

BEAVERHILL BIRD OBSERVATORY UPDATE AUGUST 8-14, 2007

WIND, RAIN AND GENERALLY POOR WEATHER reduced the number of hours we were able to mist-net for migrating birds this week. Nonetheless, new species continue to arrive on their journey south. Not all songbird species migrate at the same time, and one of the best parts about this time of year is wondering what new species we will see in the Natural Area each day. We banded three new species this week: Ovenbirds, Northern Waterthrush and an American Restart. Yellow Warblers and Tennessee Warblers have been the most common captures during the past two weeks.



Northern Waterthrush

We've been catching some juvenile Yellow Warblers that look a little strange



Juvenile Yellow Warbler

with their mixture of wispy juvenal body feathers (the plumage they grew in the nest to provide camouflage from predators) with their "basic" fall plumage- similar-looking body feathers as adult Yellow Warblers. Although birds are completely covered by feathers, feathers do not grow evenly a bird's body. Instead, feathers are attached in concentrated areas called feather tracts- which are obvious when highlighted by the new yellow feathers of the young Yellow Warblers! Some of the adults we catch are a little ragged also, with their combination of leftover worn feathers, partially grown feathers and sparse patches created as they, too, replace their worn breeding plumage by molting in their "basic" fall plumage.

We've also been busy with fall maintenance: cleaning out the nest boxes on the Tree Swallow Grid and putting up new boxes to replace those in poor condition. While cleaning we found a young Tree Swallow that was attempting to fly (Aug 3). Since the little bird was mostly crash landing, we stuck it back into a nest box to rest a little. This nestling confirmed that at least one of the nest boxes held two successful swallow nests this year.



New boxes in the swallow grid

Geese and shorebirds are also moving through the Natural Area. Standing in the cattail rushes at the Weir has proven to be a good place to watch shorebirds, and this week we saw flocks of American Avocets, Willets and Yellowlegs, as well as foraging Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper and a family of Soras. If you're going to visit Beaverhill Lake to see some of the many migrating birds, plan an early morning stop at the banding lab. With some good fortune (and good weather) some of the migrating songbird flocks will hit the mist-nets and provide an up close and personal look at some of these species.

-Alicia and Anna

Table 1: Results from Fall Migration Monitoring August 8-14, 2007.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Alder Flycatcher	2	0	0	0	0	2
American Redstart	1	0	0	0	0	1
Black-capped Chickadee	1	0	0	0	0	1
Least Flycatcher	7	2	0	0	0	9
Myrtle Warbler	3	0	0	0	0	3
Northern Waterthrush	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ovenbird	2	0	0	0	0	2
Tennessee Warbler	3	1	0	0	1	5
Warbling Vireo	3	0	0	0	0	3
Yellow Warbler	11	0	0	0	0	11
Total	34	3	0	0	1	38

Net Hours: 193.5 NH

Capture Rate: 19.64 birds/ 100 NH

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).



A ratty-looking Myrtle Warbler