

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update August 16, 2022 – August 22, 2022

By Shane Abernethy

This week was a relatively uneventful one, likely owing to a protracted stretch of high daytime temperatures. We noted a considerable decrease in bird activity the moment the sun cleared the horizon and the temperature started climbing, and we can't blame the birds one bit. A similar decrease in activity was noted in the staff, who spent most of the week working on data entry and other office tasks from the relative cool of the lab building.

However, that doesn't mean nothing of interest happened. The trickle of boreal migrants has sped up a little, and it would seem we're in a bit of a calm-before-the-storm period before the fall rush of warblers begins in earnest. For the moment, it looks like most of the migratory locals have cleared out, and most of what we're catching are transient birds passing through on migration.

Of note this week were two occasions: first, we wished goodbye and a pleasant trip home to Robyn, a volunteer from Ontario who spent two weeks helping us with our operations. Thank you so much, and may you enjoy the Eastern warblers on your return! Also of note was the first fall banding livestream of 2022, which attracted modest viewership but was able to offer a close-up look at a number of birds to several people who weren't able to make it to our songbird banding events.

Other sightings throughout the natural area are hinting that migration is well underway. Even though they haven't been captured, several other boreal migrants, such as Blackpoll and Canada Warblers, have been spotted taunting us from the birdbaths. Our newly operational MOTUS receiver tower has also proven very popular with our resident purple martins, as well as a number of raptors passing through. One memorable morning saw three Merlins perched on the tower, sending birds in the clearing into a tizzy.

In some ways, this is an excellent time: it's slow enough to let us take our time with birds and commit those subtle morphological features to memory before the true rush hits in the next couple weeks.



How many nuts could a nuthatch hatch if a nuthatch could hatch nuts?



Black and white warblers are often found creeping up trees, foraging for insects that other birds would miss.

Table 1. Standard Migration Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Least Flycatcher	7				2	9
Traill's Flycatcher	3					3
Alder Flycatcher	1					1
Yellow Warbler	1	1				2
Myrtle Warbler	23	2				25
Ovenbird	1					1
Tennessee Warbler	1					1
American Redstart	1					1
Black-and-White Warbler	1					1
Rose-Breasted Grosbeak	1					1
Black-Capped Chickadee	5	4				9
House Wren	1					1
Warbling Vireo	2					2
Philadelphia Vireo		1				1
Red-Breasted Nuthatch	1					1
Downy Woodpecker	1					1
TOTALS	50	8			2	60

538.5 net-hours

1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO

11.1 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 ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
Least Flycatcher	39	3			1	43
Traill's Flycatcher	20					20
Alder Flycatcher	3					3
Yellow Warbler	85	12			1	98
Western Palm Warbler	1					1
Common Yellowthroat	2					2
Myrtle Warbler	23	1				24
Tennessee Warbler	13	2				15
American Redstart	3					3
Ovenbird	3					3
Mourning Warbler	1					1
Clay-Colored Sparrow	5	2				7
Chipping Sparrow	1					1
House Wren	3	2				5

Swainson's Thrush	1					1
Warbling Vireo	8	1				9
Red-Eyed Vireo	1					1
Philadelphia Vireo	1					1
Black-Capped Chickadee	2	10				12
Gray Catbird	3					3
Ruby-Throated Hummingbird					1	1
TOTALS	218	33	0	0	3	254

173 net-hours

146 captures/100 net-hours