

## Beaverhill Bird Observatory

### Weekly Update May 15-21, 2021

This past week formed a perfect microcosm of spring as a whole: an exciting influx of boreal migrants which we had difficulty capturing due to volatile weather. Despite that, we managed our fair share of exciting captures, including a gorgeous male Baltimore Oriole, who had been whistling to us from above the clearing for a couple days at that point. The 20<sup>th</sup> was an exciting day, with 18 captures, including a number of boreal warblers passing through, including a Black-and-White Warbler and a Northern



*This handsome Baltimore Oriole was such a chatterbox that he continued singing even while being handled.*

Waterthrush. The week was nicely bookended by a pair of Grey-Cheeked Thrush captures, which are a rather uncommon migrant in this region and cause for some moderate excitement. Aside from all that, we continue to catch the typical species, although still in unusually low numbers. We have a number of theories for this, including the cold mornings, but it remains little more than speculation until the end of the season.

The lake itself is highly active, though. Black Terns are sighted overhead with regularity, and Franklin's Gulls are continuing to mingle on the lake in the thousands. Our tree swallow boxes are well-occupied, and are being monitored by our team of interns. We were amused to learn that a pair of chickadees had taken up residence in one of the boxes. In addition, White-faced Ibises, a regular fixture at the weir last year, seem to have returned, although in lesser numbers, and the odd Purple Martin has been hanging around our freshly built colony boxes.

Another interesting regular sighting is a male Yellow Warbler that the staff has named Weird Yellow: as far as we can determine, he has a malformed syrinx (a bird's sound-producing organ), resulting in his song sounding... well, weird. He baffled our biologists at first, as we'd only heard an odd vocalization at first, until we finally managed to see him singing. His unique take on his song is unmistakable, and he does seem to like hanging around near one set of nets, so perhaps we'll catch him one day.

As the season goes on, we are properly settling in to the new building and getting used to being in the field again. As a more personal development, the past week also marked all four of our staff getting their first vaccine shot, which was very encouraging. Moving forward, we have the annual Birdathon to look forward to, as well as the conclusion of spring migration monitoring.



*as warblers or orioles, sparrows do have the odd bit of pretty plumage.*

<b>Species</b>	<b>Banded</b>	<b>Repeat<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Return<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Foreign<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Other<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>
Least Flycatcher	8	1			2	11
Black-Capped Chickadee	1	1	1			3
House Wren	2					2
Swainson's Thrush	3					3
Grey-Cheeked Thrush	2					2
American Robin		3				3
Chipping Sparrow	3					3
Clay-Coloured Sparrow	7				2	9
White-Throated Sparrow	6				1	7
Baltimore Oriole	2					2
Northern Waterthrush	1					1
Black and White Warbler	1					1
Yellow Warbler	6	2	1			9
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>56</b>

314 net-hours

17.84 captures/100 net-hours

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).