

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update June 29 – July 9, 2022

By Shane Abernethy

This MAPS period was defined by rain, so much of it that it was a race against time to get our required banding effort in. However, for the rest of the 10-day period, we were trapped inside, which gave us ample opportunity to catch up on office work. While not nearly as exciting as catching and banding birds, it is just as necessary. One of the main components of science is writing down your results, after all, and we had a large backlog of results to record.

In between bouts of office work and showers of rainfall, we worked on wrapping up our summer monitoring projects. With our international volunteer on vacation in BC, the responsibility of periodically checking Least Flycatcher nests fell to staff, and we were pleased to note that the majority of nests we were monitoring had either successfully fledged or were in the process of doing so. Also having fledged are most of the Tree Swallow chicks in our grids, which we had banded a couple weeks before.

One small note of excitement was two independent sightings of a Black-Billed Cuckoo near the Lister Lake lookout! Our staff valiantly attempted to document it formally during our survey at the LILA station nearby, but that was of course the one day it didn't show itself.

Another note is successfully banding the first Purple Martin chicks at our colony boxes! Last year the colony of three that occupied the box left before producing any young, but this year they were occupied in force by at least 18 Martins, who have 11 active nests between them! We had a robust Purple Martin colony in the past, but it largely dissolved after the lake receded in 2005, so having them return in force like this is a welcome change of pace. May their twitters grace the lakebed for years to come.



A Least Flycatcher feeds her brood of chicks at one of the nests we've been monitoring. At the time of writing, the chicks have successfully fledged.



A smug looking Purple Martin from one of our colony boxes. Perhaps it's secretly proud of its new band. It certainly looks that way.

Table 1. MAPS Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Least Flycatcher	12	5	3		2	22
Warbling Vireo	1					1
American Robin	1					1
Yellow Warbler	5					5
Baltimore Oriole	1		1			2
Red-Winged Blackbird	14	1	1		10	26
Brown-Headed Cowbird	1					1
Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker		1				1
Song Sparrow		1	1			2
American Goldfinch			1			1
House Wren	2					2
Black-Capped Chickadee	2				1	3
TOTALS	39	8	7		13	67

144 net-hours

46.5 captures/100 net-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).