

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update July 10 – 19, 2009

Summer is passing swiftly at Beaverhill. Most nestlings have left their nests to survive on their own, and we have started to see and hear juvenile birds in the trees. Even if they don't have obvious baby plumage anymore, they are recognizable by their fluttery, brief bursts of flight and slightly "off" songs. They will need these next weeks to practise before fall migration begins. Some species attempt to raise two sets of young over the summer if food is abundant. We have noted Mountain Bluebirds and Clay-coloured Sparrows with second nests this year. House

Wrens appear to nest the latest of all our birds; some wait until another species is finished with a nest before taking it over to begin a nest of their own.



A Mountain Bluebird nestling keeps a straight face



The bright blue eggs of Clay-coloured Sparrows

As Table 1 shows, most of our captures in this MAPS round have been Least Flycatchers. We are still recapturing some new banded birds from previous years, and it is interesting to think that they have managed to breed in the area all season without encountering our nets until now. On July 13th, we had a very exciting recovery of a banded female Warbling Vireo. It was originally banded at BBO in 2004, and has not been captured again until this week! Since it was recorded as being an adult bird in 2004, we know that this female vireo is at least 6 years old.

I saw a juvenile Long-eared Owl in one of our nets this week, but was unable to retrieve it before it wiggled free and flew away. It would have been great to see if it was banded or not, because that would have told us if there was a second nest of Long-eareds in the Natural Area. I am trying to soothe my disappointment by remembering that this sighting at least tells us that this year's offspring are healthy and strong.

Tyler and Jenny, the pair studying our Tree Swallows, returned home to California this week. Most of the swallow nestlings have left their nests by now. Of the 98 adult Tree Swallows that Tyler and Jenny processed, 68 were newly banded and 30 had been banded in previous years. That's a returning adult rate of 31%!

On July 18, 2009, Nature Canada held a special memorial service at Beaverhill for Charles Labatiuk. Nature Canada selected Beaverhill Bird Observatory to be the recipient of an endowment left by Mr. Labatiuk to further bird research and education. A memorial bench has been placed at the bird observatory in his name. The event was attended by over 70 of Charles' family and friends. A special thank you to Al DeGroot, Jim Beck, Margaret Takats and her sister Gail... for helping organise this memorable and heartfelt tribute. A lot of work went into preparing the Natural Area for this event, including a fresh coat of paint for the lab. Stop by to take a look!

Table 1. Results from MAPS Program July 10 – 19, 2009.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Least Flycatcher	19	17	3	0	4	43
Swainson's Thrush	1	0	0	0	0	1
Warbling Vireo	0	1	1	0	0	2
Long-eared Owl	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	20	18	4	0	5	47

Net Hours: 180 NH
Capture Rate: 26.11 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 very vibrant caterpillar



This young porcupine is enjoying a relaxing nap up a