

Weekly Update April 1st to April 15th, 2017

The BBO is back up and running once more! It's been a slow start to the season this year compared to last, with snow still on the ground for the first week and temperatures remaining around the freezing mark, but that hasn't stopped the staff or the birds! BBO staff have been out every morning, doing double census and counting all the migrating birds that have been passing through and it feels great to be back at it.

We've seen large number of Snow Geese fly by in the last two weeks. A flock of 3000+ was spotted one morning! We have also seen the rush of American Tree Sparrows come and go, there was a good rush of American Robins for a couple of days, and just to tease the staff, a rush of Purple Finches visited the feeders at the lab. If only it was a bit warmer so we could band! Still, it was lovely to see all these species returning to Alberta once more and now the staff are greeted back at the lab every morning by the musical chorus of Dark-eyed Juncos that are currently passing though in high numbers.



Some other common migrants that have been gracing us with their presence include Canada Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, Northern Pintails, Mallards, Red-tailed Hawks, Red-winged Blackbirds, and of course, our Mountain Bluebirds are back once more and establishing which nest box they wish to occupy this year. One of the major highlights for the staff though was having a Pileated Woodpecker, fly out of the woods, right over their heads while at the Purple Martin house, and fly back into the trees while giving a powerful call as if to say, "I'm back and I'm letting everyone know it!"

It was great to see some of our volunteers and visitors already out this season! Irene came out with staff on opening day to shared our first birding at the lab and she's been out a number of times since then. Emily and Connor came out one morning and Jeremy has visited us a couple of times as well. Helen Trefry brought her daughter Sarah and granddaughter Hazel out for a morning hike, and twice the students from NAIT's forestry program came out to get some birding experience and we were happy to meet them. A big thank you goes out to Al, Geoff and Gemma for helping to set up the lab and solar panels! We have electricity once more! Now if only it would warm up... Stay posted though, the warm weather is coming and soon the nets will be open!