

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly update - May 8th to May 14th

Despite a slow start, northbound migration is springing into action at the BBO, with new arrivals beginning to show up both in the forest and in the nets. Sparrows in particular have been prominent, with Clay-coloured, White-throated, and Lincoln's being caught regularly over the past few days. Flocks of Swainson's Thrushes arrived this week, with 15 of these subtle but beautiful thrushes being caught on May 14th. We've also banded the front runners of some BBO stalwart species like Least Flycatcher and Yellow Warbler.



First Northern Waterthrush of 2024!

Migration Monitoring faced some difficult weather, and the nets weren't opened for several days due to heavy wind and rain. The days we did manage to run nets typically caught low numbers of birds. Nonetheless, 102 birds were banded over the week, including a Northern Waterthrush and an early female Black-and-white Warbler. Clay-coloured Sparrow was the most often caught bird, with 23 captures. They were closely followed by Swainson's Thrush, at 20.

With the unexpectedly poor condition of Rowan's Route (TWP 262), World Migratory Bird Day events were regrettably cancelled. Staff contributed to the global effort by birding around the observatory and completing a Weir Survey at Lister Lake, where they found 43 species. Highlights at the weir included Virginia Rail, White-faced Ibis, and Cape May Warbler. The second shorebird survey of the year was also completed, with promising results. Over 2,000 shorebirds were observed on May 8th, a survey which included 3 Dunlin. Dunlin are an irregular and notable migrant in Alberta, and it's rare to see more than one in the province.



Dunlin are uncommon migrants in Alberta but appear most years at Beaverhill Lake

Banding Totals (Standard nets):

| Species Name (Autofills) | # of Captures | | | | Grand Total |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------|----------|----------|-------------|
| | Banded | Repeat | Return | Unbanded | |
| American Robin | 3 | | | 2 | 5 |
| Black-and-white Warbler | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Brown-headed Cowbird | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Chipping Sparrow | 6 | | | | 6 |
| Clay-colored Sparrow | 3 | | | | 3 |
| Downy Woodpecker | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Gambel's White-crowned | 1 | | | | 1 |
| House Wren | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Least Flycatcher | 4 | | | 2 | 6 |
| Lincoln's Sparrow | 2 | | | 1 | 3 |
| Myrtle Warbler | 6 | | | | 6 |
| Northern Waterthrush | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Orange-crowned Warbler | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Swainson's Thrush | 17 | | | | 17 |
| Tree Swallow | 1 | | | 1 | 2 |
| White-throated Sparrow | 9 | | | 1 | 11 |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | 1 | | 1 | | 2 |
| Grand Total | 57 | | 2 | 7 | 69 |

493.5 net-hours

14 captures / 100 net-hours

- 1 - banded 90 or fewer days ago, at the BBO
- 2 - banded over 90 days ago, at the BBO
- 3 - banded at a location other than the BBO
- 4 - caught but not banded (e.g. escaped)

Banding Totals (Experimental nets):

| Species Name (Autofills) | # of Captures | | | Grand Total |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| | Banded | Repeat | Return | |
| Chipping Sparrow | | 1 | | 1 |
| Clay-colored Sparrow | | 17 | 1 | 20 |
| Least Flycatcher | | 1 | | 1 |
| Lincoln's Sparrow | | 1 | | 1 |
| Northern Waterthrush | | 1 | | 1 |
| Orange-crowned Warbler | | 1 | | 1 |
| Swainson's Thrush | | 3 | | 3 |
| Tree Swallow | | 2 | | 2 |
| White-throated Sparrow | | | | 1 |
| Yellow Warbler | | 1 | | 2 |
| Grand Total | | 28 | 1 | 33 |

53.5 net-hours

62 captures / 100 net-hours

- 1 - banded 90 or fewer days ago, at the BBO
- 2 - banded over 90 days ago, at the BBO
- 3 - banded at a location other than the BBO
- 4 - caught but not banded (e.g. escaped)