

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Update July 1-10, 2006



Juvenile American Robin

At this time of year we're seeing birds at all stages of life: eggs, newly hatched birds, nestlings, fledglings working on their flight (and landing!) skills, and busy adults. We caught the first fledging birds of the year this week. At the WIER site, we caught an American Robin speckled with buff spots on its back and black spots on its breast. Over the next year these spotted feathers will either be replaced, or the "spotted" tips will wear off, so that come next spring this young bird will look just like the robins we are so familiar with. A family group of 5 juvenile Black-capped Chickadees also flew into a net at WIER-- chickadees are cute any time, but these young birds were adorable!



While mist-netting at WIER, Katie heard a couple of cowbird fledglings begging for food. Brown-headed Cowbirds lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, counting on those birds to adopt the eggs and raise their young. Sure enough, she saw a Least Flycatcher (half the size of even a young cowbird) busy feeding these enormous 'babies'. What a lot of work for the flycatcher! The House Wrens that nested in a woodpecker hole in one of the bunkhouses now have young that beg incessantly- they can be heard all the way to the lab. And we spotted one of the young Black-billed Magpies which was banded as a nestling a few weeks ago-also making a ruckus near the lab.



The Swallow Grid was busy again this week: 93 Tree Swallow nestlings and 2 adults were banded. We do see the light at the end of this tunnel- only 4 more boxes to go! We also visited Francis Point and banded 8 Tree Swallow nestlings and 4 Barn Swallow nestlings.



We were lucky to have several visitors at the lab this week. Cathy, Don, Anna and Ziliana Page as well as Estelle, Gerhart and Eric Reuter came out to witness mist-netting and help out with Tree Swallow banding, and Ed and Claudia Cameron spent a morning checking nets and banding at BLAB with us. Thanks to all for coming out!

-Alicia and Katie

Top-bottom: Claudia Cameron holding an Ovenbird; Anna Page and Ziliana Page holding young Tree Swallows

Table 1. Results from MAPS banding July 1-10, 2006.

Species	Banded	Recaptures	Foreign	Other	Total
American Robin	1	0	0	0	1
Black-capped Chickadee	5	0	0	0	5
Clay-colored Sparrow	1	1	0	0	2
Hermit Thrush	1	1	0	0	2
House Wren	1	0	0	0	1
Least Flycatcher	9	9	0	0	18
Ovenbird	1	0	0	0	1
Warbling Vireo	3	0	0	0	3
Yellow Warbler	0	1	0	0	1
Total	22	12	0	0	34

2006 Beaverhill Lake NABA Butterfly Count

In addition to being fun to catch (mostly!) and beautiful to observe, butterflies can serve as one important indicator of the health of ecosystems. July 2 was a perfect day for butterflies (sunny and calm) and the 2006 North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Butterfly Count. The NABA count is similar to a Christmas Bird Count: a one-day census of all butterflies observed in a 15-mile radius count circle encompassing the Beaverhill Natural Area. We only covered a small portion of the count circle, but nonetheless counted 629 butterflies from 16 species. The paths to the weir and through the Natural Area (willows, grassy areas and aspen forest edge habitat) were swamped with butterflies- dominated by Northern Crescents and White Admirals. Our short jaunt to the wetter roadside areas near Anise Creek turned up a Peck's Skipper and an early Grey Copper. A huge thanks to who participated in the count: Claudia and Ed Cameron, Barb and Jim Beck, Dave Lawrie, Jess Bennett and Erik Ligtenberg.



Silvery Blue



Beaverhill's 2006 NABA butterflyers!



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail

Table 2: Results from the July 2, 2006 Beaverhill Lake NABA Butterfly Count.

Species	Poplar/willow habitat	Amisk Creek	Poplar forest/Amisk Creek	TOTAL
European Skipper	3	1	8	12
Peck's Skipper	0	1	0	1
Long Dash Skipper	2	0	0	2
Skipper sp.	2	0	3	5
Cdn. Tiger Swallowtail	1	0	3	4
Cabbage White	5	1	1	7
White sp.	0	0	13	13
Clouded Sulpher	0	4	1	5
Sulpher sp.	0	0	2	2
Grey Copper	0	1	0	1
Greenish Blue	7	3	4	14
Silvery Blue	0	1	3	4
Western-tailed Blue	2	0	0	2
Blue sp.	0	0	8	8
Fritillary sp.	1	0	0	1
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	0	0	1	1
Northern Crescent	255	0	48	303
White Admiral	52	1	126	179
Northern Pearly Eye	4	0	9	13
Inornate Ringlet	8	22	22	52
TOTAL # BUTTTERFLIES				629
TOTAL # SPECIES				16