



Volume 25, Number 2

May 2012

BIG BIRDING BREAKFAST

Saturday May 26, 2012

at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Join the Beaverhill Bird Observatory for our annual BIG Birding Breakfast in celebration of Spring Migration. We will be serving Crepes made by famous Hungarian chef Janos Kovacs. Bacon, fruit, coffee, tea, and juice are also on the menu. Watch bird banding up close, walk the net lanes with our staff and meet the bird observatory executive and volunteers. Netting begins at 5 a.m. breakfast served between 7 and 10 a.m. Cost is \$10 per person.



To register please contact Lisa Priestley (780) 918-4804 or E-mail lisa@beaverhillbirds.com

Supported by Alberta Conservation Association, Edmonton Nature Club, Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, and Nature Canada (Charles Labatiuk Fund)

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Opens May 1, 2012

We are pleased the Beaverhill Bird Observatory lab opened on May 1, 2012. Meaghan Bouchard has returned for another field season and has taken on the head bander role. We are welcoming a new staff member Amelie Roberto-Charron who recently completed studies at the University of Alberta.

Banding occurs almost every morning during migration if the weather is suitable (no rain or strong winds). We encourage you to come out and visit us. Although most of Beaverhill Lake is dry, Lister Lake has plenty of water and there are great waterfowl viewing opportunities. Mundare Beach also still has water, and the shorebirds are plentiful.

Check the website www.beaverhillbirds.com every two weeks for updates on species being captured or observed in the area. See you at the lab! Please call to make sure someone will be on site (phone 780-819-9927). Check for lab updates on our [Summaries page](#).

Beaverhill Board Director of Operations Receives Award

The Frank and Alice Harper Memorial Award (through Nature Alberta) is given out to “unsung heroes” in naturalist groups: those people who give of themselves in carrying out the often less-than-glamorous duties associated with the running of a Club – people who play an important role in keeping the group on track, active, organized and able to provide the services that are basic to the Club’s continued existence.

The 2012 award recipient was Al deGroot, our director of infrastructure and operations for Beaverhill Bird Observatory. Following is our letter nominating Al for the award. CONGRATULATIONS Al!!



FAN rep Ted Hindmarch presenting Al deGroot with award. (photo by Vid Bijelic)

We would like to nominate one of our long-standing volunteers and board members Al (Eelco) DeGroot for the Frank and Alice Harper Memorial Award. Al has been on the board of directors of Beaverhill Bird Observatory (BBO) since the mid 1990's, and has been involved with the group almost since its inception. Every year he has taken on the responsibility of 'opening' and 'closing' the BBO laboratory at Beaverhill Lake. Twice a year, he transports the logistical items such as propane tanks, solar panels and other hardware to and from the lab.

About ten years ago he took on the task of providing electricity for the lab. This involved installing a complex of solar panels and six batteries that now provide power for laptops, lighting, saw-whet owl call-playback, and charging of phone and cell booster. In his first years on the executive he also drafted some of our publicity material and public brochures. He built and transported new nest boxes for the Tree Swallow research grid after cows damaged many boxes in the mid-90s. In 1997, he was lead carpenter when we built a new bunkhouse to accommodate more staff and visiting researchers. In the past decade he has organized work bees to re-roof the lab, expanded the lab, built a covered deck on the lab, and assisted in building the new kiosk and visitor's parking lot. In fact over the past two decades, he has been involved in all construction and maintenance activities at the BBO field station.

Al DeGroot is also a raptor bander. Each year he visits known hawk and owl stick nests and a nestbox trail he established for American Kestrels, to determine birds are nesting, and then follows up with banding the young. Al brings interested new bird observatory staff with him as he bands and is always sharing his passion with people. He diligently fills out raptor nest cards which are submitted to Nature Alberta and Bird Studies Canada. He recently co-authored a paper on American Kestrels (Nature Alberta 2010). Al also finds time to participate in the Alberta Nocturnal Owl survey program, and has been involved almost since its inception. He also volunteers time for our annual Steaks and Saw-whets event and our casino.

Al has attended and participated in most of the executive's monthly meetings throughout the last 20 years even though the meetings are always in the evening and in Edmonton and he lives more than one hour's drive north in Redwater! His input at the meetings is positive and critical as he helps BBO to accomplish its goals efficiently and effectively.

Throughout this time, he has completed all these tasks cheerfully and with a smile. We are very proud to nominate Al for this award.

