

Weekly Update: June 11-21

Well, as you are well aware of from the last update we sent out, spring migration has ended and we are now full swing into the MAPS program. With the first week completed and the 2nd soon to follow, I have to admit it hasn't been anything like I had expected it to be...Actually, to tell you the truth I don't think I even knew what to expect. You see it is quite unlike the spring migration banding we have been doing since we arrived here at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory. To begin with we are now nomadic—Gone are the days where we could sip lemonade in the shade of the porch in between net checks. Where we used to have one main headquarters (the lab), from which to work out of, we now have three banding stations (“PARK”, “WEIR”, and “BLAB”), from which alternate banding at. I'll admit the change of scenery has been quite refreshing; however, it has also been a tad bit busy as we try to become familiar with our new surroundings. I think this transition has been particularly difficult for me as I am notorious for having a terrible sense of direction, the change has added considerably to my net-check time. Luckily, Jill who is a bit of a map-maniac and expert orienteer is only a call away on my hand-held radio and has heroically guided me safely to my proper destination on more than one occasion.

Well, with the MAPS program being so new to both Jill and myself, we chose to work the BLAB station the first day (it being the closest one to our old familiar stomping grounds of migration monitoring). We thought that by working close to the lab we would be able to “ease” into the transition from Migration banding to MAPS. Well, although in theory we may have been on to something, in actuality, our first day of MAPS at BLAB was one of our craziest yet. The weather, to begin with was not ideal to say the least, it was drab, a bit dreary, borderline drizzly, but not enough to justify closing the nets either. So we kept them up, which is a good thing too, because they were hopping and by the end of the day we had caught a grand total of 19 birds, the most exciting of which—a new species for us at the BBO this year—the Red-eyed vireo. I can't even begin to describe the excitement and awe I felt as I say my first Red-eyed vireo (It's like that each time I see a new species for the first time). This being said, it was not all roses that day, for whatever reason, many of the birds were more difficult to extract than usual greatly increasing handling time of the birds. Yes, it was the best of days (Red-eyed vireo), and it was truly the Worst of days, and by the end of the day, I will confess that the thought “is this what MAPS is like?” crossed my mind and as with Mother-Nature we would have to wait a few more days to find out. That evening the rains began, and continued for two days. The weather was fairly uncooperative with us (to say the least). The rains came down hard and seemed relentless. At the time it seemed as though there was no end in sight, but two days later I learned otherwise. We spent our rainy days, setting up the stations for “Park” and “Weir”, doing point counts, and discovering new inventive ways to use Safeway bags and duck-tape to keep our tootsies dry (if you have any tips we welcome them). Anyway, on the 13th we banded “Park” which went seamlessly—a very pleasant day. We had another taste of rain on the 14th which required us to close nets at the “Weir” before we even had a

chance to get them all open (perhaps a blessing in disguise), so again we did some more point counts. Due to rain we were unable to finish banding "Weir" before our days off, and we thank Lisa Priestley for coming out to finish things up last week for us.

This week it seems as though the weather has decided to cooperate with us a little bit more. It has been absolutely glorious! Our first day back was a real treat as it was the day of the much anticipated and talked about annual Crepe Spectacular at the BBO. Janos Kovacs, came out and transformed the lab into a five-star, fine-dining restaurant...whipping up the most delectable crepes, I have ever tasted...Thanks so much Janos...and you and your whisk are welcome out here any time (just kidding, you can even leave your whisk at home). We also had the pleasure of Suzanne Benoit's company that day, which was a real treat, Jeff Swingler, and of course Chuck and Lisa Priestley were there for the celebration as well. By the end of the day Jill and I both agreed how delightful it was to have visitors out with us. Thanks for coming out, and hopefully you who were unable to come out for it this year, can make it the next...I'm telling you Great food, Great company, and birds...What more could you want?

Yesterday (June 21st) we were out banding at "Park" and what an exciting day it was. The morning was slow (probably a good thing as we were still digesting Janos' famous crepes from the day before), and then things began to get a little exciting. The Climax of the day, perhaps of the summer so far, was finding a Coopers Hawk in the net on one of our checks. It already had a band on it, but we took it back to the banding spot to take measurements...What a beauty he was!

Well, that about sums things up for now. Just a reminder though to those of you who might be coming out to the BBO, if you want to see some banding it is probably best to call before (991-6864) to let you know where we will be as it will probably be pretty tricky to find us otherwise. Also, the cows are moving in next door, and so if you encounter any fences that are up on your way in, just a reminder to make sure you close them after you. Thanks again and have a great day. We will continue to keep you posted on all the adventures out at the BBO.

Bye for now,
Crystal and Jill

Station	Species	Birds Banded	Repeats	Returns	TOTAL
PARK	Least Flycatcher	4		7	11
	Hermit Thrush		1		1
	Clay-colored Sparrow	4			4
	Yellow Warbler	1			1
	Brown-headed Cow.	1		1	2
	Yellow-bellied Sap.			1	1
	Coopers Hawk			1	1
BLAB	Least flycatcher	4	7	7	18
	House Wren		1		1
	Hermit Thrush		1		1
	American Robin		1		1
	Red-eyed Vireo	2			2
	Yellow Warbler			1	1
	Brown-headed Cow.	1			1
WEIR	Least Flycatcher	2			1
	Black-capped Chic.	1			1
	Brown-headed Cow.	1			1
					49