

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Fall Migration Update – September 16 to 30, 2004

Songbirds

Matt Hanneman

Welcome back to the latest chapter of fall migration monitoring. With it being two weeks since the last update, you are probably quivering with built up anticipation. I can assure you, it has been an exciting, action packed couple of weeks. Fall continues to advance as we have watched the leaves drop and gather in piles in front of the lab. Temperatures also are gradually dropping, dipping below zero at night and leaving chilly morning frosts. The maturing fall also means that songbird monitoring is soon coming to a close. However Saw-whet Owl monitoring is only just getting going as some of you may know if you made it to the Steaks and Saw-whet event.

The migrants continue to pour through at the BBO during the last two weeks as they arrive from the North. Tundra Swans have now arrived and big numbers of Geese (Snow, White-fronted and Canada), Sandhill Cranes, and a variety of ducks are still being seen, serenading us with their honks, coos, and quacks. As I mentioned in the last update, fall is always the coolest time to keep your eye on the birds the odd rare migrant. That is one of the toughest jobs for us out here, but when the going gets tough, the tough go birding. Our hard work pays off, though, and we have some very cool bird sightings to report. There has been a Varied Thrush, Townsend's Solitaire, and best of all a Great-crested Flycatcher all seen within the natural area.

Mist netting has also seen some interesting migrants despite low numbers. These captures include Swamp Sparrows, Winter Wrens, a Brown Creeper (one of my personal favorites), and a very rare Western Flycatcher. Besides these species, 28 other species were banded over the past two weeks bringing our fall total to 59 different species caught. Nets were open 12 of the 15 days and 65% of the possible net hours, with closure due to adverse weather conditions. After all said and done, there was a total of 194 captures (173 banded). The highest numbers came from Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Slate-colored Juncos, Orange-crowned Warblers, and American-tree Sparrows. Check out the species list (Table 1.0) for full information.

Saw-whet Owls

Lisa Priestley

As predicted, the saw-whets really began to move half way through September. We were unable to set the nets for three days in a row, but on September 19 the nets went up and we caught 11 saw-whets. Incidentally, this is 2 short of our record of 13 owls from last year. From September 16 to 30 (190 net hours) we captured 51 saw-whets (47 banded, 3 recaptures, and 1 escape).

Raptor Traps

Lisa Priestley

Although migration has slowed down considerably, we are still catching birds in the raptor traps. Another 9 birds were banded (1073 trap hours) including: 1 Red-tailed Hawk, 2 Great Horned Owls, and 6 Magpies. We are sitting at 29 birds caught in the raptor traps, our best year yet . . . hope we can make it 30!!

Table 1.0 Fall migration capture totals during September 16-30 at the BBO, 2004.

Species	Banded	Repeat	Recoveries	Other	Total
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2				2
Downy Woodpecker	1				1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1				1
Yellow-shafted Flicker	1				1
Western Flycatcher	1				1
Least Flycatcher	1				1
Savannah Sparrow	1				1
White-crowned Sparrow	4				4
White-throated Sparrow	7				7
American Tree Sparrow	16				16
Slate-colored Junco	26	2		2	30
Lincoln's Sparrow	5				5
Swamp Sparrow	2				2
Fox Sparrow	3				3
Orange-crowned Warbler	19			1	20
Cape May Warbler	2				2
Myrtle Warbler	9				9
Magnolia Warbler	3				3
Western Palm Warbler	2				2
Ovenbird	1				1
Northern Waterthrush	1				1
Wilson's Warbler	3				3
House Wren	2				2
Winter Wren	3				3
Brown Creeper	1				1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2				2
Black-capped Chickadee	5	12			17
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1				1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	35	2			37
Swainson's Thrush	5				5
Hermit Thrush	7	2			9
American Robin	1				1
Total	173	18	0	3	194



American Tree Sparrow above
Black-billed Magpie right © Chuck Priestley