the oldest songbirds BBO has ever recorded. The oldest yellow warbler recorded in our entire 37 year history was also a Yellow Warbler, which was banded and recaptured 10 years later.

The second of our exciting captures was on the day of writing: as our summer student Jon and I were checking nets, a thrush flew into the net right in front of us. But it wasn’t just any random thrush: it was a Grey-Cheeked Thrush! We don’t catch a lot of them, so they’re always exciting to see.

We are also continuing to host visitors on the weekends, who are always pleased to attend despite low banding numbers. We are able to give them a close up look at a bird being banded, whether it’s from our standard migration monitoring mist nets or our non-standard feeder net.

New species are appearing as the migration season continues. Female Red-winged Blackbirds have joined the handsome males, and the trees have started filling with the strident *chi-beck* of Least



Flycatchers, joined by the rapid whistle of Yellow Warblers and the glassy tinkle of Black-and-White Warblers. Finally, we have also logged our first sighting this year of a Baltimore Oriole, a handsome male that has been happily singing around the lab clearing.

Franklin’s Gulls continue to be a constant presence over the lab and the lake. At times their overlapping calls form a constant backdrop of white noise as thousands of them crowd over the lake. Historically, there was a Franklin’s Gull colony out on the lake, and as time passes we could be seeing another one forming.

As BBO is right on the edge of their migratory range, Grey-Cheeked Thrushes are an uncommon capture. Note the lack of buffy spectacles, which distinguishes it from the similar Swainson’s Thrush.



This Yellow Warbler was originally banded in 2013, making him 8 years old.

Species	Banded	Repeat¹	Return²	Foreign³	Other⁴	Total
American Robin	2		1			3
Yellow Warbler	1		1			2
Least Flycatcher	2		1			3
Black-Capped Chickadee		1				1
Lincoln's Sparrow	2					2
TOTALS	7	1	3	0	0	11

Net Hours: 396.5
Capture Rate: 2.77 birds/100 hours

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).