

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update October 3-9, 2025



A Mountain White-crowned Sparrow, note the black lores (the lores are the area between the eye and the bill).

A chill lingered in the air this week as we move later and later into our field season. Gone are the days of plentiful birds are warm weather, only the latest migrants and our hardiest winter residents remain in the natural area. Our total captures for songbird migration monitoring only reached 50 for the week, with nets opening late many mornings courtesy of below freezing temperatures. In addition to the usual Black-capped Chickadees and Slate-colored Juncos, we did have one noteworthy capture this week – a Mountain White-crowned Sparrow! This subspecies of White-crowned Sparrow normally resides in the mountains (as the name implies), and is distinguished from our usual Gambel's White-crowned Sparrows by its black upper lores.

This week does mark the typical peak of captures for our owl migration

monitoring, but much to the dismay of the staff, the owls are conspicuously absent! Typically we are catching 10+ Saw-whet Owls per night by now, but currently we are lucky to get more than 3. It remains to be seen whether these slow capture numbers are just the result of a very late migration by our owls, or if populations have decreased, or if the owls are simply taking a different migratory route this year. Regardless of the cause, we have but one request...more owls please!

A huge thank you to our volunteers this week: Gabby, Pat, Nik, Bannor, Dani, Kelsey, Jessica, Irene, and K! We couldn't run this station without help from people like you! We would also like to thank Laura and Lucile from Mackenzie Nature Observatory who stayed with us this week, it was a pleasure getting to know you and we greatly appreciated your help (and your stickers)!



An adorable Northern Saw-whet Owl. We would greatly appreciate if more of these cuties would find their way into our nets!

Table 1. Migration Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Tree Sparrow	7	3				10
Black-capped Chickadee	2	10				12
Downy Woodpecker		2				2
Hairy Woodpecker			1			1
Mountain White-crowned Sparrow	1					1
Myrtle Warbler	7					7
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	1				3
Slate-colored Junco	10	2				12
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	1				2
TOTALS	30	19	1	0	0	50

457.5 net-hours

1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO

10.9 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	17	0	0	1	0	18
TOTALS	17	0	0	1	0	18

NSWO Male 1 (11 captures)

40 playback hours

27.5 captures/100 playback hours

NSWO Male 2 (4 captures)

45 playback hours

8.9 captures/100 playback hours

NSWO Female (1 capture)

40 playback hours

2.5 captures/100 playback hours

Long-eared Owl (0 captures)
47 playback hours
0 captures/100 playback hours

Boreal Owl (2 captures)
47 playback hours
4.2 captures/100 playback hours