

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update May 8-14, 2023

Our 2023 spring migrants have been trickling in at a steady pace this week. We welcomed Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, House Wrens, Swainson's Thrushes, a Blackpoll Warbler, and our signature summer residents - the Least Flycatchers and Yellow Warbler, to our nets. The Clay-coloured Sparrow is the most common bird banded so far this year. We've also been surprised by an unusually large number of Chipping Sparrows this year; having banded 15 individuals this week, we've already broken the 2022 total of 13 Chipping Sparrows from spring and fall combined!



This beautifully sooty female tree swallow that we affectionately call 2631-82732 has returned to its childhood home to raise its own nestlings this year.

We've also greeted a few return residents, including a female Tree Swallow that our Head Biologist, Jana Teefy banded as a nestling back in the summer of 2021. Interestingly, the swallow has shifted neighborhoods from its childhood home along the roadside to the spiral grid, located near our migration monitoring nets. Speaking of nests, the Tree Swallows and Purple Martins have begun to colonize our nest boxes, as has our usual pair of Mountain Bluebirds. We've noticed a Loggerhead Shrike and Baltimore Oriole nest pop up before the tree's leafed put around the property - a bit earlier than expected!

Thirty-four visitors came out to the banding station on May 13 to celebrated Migratory Bird Day. They were introduced to our new education bird, Keith the Red-tailed Hawk, watched some bird banding demos, went on a guided hike to the weir where they spotted all three of our local Teal species, and tossed feathers for our nesting Tree Swallows.

We also started our first official shorebird survey in 28 years this week. So far, a Dunlin has been the biggest highlight. The plethora of shorebirds found on Beaverhill Lake has also attracted some notable raptor species, including a Peregrine Falcon, a Bald Eagle, and several Northern Harriers and Falcon species. Our official shorebird surveys will continue throughout the season, so stay tuned for future updates.



The Beaverhill Natural Area is wonderful Yellow Warbler habitat with abundant willows, aspen, and insects.



Despite the terrifying sound of the Red-tailed Hawk's screech, Keith is one of our calmest education birds on staff. We can't wait to introduce you to him at one of our upcoming events!

Table 1. Migration Monitoring Banding Totals in Standard Nets

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	TOTAL
Downy Woodpecker		1				1
Traill's Flycatcher			1			1
Least Flycatcher	4					4
Black-capped Chickadee		1				1
American Robin		2				2
Swainson's Thrush	3					3
Yellow Warbler			1			1
Chipping Sparrow	10					10
Clay-colored Sparrow	2					2
Lincoln's Sparrow	1					1
White-throated Sparrow	5					5
Tree Swallow	2					2
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1					1
TOTAL	28	4	2	0	0	34

Total net-hours: 504.5

Capture-rate: 6.74 /100 net-hours

- 1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO
- 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. Migration Monitoring Banding Totals in Non-Standard Nets

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	TOTAL
Least Flycatcher	4					4
Black-capped Chickadee		3				3
House Wren	1					1
American Robin	1	1				2
Swainson's Thrush	2					2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1					1
Yellow Warbler	4		2			6
Myrtle Warbler	8					8
Blackpoll Warbler	1					1
Chipping Sparrow	5					5
Clay-colored Sparrow	31	1	2			34
Song Sparrow	2	1				3
Lincoln's Sparrow	1					1
White-throated Sparrow	4					4
White-crowned Sparrow	2					2
Tree Swallow	5	1	1			7
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2					2
TOTAL	74	7	5	0	0	86

Total net-hours: 214

Capture-rate: 40.19 /100 net-hours

- 1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO
- 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).