

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly update - October 5th to 11th, 2024

The temperature continues to drop day by day with frost frequently coating our nets in the morning. The only thing separating us from winter at this point is the dreaded S-word. Snow. On the bright side, several frosty nights were accompanied by extravagant northern lights throughout the week!

Our capture rates for songbird banding have continued to dry up this week with a total of 50 birds. Considering the lack of foliage throughout the forest I wouldn't stick around either if I was a tiny vulnerable birdy. All that's left for songbirds are species that will spend their winter here or the very last of the migrants. This fact is exemplified by the majority of our captures being from just two species: Black-capped Chickadees and American Tree Sparrows.

On the flip side of the dwindling songbirds is owl migration which continues to ramp up! The brunt of these captures are made up of, as always, Northern Saw-whet Owls with 57 being banded. Despite how often we see them, these little owls never get any less adorable. In addition, two other owls were captured this week: one Long-eared Owl, the first in a few weeks, and a super feisty Boreal Owl, the first in a year! The owls in the nets weren't the only ones we were lucky enough to observe. Both Great-horned Owls and a Barred Owl were heard hooting in the natural area.



Our first Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) of the year! These owls are known for their feist as can be seen by its talons clenched in rage.



Northern lights winding their way colourfully over the banding station (Photo credit: Sian Ford).

<i>Standard Nets</i>				
<i>Species Code</i>	<i># of Captures</i>			
	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Grand Total
American Tree Sparrow	1	1		2
Black-capped Chickadee		4		4
Downy Woodpecker	3	2	1	6
Golden-crowned Kinglet	3			3
Slate-coloured Junco	5			5
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	1		2
Grand Total	13	8	1	22

509.5 net-hours

1 - banded 90 or fewer days ago, at the BBO
 2 - banded more than 90 days ago, at the BBO

4.3 captures/100 net-hours

<i>Experimental Nets</i>				
<i>Species Code</i>	<i># of Captures</i>			
	Banded	Repeat ¹	Unbanded ²	Grand Total
American Tree Sparrow	18	1	2	21
Black-capped Chickadee	3			3
Downy Woodpecker		1		1
Slate-coloured Junco	2			2
White-throated Sparrow	1			1
Grand Total	24	2	2	28

136 net-hours

1 - banded 90 or fewer days ago, at the BBO
 2 - caught in a mist-net but not banded

20.6 captures/100 net-hours

<i>Species Code</i>	<i># of Captures</i>		
	Banded	Repeat	Grand Total
Boreal Owl	1		1
Long-eared Owl	1		1
Northern Saw-whet Owl	56	1	57
Grand Total	58	1	59

NSWO Male 1 (19 captures)

47.5 playback hours

40 captures/100 playback hours

NSWO Male 2 (18 captures)

47.5 playback hours

37.9 captures/100 playback hours

NSWO Female (14 captures)

29.5 playback hours

9.0 captures/100 playback hours

Long-eared Owl (0 captures)

47 playback hours

0 captures/100 playback hours

Boreal Owl (7 capture)

47.5 playback hours

14.7 captures/100 playback hours