



Volume 29 Number 2

Sept 2016

Steaks and Saw-whets

Friday September 30 and Saturday October 1



Photo: Helen Trefry

Join the Beaverhill Bird Observatory (BBO) for a celebration of the annual fall movements of the tiny but mighty Northern Saw-whet Owl. A complete steak barbeque will be served followed by setting up mist nets to capture owls for banding. Learn about their biology while observing owls up close. This popular event sells out so please book early to ensure your spot! **Online registration required.**

Time: Dinner served between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. Nets go up at 8:00 p.m.

Cost: Members \$30 /person, Non-members \$40/person can include a \$10 life membership, free for kids under 12 when accompanied by their parents.

Register: Purchase tickets on-line at www.beaverhillbirds.com ; contact Jason

Duxbury at jayduxbury@gmail.com for more information.

Interesting Fact: some Northern Saw-whet owls are moving north in the fall. For example, on Oct 17, 2015, Bob Gehlert caught a hatch year owl near Lindbrook that had been banded 30 days earlier in Elkwater (Cypress Hills) by Yousif Attia. It had moved 449 km north.

Beaverhill Bird Observatory's Geoff Holroyd Young Ornithologists' Workshop - a first.



Geoff Holroyd (Chair Beaverhill Bird Observatory), Larry Zhong, Robin Moore, Myles Grieve, Luke Nelson, Charlotte Wasyluk, Carson Hvenegaard, Stephanie Olson, Jeremy Lambe, BBO biologists Kevin Methuen and Emily Cicon, and Helen Trefry (BBO Board Member and workshop organizer). In front is "Jackie".

The inaugural BBO Geoff Holroyd Young Ornithologists' Workshop ran from 31 July - 1 August, 2016. The fun and enthusiastic group of students made for an enjoyable and productive week. The eight students, ages 15-18 years, came from across central Alberta with a common interest in birds and nature. During the week they improved their bird identification skills and were taught how to extract birds from mist nets and band them. The week included talks with topics as diverse as bird photography (Gerald Romanchuk), tree swallow ecology (Geoff Holroyd) and peregrine falcon recovery (Gordon Court). David Lawrie and Loney Dickson lead a field trip to learn about local butterflies. Other local field trips allowed the students to band purple martins, release ducklings (thanks Kim Bloome), canoe and handle raptors (thanks Phil Trefry). Other activities included building bird boxes, banding humming birds, conducting bird census and operating MAPS stations. While camping, helping with camp chores and getting up to band at 5 am, they experienced a glimpse of field biologists' life. By learning about

the lives and plights of the local breeding birds and those migrating through the area they gained a better understanding of bird conservation issues.

The similar Doug Tarry Young Ornithologist program at Long Point Bird Observatory has seen their program become a jumping off point for many leaders in bird conservation. We saw the same enthusiasm and leadership skills in BBO's group of budding ornithologists. Two of the students attended both programs, providing them with a Canadian bird monitoring experience from east and west. We hope these students will become ambassadors for birds.

BBO plans to make the Workshop an annual event. However, BBO was unable to secure new funding for the workshop since the workshop is not directly affecting a large number of people. If you wish to support a student, your \$200 donation (with a tax receipt) will ensure a student can attend in 2017! Contact helentrefry@gmail.com if you are interested in supporting a future young naturalist.

Leaders Helen Trefry and Geoff Holroyd want to extend a big thank you to those already mentioned as well as Jeff Manchak, Dan Verhoeff and Irene Crossland for assisting. A HUGE thanks to the staff, Kevin Methuen, Emily Cicon and Megan Jacklin for helping to make the week a memorable one for the students. The Tofield IGA provided a much appreciated discount on groceries. Thanks to the Wildbird General Store for a discount on bird books and a donation of seed for the feeders.



Charlotte Wasylik extracts a bird (above) and bands it (right) under the supervision of Emily Cicon, recorded by Stephanie Olson. Check out Charlotte's FB site: [Prairie Birder](#)
Photo credits: Helen Trefry



Loney Dickson and David Lawrie provided an informative and lively field trip to explore lepidopteran of the Beaverhill area. Photo credit: Helen Trefry



Meghan Jacklin teaches Larry Yiding how cool "Ray" is. Photo credit: Stephanie Olsen

The Water Levels in Beaverhill Lake rose this summer.



Carson Hvenegaard, a Young Ornithologist, stands in front of the Ducks Unlimited weir at Lister Lake- the weir was still still hidden by water flowing in early August (photo credit: Geoff Holroyd). When the flow peaked in Mid-July after heavy rains, staff found water was over their boots over some of the paths in the area. Amisk Creek was high and surrounding fields were flooded after heavy rainfall to the south. Kevin Methuen hiked out and discovered knee-deep water not far north of the banding station. Dozens of black terns were seen foraging over the shallow waters of the lake bed and yellow

rails moved into the area. Kevin saw many species of shorebirds, including arctic migrants using the new waters. The mosquitoes and the staff have been cheerful through it all - see the big smile on Kevin Methuen as he gets bit! Truth is Kevin seems to always be smiling. He was overheard saying he no longer feels bites. Fortunately, mosquitoes are good food for birds and bats. Kevin has worked to change the location of the MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) sites to better reflect the guidelines for MAPS stations by bringing them closer to the water and greatly increasing the capture rates of local breeders. This included nets of marsh wren families. Please take that



Photo: Helen Trefry

time to check the web site for Kevin's capture reports for spring migration and his summer report of MAPS results: <http://beavhillbirds.com/docs/annualReports/2016-SpringReport.pdf>.

