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May 2014

The Beaverhill Bird Observatory's Annual BIG Birding Breakfast



On Saturday June 7, 2014, join the Beaverhill Bird Observatory (BBO) for the annual BIG Birding Breakfast in celebration of the songbird spring migration! The BIG Birding Breakfast will take place at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory, located east of Tofield, AB.

The BBO will be serving crepes made by Claude Roberto. Bacon, fruit, coffee, tea, and juice are also on the menu.

Watch bird banding up close, walk the net lanes with the observatory staff, go for a guided nature walk and meet the bird observatory executive director and some of its volunteers, board members and interns! Children's activities, including crafts and games, will also run throughout the morning. Mist netting and banding will run from 5 am to 11 am, the guided nature walk will be at 9 am and breakfast is served between 7 am and 11 am!

Cost is \$10 per person. All proceeds go to BBO. For more information and to register please contact Amélie Roberto-Charron at amelie@beaverhillbirds.com

Waiting No More

By Irene 'Field Mom' Crosland

Winter has its true bits of birding wonder but then we wait. Snowbanks are shrinking. Water is running over the weir and waterfowl are arriving daily in larger numbers. But where is the BBO staff?

Volunteers are summoned and then suddenly, rounding the corner are Amelie and Kevin, leader/summer staff to lead us on our first adventure. Whether science or practicality, the task of this first workday is cutting six new net lanes to add to the existing ones. Are they crazy? Nope they are truly game to think outside the box and take on the challenge of a new season.

We volunteers gathered together over Tim's coffee and doughnuts and Mamma IGA's cinnamon rolls, still warm from the Tofield ovens to discuss the day's project. Then clippers clipped, axes fell, a chainsaw buzzed through aspens trunks, whipper snips cleared thistles and old grass and voila... new net lanes.

After a relaxing lunch and a bit more clearing the work was declared satisfactory and we wish the summer staff many hours of wonderful birding, catching the unaware songbirds migrating through. What will be the first species caught this year ?



Above (left): Amélie Roberto-Charron and Nicolle Spencer cut a new net lane. Above (right): Volunteers, interns, board members and staff take a break for lunch (left to right: Nicole Boucher, Nicolle Spencer, Kevin Methuen, Amélie Roberto-Charron, Geoff Holroyd, Randi Glen, Jim Beck, Lisa Priestley), Below (right): Jim doing all the work while Amélie and Geoff gab (left to right: Jim Beck, Amélie Roberto-Charron, Geoff Holroyd, Onyx Crosland); Photos taken by Irene 'Field Mom' Crosland.

Thanks to everyone who helped open the lab this year!
Thanks to Geoff Holroyd, Jim Beck, Irene Crosland, Kevin Methuen, Lisa Priestley, Nicolle Spencer, Randi Glen, Amélie Roberto-Charron, Nicole Boucher, and Alyssa Bohart.
Without their help we wouldn't have been able to open for the 2014 field season!

Snow Goose Chase 2014

Amélie Roberto-Charron, Executive Director

Despite the heavy fog and the barely above zero temperatures, the 15th annual Snow Goose Chase was a success. As per usual. Children from all over Edmonton came to Tofield by the bus load to see migrating shorebirds, geese, hawks, and songbirds. Participants were also able to view wildlife up close and local experts were able to share their passion and knowledge about the Alberta wildlife.

The Beaverhill Bird Observatory (BBO) attended and ran a banding demo and a booth in the community hall. The booth was manned by Julia Jackson, Director at Large, and Rachel Keglowsch, Intern, and the demo was run by the BBO staff. Although it was not possible to catch live birds due to the weather conditions, the BBO staff, Amélie Roberto-Charron and Kevin Methuen, ran a banding activity that enabled children to try their hand at 'bird' banding!

With every new school bus that arrived, Kevin would toss a fake bird into the open mist net during introductions while the children weren't looking. Soon enough an observant participant would announce that the staff had in fact caught a bird! A volunteer extractor would then be called upon to extract the 'bird' and put it in a cotton baggie to transport him to the 'open concept banding station' (a picnic table) located just across the courtyard. When they reached the 'banding station' another volunteer participant would be asked to band the songbird with mock bands. These bands had 3 digits on them enabling the children to easily read the digits. Other volunteers helped with measurements, scoring feather wear, aging the bird, assessing bird health, and weighing the bird.

At the end of the day, several children exclaimed that this is what they were going to do when they grow up, and the staff, although partially frozen, was happy to have been able to share their passion with others!



Who Am I?

My song is the familiar 'cheerup, cheery, cheerio' that is often associated with the start of spring.

There is a crayola crayon named after the color of my eggs.

A flock composed of several individuals of my species is often referred to as a 'worm'.

Who am I?

January 2014 Answer- Tree Swallow

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

Interested in getting more involved with the Beaverhill Bird Observatory? Become a volunteer!

Visit our website: www.beaverhillbirds.com or email Amélie at arobertocharron@gmail.com to become a volunteer!

Like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/BeaverhillBirdObservatory

Follow us on Twitter

@BBObservatory

And check out our website

www.beaverhillbirds.com

Material for the next newsletter can be sent to:

Amélie Roberto-Charron, Editor, Box 1418, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N5.

Email: arobertocharron@gmail.com

Articles and photos can be on bird banding, bird watching, wildlife viewing, personal nature photos, etc. Deadline: February 15, 2013.

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.