

BEAVERHILL BIRD OBSERVATORY UPDATE MAY 1-7, 2007



Spring at the BBO Lab

WELCOME TO ANOTHER SEASON at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory! I (Alicia) am back for my second summer as the bander-in-charge, and Anna Daku is the new staff person this year. I've just finished a B.Sc. in Environmental and Conservation Science at the University of Alberta, and Anna is almost done a B.Sc. in Environmental Biology at the U of A. We're looking forward to a great summer, and we hope you'll make time this summer to visit us at the lab and spend some time in the Beaverhill Natural Area.

The 2007 season is off to a busy start and our expectations for this summer are high! We've banded a higher number of birds in this first week than expected, including some less common species: a Brown Creeper and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Myrtle Warblers have been the most abundant species. It's good to see this common early migrant back in the nets after only catching two Myrtle Warblers during the entire spring migration last year. We've also banded some other early migrant species: Orange-crowned Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and White-throated Sparrows.



Male Myrtle Warbler



Brown Creeper

Banding birds requires good knowledge of bird species, as well as the techniques used to determine the age and sex of each species in its various plumages. This past weekend we were fortunate to attend a bird banding workshop put on by the Canadian Wildlife Service in Lesser Slave Lake. We met with banders from across western Canada to practice techniques for aging birds, and learned some great tips and new methods for aging woodpeckers from Peter Pyle himself (the author of the bird banding manual used across North America). Now we're looking forward to putting this knowledge to good use.

Spring is well underway at the BBO. Tree Swallows are building their nests in the Swallow Grid, and we've already seen a brood patch on a Black-capped Chickadee and an American Robin. The water level is much higher this year compared to last year, and there are numerous ducks and shorebirds flying overhead as well as around Lister Lake and flooded Kallel Meadows along Rowen's Route. A Cinnamon Teal has been sighted a few times, along with Black-necked Stilts, Black-bellied Plovers and Hudsonian Godwits.



Water flowing over the Weir

And it's not all about birds- we've also seen white-tailed deer, porcupines, hares, a short-eared weasel, early butterflies and frogs this week. There's lots to see, so come on out!

-Alicia Kelly and Anna Daku

Table 1: Results from Spring Migration Monitoring May 1-7, 2007.

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Robin	1	0	1	0	0	2
Black-capped Chickadee	5	1	1	0	1	8
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	0	0	0	0	1
Blackpoll Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	1
Brown Creeper	1	0	0	0	0	1
Clay-colored Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Flycatcher sp.	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hermit Thrush	2	0	0	0	1	3
Lincoln's Sparrow	2	0	0	0	0	2
Myrtle Warbler	31	0	0	0	1	32
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	0	0	0	1	5
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4	0	0	0	0	4
Savannah Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Slate-colored Junco	1	0	0	0	0	1
Song Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Swamp Sparrow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Traill's Flycatcher	1	0	0	0	0	1
White-throated Sparrow	5	0	0	0	0	5
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	64	1	2	0	5	72

Net Hours: 222.6 NH

Capture Rate: 32.24 birds/ 100 NH

- 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).



Anna and Alicia (holding a Dark-eyed Junco and Myrtle Warbler)



Staff with bird banding guru Peter Pyle and Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory staff (and BBO staff alumni) Tyler and Richard