Thanks to those that helped create the new MAPS sites and the many who came out to assist on busy mornings. Here are a few of the residents (photos Helen Trefry and bottom right, Luke Nelson)



Big Birding Breakfast 2016

Twenty month old Theda Cannon tagged a ride on her mother Erin's back while getting a close look at a House Wren held by Meghan Jacklin. About 75 people enjoyed a crepe breakfast on June 4th at BBO



during the annual Big Birding Breakfast event while learning about the role of bird banding in monitoring bird populations. Photographing feeder birders, taking in a nature walk and the banding of spring migrants, fledgling bluebirds and white-breasted nuthatches under sunny skies made for a good dose of birds and some Vitamin N (Nature!). Some Alberta Stewards of Natural Areas joined us for the event prior to their field trips to another local Natural Area. Helen Trefry organized the event and a big thanks goes to the volunteers, especially Janos Kovacs and Dave Ealey for making crepes and Joyce DeGroot for frying piles of bacon!



Photos: Helen Trefry (above) and Linda Kershaw (left)

2016 Intern Program



Thanks to the Mentors of the 2016 SCIP interns: Geoff Holroyd (tree swallows, breeding bird surveys and amphibians), Emily Cicon (house wrens) and John Acorn (butterfly surveys), and to BBO's co-ordinator Laurie Hunt. Without the hours of training by the mentors, these students would not be able to benefit from the learning opportunities the internship program offers. There were 10 interns this year: Jordan Nakonechny, Hannah Smith, and Alanna Grant were TRES interns; Cala Jorgensen and Martijn Dieleman worked on Breeding Bird Grids; Kayleen Sandrowski studied butterflies, Nicole Paskar and Megan Wisselink worked on house wrens; and Jordan Lange did amphibian surveys. Thanks for Serving Communities internship Program (www.joinscip.ca) for funding the interns.

TRIBUTES TO TERRIFIC VOLUNTEERS: without you BBO would not be able to accomplish all it does.

Casino: Thanks to those that helped with the 2016 Casino: Steve Anderson, Jim Beck, Mary Blair, Kim Blomme, Andrew Dalwood, Al DeGroot, Jason Duxbury, Dave Ealey, Victoria Hansen, Connie Herman, Alan Hingston, Geoff Holroyd, Art Hughes, Sam Kelch, Janos Kovacs, Joan Ko-

vacs, Megan Maloney, Barry Manchak, Jan Manchak, Jeff Manchak, Treva Piekema, Lisa Priestley, Jenette Prozny, Brian Stephens, Josef Takats, Margaret Takats, and Helen Trefry.

BBO has a new Treasurer

Rose Scott has taken on the role of Treasurer for BBO- welcome on board, Rose. Thanks to Debra King for the past year of service. The Treasurer is a key executive position on any non-profit board and we thank Debra and Rose for filling this important role.

BBO removed 1 kilometre of old fencing in the Natural Area

Kevin Methuen organized a work bee to remove an old cross fence of barb wire that ran through the middle of the Beaverhill Natural area, acting as a hazard for birds flying low through the wetlands, such as Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls. BBO continues to act as Steward for the Natural Area, letting the province know of any infractions or disturbance to the area, birds using the area, etc.

Thanks to those that helped Kevin with the fence removal: Steve Andersen, Suzanne and Rick Cicon, and Fraser Methuen (Yeh! Dads).

Thanks to Rolly and Sonya Perrot and Geoff Holroyd for assisting Helen Trefry with hauling gravel for road repair.

BBO's Educational Program: Bring an Owl and a Biologist to your school!

educationbeaverhillbirds@gmail.com

BBO biologists Emily Cicon and Meghan Jacklin are preparing for another winter program of school presentations. BBO was successful in securing an Edmonton Community Foundation grant to support part of this program. If you know of anyone that is interested in having an educator and owl visit their classroom or non-profit group from November 2016 - March 2017 please contact: educationbeaverhillbirds@gmail.com to discuss fees and content of the talks. The program is geared for K- Grade 12 with a focus to build an awareness of the birds using the Edmonton and region, the dangers facing birds as they try to breed or migrate, and what individuals can do to reduce bird mortality. The talks are tailored to the Alberta curriculum. Some topics include: Owls of Alberta, Bird Diversity in Alberta, Bird Conservation, Bird Research/Banding (and the scientific process), Natural Areas (and their importance to Edmonton), Bird Migration, Bird Adaptations, and more. These topics can be integrated into the broader curriculum (biodiversity, ecosystems and population change, population and community dynamics, etc.) at the request of the teacher.

Beaverhill Bird Observatory is Supported by Alberta Conservation Association, TD Friends of the Environment, Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, Nature Canada (Charles Labatiuk Fund), Edmonton Community Foundation and personal donations. [Please consider a tax-refundable donation to BBO \(www.beaverhillbirds.com\)](http://www.beaverhillbirds.com)