

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update May 31 – June 9, 2022

By Shane Abernethy

The final stretch of spring migration predictably brought the last of the Least Flycatchers, an extremely common local breeder, but also a shocking number of Baltimore Orioles. We banded more orioles in the last ten days than we did over the entirety of last year! From visitor comments, we're not alone in noticing a dramatic uptick in oriole populations, either. Our hypothesis is that they had a very productive season last year, and a larger than normal amount of them survived the winter. Regardless, they're always welcome in the forest, although we wish they'd stop stealing the net ties for their nests.



A pair of Cedar Waxwings showcase their lovely colouring.

Speaking of nests, even as migration settles down the local birds are busy carving out territory and assembling nests. We've already come across a couple woodpecker, wren and duck nests while doing our daily work, and have also tracked down several Least Flycatcher nests for a more targeted study that will be ongoing this summer. And even better, after years of trying, it looks like our Purple Martin boxes are finally attracting the start of a colony, with a high count of 13 adults detected at the boxes during morning census!



Left: The final capture of spring migration was, fittingly, a Baltimore Oriole. Right: An Eastern Kingbird, the only one captured this year, poses imperiously. Its hidden crown is fluffed in indignation.

Event-wise, we were happy to host major donors and sponsors during our weekend-long VIP event. They were able to get a close look at the banding process and the work they were able to support, and we thank them very much for coming out and taking part!

But as spring migration winds down, there's no rest for the wicked, or for our staff. Even as we're running the last few days of migration monitoring, we're rapidly retooling for the upcoming MAPS season and commencing our breeding bird monitoring projects. Never a dull moment for a field biologist!

Table 1. Standard Migration Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Least Flycatcher	10	6			4	20
Traill's Flycatcher	2					2
Alder Flycatcher	1					1
Swainson's Thrush	7	1				8
Gray-Cheeked Thrush	1					1
American Robin	5					5
Yellow Warbler	3	6			1	10
Baltimore Oriole	11	24				35
Red-Winged Blackbird	1					1
Brown-Headed Cowbird		3			2	5
Clay-Colored Sparrow	1	3				4
White-Throated Sparrow	1					1
Song Sparrow		1				1
American Goldfinch	1					1
House Wren	2	2				4
TOTALS	46	46			7	99

718 net-hours

13.8 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).

Table 2. Experimental Migration Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Least Flycatcher	12	4	1		1	18
Traill's Flycatcher	13	1	1			15
Alder Flycatcher	1					1
Eastern Kingbird	1					1
Yellow Warbler	13	14	1		1	29
Blackpoll Warbler	1					1
Common Yellowthroat	5		1			6
Myrtle Warbler	1					1
Clay-Colored Sparrow	30	17			1	48
Song Sparrow	1					1
Lincoln's Sparrow	1					1
Baltimore Oriole	20	27			1	48
Red-Winged Blackbird	1				1	2
Brown-Headed Cowbird	1					1
Swainson's Thrush	2					2

American Robin		1	1			2
Warbling Vireo	4	2				6
Red-Eyed Vireo	1					1
Black-Capped Chickadee			1			1
Gray Catbird	5					5
Cedar Waxwing	4					4
American Goldfinch	4					4
Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker	1					1
TOTALS	122	66	6		5	199

192.5 net-hours

103.4 captures/100 net-hours