

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update September 27 – October 3

By Shane Abernethy

With this week, the calendar has flipped over to October, and we find life at the BBO rapidly changing. The rush of warblers has slowed to a mere trickle, and end of season migrants such as Slate-colored Juncos and American Tree Sparrows have started appearing. These boreal and arctic sparrows are the last songbirds to pass through on fall migration, and a harbinger of the end of the season.

But the odd songbirds are still passing through: this week we captured our first Golden-Crowned Kinglets of the fall, bringing our seasonal species count to 69. Just one more species will take us to 70, a number previously considered unlikely, overly ambitious and very out of our reach. Likewise, our total seasonal captures have us closing in on 3,000, another lofty number that is tantalizingly close. Even if we fall short of that milestone, this has still been a fantastically diverse and dense fall migration.

Meanwhile, October is peak season for owl migration, and so this change of month has us flipping our schedules and shifting our staffing priority away from songbirds and toward owls. Those of us remaining on songbirds can now use the extra time from reduced bird banding to focus on reports, analyses, and trying to reduce the enormous backlog of data entry that built up over a fall that yielded nearly 50% more captures than last year. There are two weeks in songbird monitoring season yet, so there's still time for us to be surprised.



A Long-eared Owl perched in a tree, getting its bearings just after being banded and released.



Left: The first American Tree Sparrow of the season, and a signal that our time in the field is coming to an end.

Right: a straggling Palm Warbler that really should be getting a move on to its tropical overwintering range.



Table 1. Migration Monitoring Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Robin	1					1
Black-capped Chickadee	1	9				10
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2					2
Lincoln's Sparrow	2					2
Myrtle Warbler	10	2				12
Nashville Warbler					1	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1					1
Slate-colored Junco	2					2
Swainson's Thrush	1					1
Western Palm Warbler	4					4
White-breasted Nuthatch	1					1
White-throated Sparrow	2					2
TOTALS	27	11	0	0	1	39

432 net-hours

1 Banded recently (within 90 days) at the BBO

9.02 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 Net Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
American Tree Sparrow	5					5
Black-capped Chickadee	6	1				7
Lincoln's Sparrow	1					1
Myrtle Warbler	9	2				11
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2					2
Slate-colored Junco	2					2
Tennessee Warbler	1					1
Western Palm Warbler	1				1	2
TOTALS	27	3	0	0	1	31

110 net-hours

28.2 captures/100 net-hours

Table 3. Owl Migration Monitoring Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat ¹	Return ²	Foreign ³	Other ⁴	Total
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Northern Saw-Whet Owl (M)	26	2				28
Northern Saw-Whet Owl (F)	5	1				6
Long-Eared Owl	2					2
Boreal Owl						0
TOTALS	33	3	0	0	0	36

NSWO Male Lure Playback Hours: 42

Capture Rate: 66.7 captures/100 net-hours

NSWO Female Lure Playback Hours: 41.5

Capture Rate: 14.5 captures/100 net-hours

Long-Eared Owl Playback Hours: 30

Capture Rate: 0.67 captures/100 net-hours

Boreal Owl Playback Hours: 5.5

Capture Rate: 0