Edmonton Bird Banding Society 2011 Banding Results

by Janos Kovacs

Results of banding at Strathcona Science Park, Edmonton 2011 compared to 2010.

Common Name	2011 Total	2010 Total	Common Name	2011 Total	2010 Total
Alder Flycatcher	9	38	Lincoln's Sparrow	4	24
American Goldfinch	1	29	MacGillivray's Warbler	2	1
American Redstart	3	69	Magnolia Warbler	7	9
American Robin	14	64	Mourning Warbler	1	5
American Tree Sparrow	5	54	Myrtle Warbler	33	311
Baltimore Oriole	0	7	Nashville Warbler	0	3
Barn Swallow	0	2	Northern Waterthrush	3	13
Bay-breasted Warbler	1	1	Orange-crowned Warbler	27	223
Black-billed Magpie	1	0	Oregon Junco	0	1
Black-capped Chickadee	27	256	Ovenbird	6	53
Black-and-white Warbler	0	6	Philadelphia Vireo	0	4
Blackpoll Warbler	3	30	Pine Siskin	183	192
Black-throated Green Warbler	0	2	Purple Finch	2	41
Blue Jay	2	5	Red-breasted Nuthatch	0	22
Blue-headed Vireo	1	4	Red-eyed Vireo	11	71
Bohemian Waxwing	0	2	Red-winged Blackbird	0	11
Brown Creeper	0	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	17
Brown-headed Cowbird	0	13	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	8
Canada Warbler	0	1	Savannah Sparrow	7	79
Cape May Warbler	4	7	Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	4
Cedar Waxwing	34	113	Slate-colored Junco	2	261
Chestnut-sided Warbler	0	1	Solitary Vireo	0	1
Chipping Sparrow	7	73	Song Sparrow	2	59
Clay-colored Sparrow	19	131	Swainson's Thrush	8	54
Cliff Swallow	0	7	Swamp Sparrow	0	2
Common Redpoll	213	349	Tennessee Warbler	60	598
Common Yellowthroat	2	1	Traill's Flycatcher	0	21
Dark-eyed Junco	0	2	Tree Swallow	26	92
Downy Woodpecker	9	48	Warbling Vireo	3	7
Eastern Phoebe	0	3	Western Palm Warbler	0	10
Gambel's White-cr. Sparrow	0	11	Western Tanager	1	17
Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	1	19
Gray Catbird	5	19	White-crowned Sparrow	0	7
Gray-cheeked Thrush	0	1	White-throated Sparrow	23	181
Hairy Woodpecker	2	6	White-winged Crossbill	0	1
Harris's Sparrow	0	1	Wilson's Warbler	4	39
Hermit Thrush	0	16	Yellow Warbler	47	402
Hoary Redpoll	22	16	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	0	4
House Finch	4	2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	2
House Wren	6	22	Yellow-shafted Flicker	0	1
Least Flycatcher	13	110	Total	875	4394

Backyard Visitor – What Is It?

These colorful songbirds invaded the Beaverhill Lake area in the late winter and have been spending time at feeders in Tofield. This species is more common in western and northern Alberta. They feed on seeds of cones and have a specialized beak adapted for that purpose. There were no white wing bars.

Answer to February issue What Is It? – Harris Sparrow



Talks and Presentations in Abundance

Our public engagement continues to be a large part of what we do throughout the year. We were pleased to visit Olds Elementary school again this year to give a talk on owls to three Grade 3 classes. Then we went on to Trochu to give a presentation to the entire Elementary school (120 students). Beaverhill was involved with the Snow Goose chase again this year and we set up a display at the community hall with a live Burrowing Owl for everyone to see (and touch). We also participated in Biodiversity Day at the John Janzen Nature Center with a banding demonstration and a talk about the Beaverhill Bird Observatory.



Membership Information

\$10/yr for an individual, \$20/yr for a family, \$25/yr Supporting, \$25/yr Corporate, \$100/yr Sustaining, \$500 (one time) Life Membership

Cheques can be made to the Beaverhill Bird Observatory and sent to: Box 1418, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2N5

Material for the next newsletter can be sent to:

Lisa Priestley, Editor, Box 1418, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N5.

Email: lisa@beaverhillbirds.com. Articles and photos can be on bird banding, bird watching, wildlife viewing, personal nature photos, etc. **Deadline:** August 15, 2012.

Join us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/5822270917/>

We gratefully acknowledge Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Sport Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation, Community Spirit Program, Environment Canada Science Horizons, Shell Environmental Fund, and Nature Canada (Charles Labatiuk Fund) for their support.