

Weekly Update: August 11 - 20

Things certainly have picked up since last weekly report! Over the past ten days we have banded 156 birds and handled 181 (see chart below for a complete species listing). Although the first part of the week was quite slow, activity increased as the week progressed and peaked on August 19th. 43 birds were banded on this day. The days leading up to the 19th were very, very hot, which we gladly welcomed; however, on sunny days the birds can easily see the nets and avoid them. But the 19th of August was a cloudy day; therefore, the nets were not “lit up like Christmas trees” (as we like to say), and the birds could not see the nets as well. We handled 50 birds that day and a single net check often produced 10 to 15 birds. We were busy!! I have not seen this much activity in one day since spring migration. We also had quite a surprise on August 17th when we caught a young Cooper’s hawk on net 49. Tessa extracted the raptor like a pro! This is the second Cooper’s that has been caught in the mist nets this year (the first one was caught during summer M.A.P.S program).

Species diversity has also increased and I am handling some birds I have never seen before. For example: Canada Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Blackpoll Warbler. And as promised, I have to let you know that we have caught quite a few Ovenbirds (seven to be exact). Also the American redstarts are passing through the natural area in full force. During the past 10 days we banded 38 individuals, and we are becoming very familiar with their brightly coloured tail spots, and referee whistle-like call.

Two other projects have started at the BBO this past week: Northern Saw-whet Owl migration monitoring and raptor banding. I must say these programs have already been quite successful. Five raptor traps have been placed around the natural area in hopes of catching some of the many raptors flying overhead. The traps are checked at least 3 times a day and remain open 24 hours a day, weather permitting. If you happen to come across one of the traps and there is a raptor inside, please come to the lab and let us know. We will then remove the raptor from the trap, and you are more than welcome to watch us band the bird and take advantage of the amazing photo opportunity. To date we have caught and banded 3 Red tailed hawks, which is very uncommon, according to Lisa.

Northern Saw-whet Owl banding began on August 15th. Banding takes place one hour after sunset and continues for 4 hours. This program will run until mid November. Mist nets are used to capture the owls; however, unlike songbirds a broadcast of Northern Saw-whet Owl calls is used to attract the owls to the area. The repetitive call of this tiny owl sounds much like a truck backing up, and it is played continuously during banding hours. Nets are checked every half hour and are closed if the wind becomes too strong or if it rains. These nets were open four nights this week and surprisingly one owl was caught. This is a very early occurrence and most years the first owl is not banded until September. We were all excited to see this beautiful owl and I was even more excited to hold it!

Come on out to the BBO and see some of the great fall migrants. There are large flocks of songbirds flitting about in the trees, and raptors and waterfowl soaring overhead. So take the time to visit one of Alberta's greatest migration hot spots ...only one hour east of Edmonton. See you soon!

Cheers,
Jill, Tessa and Lisa

Species	# New	# Recaptures	# Recoveries	Total
Alder Flycatcher	1	0	0	1
American Goldfinch	1	0	0	1
American Redstart	38	0	0	38
Black-capped Chickadee	9	11	0	20
Black & White Warbler	4	0	0	4
Blackpoll Warbler	1	0	0	1
Canada Warbler	3	0	0	3
Chipping Sparrow	1	0	0	1
Clay-colored Sparrow	4	0	0	4
Cooper's Hawk	1	0	0	1
Downy Woodpecker	1	0	0	1
Hairy Woodpecker	1	0	0	1
Hermit Thrush	1	0	0	1
House Wren	1	0	0	1
Least Flycatcher	28	3	1	32
Lincoln's Sparrow	2	0	0	2
Magnolia Warbler	3	0	0	3
Myrtle Warbler	0	1	0	1
Northern Waterthrush	1	0	0	1
Ovenbird	7	0	0	7
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	0	0	1
Red-eyed Vireo	1	0	0	1
Song Sparrow	2	1	0	3
Swainson's Thrush	2	1	0	3
Tennessee Warbler	7	0	0	7
Traill's Flycatcher	10	0	0	10
Warbling Vireo	2	0	0	2
Wilson's Warbler	7	1	0	8
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	3	0	0	3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	1	0	2
Yellow Warbler	12	3	2	17
Total	156	22	3	181