

Bi-Weekly Update June 28th – July 8th.

After a day of banding Tree Swallow and Bluebird chicks, the team of Kevin, Alexis, and Malicia were treated to the sighting of a Bobolink in the west end of Kallal Meadow. The Bobolink is a noteworthy sighting at the BBO since it is at its most Northern range here. It is a beautiful blackbird that is unique among songbirds in that it is only one of a few species that have undergo two complete molts each year! I read that Bobolinks are collected as food in Jamaica, where they are referred to as “butter birds” due to how much fat they tend to have at that point in their migration. The next day, the BBO team banded more Tree Swallow chicks; however, they didn’t see anymore Bobolinks – which is too bad really because a group is collectively known by the fun term: “a chain” of Bobolinks.

MAPS point counts were done on the 30th. It was a windy and cool day so there was not much activity. While I was walking to my last point at WEIR, I spooked a moose and it went bolting through the forest. I was only 20 m away when it happened and the commotion gave me a fright. In the afternoon we went raptor banding with Al. We banded four 20-day old American Kestrels in a nest box near Redwater. Afterwards Al set up a roadside trap to try to capture and band the adults. We caught the mother, but when Al went to band her, we discovered that she had already been banded.

We officially started the third round of MAPS on July 2nd at BLAB. The trend continued at net lane 7 of catching the pair of Least Flycatchers representing band numbers 2690 32767 and 68. If anyone ever needed convincing that bird banding is an ethical practice that is not dangerous for the birds, this pair would be great evidence of that. In the evening, Alexis and I moved the ARU units to their new locations. Afterwards we walked over to weir to do some bird watching. Both Alexis and I marveled at how aggressively the Tree Swallows were chasing away the other birds. It was absolutely amazing to watch two aerial maestros, the Black Tern and the Tree Swallow, chasing after one another in aerial acrobatics.

PARK continued to be the least productive of the three MAPS sites, giving us only a handful of birds throughout the morning. We speculated that the reason being is the older forest at PARK as compared to BLAB.

The fourth round of MAPS was completed on July 4th. It was also the final day of uber-volunteers, Alexis and Malicia, stay at the BBO. They are excellent workers with tremendous enthusiasm and passion for the outdoors and research. I had the pleasure of rooming with them for their month at the BBO and I will miss them dearly – they are a joy to be around and their positive attitudes and warm personalities were a real asset to the team. We are lucky to have made such close friends in them and I think the BBO has made a life-long partnership with these two. Good luck to them on their travels.

On the heels of the fourth round of MAPS was the annual butterfly survey, led by the naturalist, Steve Andersen. We had a good group of guests come out for the event, including John Acorn, a personal hero of mine. We started the survey at the visitor parking lot and made our way back in a giant clockwise-loop. The survey took us two hours and we caught six different species. Our most common species was the

Northern Pearl Crescent, of which we caught 73 of! After the survey finished... we went on another butterfly survey (performing the Pollard Walk for the butterfly intern who was away that week). It was a fun day and everyone learned a lot.

The remaining three days were full of data entry and moving ARU units around to finish all the pairs in time to start the Yellow Rail study on July 10th. To hear the results of that study you will just have to stay tuned for the next bi-weekly update!

Table 1. Banding Summary from June 28th – July 8th.

	Banded	Recapture	Return	Other	Total
Least Flycatcher	10	7	7	3	27
American Robin	0	0	1	0	1
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	1	0	0	2

Table 2. Capture Summary for MAPS Stations from June 28th – July 8th.

Net Lane	BLAB	PARK	WEIR
1	0	2	1
2	1	0	2
3	1	1	2
4	0	0	0
5	3	0	0
6	1	0	1
7	2	1	0
8	0	0	2
9	3	1	1
10	2	1	2
Total	13	6	11