

# Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update September 27 – October 4, 2023



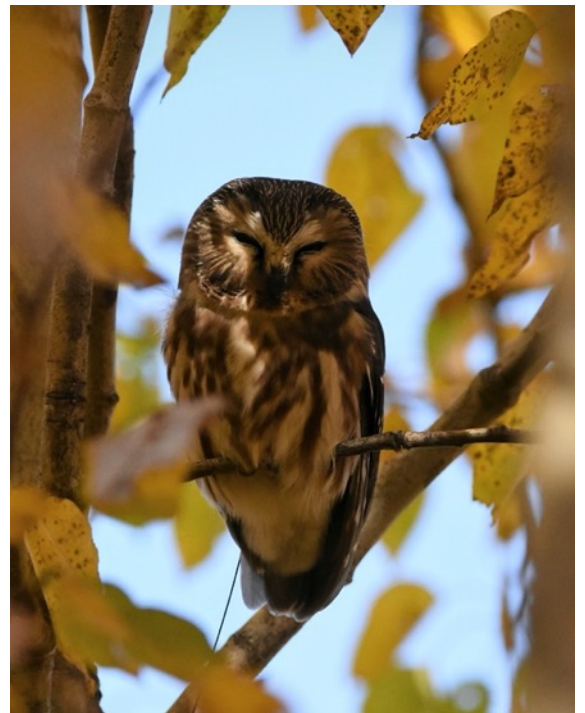
An adorable and fierce Northern Shrike, note the sharp hook on the end of the bill used to snag prey!

While songbird captures continue to dwindle as the season gets later, we had one extremely exciting capture this week: a Northern Shrike! Shrikes are close relatives of vireos and are the only predatory songbirds in North America. Once they've caught their prey, they will impale it on a thorn or wire to save it for later! This rather gruesome habit has earned shrikes the nickname of 'butcherbird'. This bird was only the 3<sup>rd</sup> shrike caught in BBO's 40-year history, and head biologist Jana was absolutely ecstatic to band it.

Owl monitoring has continued to produce high capture numbers, a welcome improvement after last year's dismal season. 2 more Long-eared Owls were caught this week, and as of October 4 over half of the 50 Motus tags we intend to use this season have been

deployed. On one morning after tagging, our chair of the board Geoff picked up a faint signal on a handheld radio received. After looking around for some time, he found an owl roosting in a tree that had one of our Motus tags attached to it!

Besides the action at the nets, migration is giving us many signals that we are getting late into the season. Large numbers of Snow Geese have been flying overhead and stopping over on Beaverhill Lake, and the first Tundra Swans of the season have been heard flying over as well. American Tree Sparrows, often the last songbird to migrate before winter, have also been seen sporadically throughout the natural area.



A Saw-whet Owl wearing a Motus tag. Note the antenna sticking out from the bird's back on the left!

Staff have been hard at work catching up on data entry and various office tasks while the season slows down, as well as patching mist nets that are in need of some care. Only a few more weeks of songbird banding remain, and our season total is tantalizingly close to 3000. Only time will tell what the lucky milestone bird will be!

Thanks to all our volunteers this week: Jenelle, Xavier, Kelsi, Sian, and Carolyn. Thank you as well to Kylli, Irene, and Martine for covering staff days off this week!

Table 1. Standard Migration Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat <sup>1</sup>	Return <sup>2</sup>	Foreign <sup>3</sup>	Other <sup>4</sup>	Total
American Tree Sparrow	1					1
Black-capped Chickadee	1	11				12
Downy Woodpecker	1	2				3
Hairy Woodpecker	2					2
Lincoln's Sparrow	1					1
Myrtle Warbler	12	1				13
Orange-crowned Warbler	1					1
Western Palm Warbler	1					1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	8					8
Slate-coloured Junco	5	1				6
White-breasted Nuthatch		2				2
Wilson's Warbler	1					1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>51</b>

393.5 net-hours

1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO

12.9 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. Experimental Nets Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat <sup>1</sup>	Return <sup>2</sup>	Foreign <sup>3</sup>	Other <sup>4</sup>	Total
American Robin					1	1
American Tree Sparrow	6					6
Black-capped Chickadee	1	12				13
Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow	1					1

Myrtle Warbler	11					<b>11</b>
Northern Shrike	1					<b>1</b>
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3					<b>3</b>
Slate-coloured Junco	2					<b>2</b>
Western Palm Warbler	1					<b>1</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39</b>

89 net-hours

1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO

43.8 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 3. Owl Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat <sup>1</sup>	Return <sup>2</sup>	Foreign <sup>3</sup>	Other <sup>4</sup>	Total
Northern Saw-whet Owl	55	1		1		57
Long-eared Owl	2					2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59</b>

NSWO Male (42 captures)

41 playback hours

102.4 captures/100 playback hours

NSWO Female (2 captures)

40.5 playback hours

4.9 captures/100 playback hours

Long-eared Owl (2 captures)

35 playback hours

5.7 captures/100 playback hours

Boreal Owl (2 captures)

39 playback hours

5.1 captures/100 playback hours