

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update September 19 – 25, 2025



American Tree Sparrows are the very last songbird to migrate through the BBO. Winter is coming!

Our migration monitoring captures slowed considerably this week, with the massive Myrtle Warbler rushes seemingly behind us as we progress later into fall. Many of our local breeders have long since departed their breeding grounds, we haven't seen a Least Flycatcher or Yellow Warbler in weeks! Despite the reduced numbers, this week still saw some noteworthy captures. We got our first Brown Creeper of the year, and more ominously, our first American Tree Sparrow! These two species are the absolute latest ones to migrate through the BBO, so their presence is a sure sign

that the end of the field season is closer than we'd all like. Besides bird banding, staff have been hard at work wrapping up reports on summer projects, working on data entry, and keeping the trails maintained for visitors.

Even if there are fewer migrating songbirds, there have been huge numbers of cranes and geese flying over the lab this week! We've seen thousands of Greater White-fronted Geese, Snow Geese, and Sandhill Cranes most days, with a handful of Cackling Geese and Ross's Geese being spotted as well. Even though Beaverhill Lake shrank considerably this year, it is still providing valuable stopover habitat to these migrating birds!

While songbird banding slowed down this week, owl banding finally began to pick up. We caught 12 Saw-whet Owls this week, with most nights having multiple owls when the nets were able to open.



Brown Creepers are tiny, cryptically patterned brown songbirds that creep up the trunks of trees while foraging.



Long-eared Owls remain absent however, despite the promising start we had catching them in August. It goes to show that we still have much to learn about the migrations of these gorgeous birds!

A huge thank you to our volunteers this week: Kelsey, Matt, Hazel, Mariana, Carolyn, Irene, Jillian, and Carmen! We couldn't run this station without help from people like you! And an extra-special thank you to Linda Aldridge, who has been staying with us all week to help us prepare for the Supper and Saw-whets event next week! Your help is greatly appreciated!

Our ambassador Great Horned Owl, Tansi, looking her absolute cutest.

Table 1. Migration Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Tree Sparrow	1					1
Black-capped Chickadee	3	8				11
Brown Creeper	1					1
Clay-colored Sparrow	1					1
Common Yellowthroat	2					2
White-crowned Sparrow	1					1
Hermit Thrush	1	2				3
Lincoln's Sparrow	1					1
Myrtle Warbler	158	10	1		5	174
Orange-crowned Warbler	16	3				19
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	7					7
Ruffed Grouse					1	1
Slate-colored Junco	4					4
Song Sparrow	1					1

Swainson's Thrush	1					1
Tennessee Warbler	3					3
White-breasted Nuthatch	1					1
White-throated Sparrow	2				2	4
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	1				2
TOTALS	205	24	1	0	8	238

476.5 net-hours

1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO

49.9 captures/100 net-hours

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).

Table 2. Owl Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Northern Saw-whet Owl	11	1	0	0	0	12
TOTALS	11	1	0	0	0	12

NSWO Male 1 (6 captures)

26 playback hours

23.1 captures/100 playback hours

NSWO Male 2 (5 captures)

26 playback hours

19.2 captures/100 playback hours

NSWO Female (1 captures)

25.5 playback hours

3.9 captures/100 playback hours

Long-eared Owl (0 captures)

26 playback hours

0 captures/100 playback hours

Boreal Owl (0 captures)

12 playback hours

0 captures/100 playback hours