

## Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update May 8-14, 2022

By Shane Abernethy

As might be expected of early spring, we faced a week of sheer frustration. Wind, cold, and even snow prevented us from even opening nets on some days, and the days we did yielded low single-digit captures. However, we were able to turn the days of slow banding into an opportunity, and succeeded in fully establishing a complete series of experimental net lanes, to be run in tandem with our standardized nets throughout the full year. These new mist nets, strategically placed in willow habitat further out into the grassland, will hopefully yield increased capture rates of a similar magnitude to the first series of net locations we established last fall.

Poor weather aside, we still managed some interesting captures, including a Western Palm Warbler, and, very surprisingly, a Tree Swallow. Swallows are incredibly maneuverable birds and are able to deftly avoid mist nets in most situations, making them a nearly unheard-of capture. Perhaps he was thinking of something else and flying on autopilot before having his day suddenly interrupted by biologists.

The other advantage of slow days is that it gives us an excuse to open the non-standard feeder net, which captures interesting species not typically captured in the migration nets. This was particularly handy when an Evening Grosbeak showed up out of nowhere, as they are prone to doing, and finally flew into the net after taunting us for nearly an hour. Later that day, that net also captured a gorgeous Rose-Breasted Grosbeak, who proceeded to demonstrate on our tender fingers exactly what that beak can be used for.

Throughout the natural area, we are seeing signs that the mad rush of spring migration is definitely continuing. We captured the first Least Flycatchers and Yellow Warbler of the season, and were excited to make our first sighting of a Baltimore Oriole, who will soon be filling the forest with their melodic whistle. Meanwhile, swarms of thousands of midges are forming above the forest, where they will be valuable food for our local Tree Swallows.



*Evening Grosbeaks are mysterious, nomadic finches, and will appear out of nowhere only to vanish just as suddenly.*



*Seriously, what was this Tree Swallow doing in a mist net? That just doesn't happen.*

Table 1. Standard Migration Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat <sup>1</sup>	Return <sup>2</sup>	Foreign <sup>3</sup>	Other <sup>4</sup>	Total
Myrtle Warbler	1					
Clay-Colored Sparrow	4					
White-Throated Sparrow	1					
Lincoln's Sparrow	1					
Tree Swallow	1					
Least Flycatcher	2					
House Wren	1					
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>

203.5 net-hours

1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO

5.4 captures/100 net-hours

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 <sup>1</sup>	Return <sup>2</sup>	Foreign <sup>3</sup>	Other <sup>4</sup>	Total
Western Palm Warbler	1					
Yellow Warbler	1					
Myrtle Warbler	5					
Clay-Colored Sparrow	18					
Savannah Sparrow	1					
White-Throated Sparrow	3					
Black-Capped Chickadee		1				
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>

59.25 net-hours

50.6 captures/100 net-hours