

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update Oct 8, 2020 – Oct 14, 2020

While the season so far has been exceptionally mild, we have been very much spoiled as far as weather goes. This week changed that. A storm system moved in partway through the week, bringing with it rain and persistent wind that lasted for days and forced us to close nets early several days in a row, and on one particularly gusty night, didn't allow us to open at all. The flip side is that the storm drove a large movement of owls ahead of it. On one of the nights that was cut short, we captured a seasonal record of 23 owls, and continued to hit double digits for the rest of the week!



Above: Even after having banded over a hundred owls this season, Northern Saw-Whets remain utterly enchanting.

Right: A flock of an estimated 700 Snow Geese flushes from a field near the observatory

The storm also appeared to encourage some large-scale movement for waterfowl. In the days following it, we saw a resurgence in Snow Goose sightings, which spiked up to over a thousand a day, peaking at 2,800 in one day. These same days also saw hundreds of Greater White-Fronted and Canada Geese passing overhead in a cacophony of honks and squeaks.

But while the skies are filled with the sounds of geese, the canopy has grown quieter. This week saw the last few straggling Myrtle Warblers of the season as nightly temperatures began to consistently dip below zero. While there is still a lot of work to do with our gorgeous owls, our biologists will miss those brightly coloured songbirds as they seek warmer temperatures south of here.

As migration winds down, we are beginning to prepare for the winter and the upcoming education season. Our BirdSmart educational program will be continuing this year, although in a rather different form: we will be delivering the majority of our presentations digitally, in order to better meet the needs of Alberta's schools.



Species	Banded	Repeat¹	Return²	Foreign³	Other⁴	Total
Northern Saw-whet Owl (M)	66	1	2		1	70
Northern Saw-whet Owl (F)	3	2				5
Long-Eared Owl	1					1
Boreal Owl*	2					2
TOTALS	72	3	2		1	77

NSWO (M) Playback Hours: 35

1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO

Capture rate: 200 birds/100 playback hours

2 Banded at the BBO >90 days prior to recapture (e.g. in a previous year).

NSWO (F) Playback Hours: 34

3 Banded at a location other than the BBO

Capture rate: 14.7 birds/100 playback hours

4 Caught in a mist-net but not banded (e.g. escaped net).

LEOW Playback Hours: 21

*All captures in the Boreal Owl net were NSWO

Capture rate: 4.8 birds/100 playback hours

BOOW Playback Hours: 20.5

Capture Rate: 9.8 birds/100 playback hours