

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Banding Update May 22-28, 2009



A sunny male Yellow Warbler

This was a great banding week at BBO. The weather looks like it's finally going to stay warm and sunny, and the birds were back in full force to enjoy it. We caught 22 species this week! The bright plumages of warblers, orioles and grosbeaks flooded our Natural Area with vibrant hues and sweet songs. Every day brought a new arrival to our nets, and while we have thoroughly enjoyed our time spent with the variety of sparrows flying through, it was wonderful to finally have some colour!



A beautiful Connecticut Warbler – an uncommon catch!

Our most commonly banded species right now are Least Flycatchers, Yellow Warblers and Clay-coloured Sparrows. You are guaranteed to hear/see them if you come for a visit. The Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Baltimore Orioles spent a lot of time around our feeder this week. We placed orange pieces out for the Orioles who have



Stunning male American Redstart

been going through them at a rapid rate, but we were surprised to see a female Grosbeak nibble at an orange as well! Our feeder (filled with sunflower seeds) has been totally dominated by at least 40 Pine Siskins and 15 American Goldfinches. Bird banders estimate the fat content of a bird by gently blowing aside the body feathers below its neck to see if any fat has collected inbetween its collar bone. When we caught some of these Siskins in our mist-nets, we gasped at their chests completely bulging over with fat. These plump Siskins will definitely have a good amount of fat stored for their next journey.

This was an exciting week for hawk sightings, too. We were very surprised to find a Cooper's Hawk in one of our nets one morning. Because it was caught in our mist-nets and we have bands at the lab large enough for its thick legs, we were able to *carefully* band it, making sure to avoid its sharp bill and long talons. Holding a bird that big in your hands is a little intimidating. It's difficult to comprehend how large and powerful raptors are when seen way up in the sky. Returning to handling the toothpick-thin legs of songbirds really emphasized how tiny songbirds are. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was a little too interested in our mist-nets one day, and forced us to close two nets early. The safety of the birds we monitor is always our first concern.

We have a little over a week left of our Spring Migration Monitoring before we begin MAPS. Come out and see the spring migrants before it's too late!



Cooper's Hawk

Table 1. Results from Spring Migration Monitoring May 22-28, 2009.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Goldfinch	4	0	0	0	0	4
American Redstart	1	0	0	0	2	3
American Robin	4	0	0	0	0	4
Baltimore Oriole	4	0	0	0	0	4
Black-capped Chickadee	0	0	1	0	0	1
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	2	3	0	1	7
Blackpoll Warbler	4	0	0	0	0	4
Clay-colored Sparrow	40	7	0	0	9	56
Chipping Sparrow	9	0	0	0	3	12
Cooper's Hawk	1	0	0	0	0	1
Connecticut Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	1
House Wren	7	2	0	0	1	10
Least Flycatcher	43	2	5	0	5	55
Myrtle Warbler	7	0	0	0	1	8
Ovenbird	2	0	0	0	0	2
Pine Siskin	12	0	0	0	0	12
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2	0	0	0	0	2
Savannah Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Swainson's Thrush	11	0	0	0	0	11
Warbling Vireo	0	0	1	0	0	1
White-throated Sparrow	2	0	0	0	0	2
Yellow Warbler	13	2	6	0	1	22
Total	169	15	16	0	23	223

Net Hours: 389.5 NH
 Capture Rate: 57.25 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).



Two very photogenic male Blackpoll Warblers



An Ovenbird's bright top