

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly Update May 8-14, 2025

Despite a few bouts of dreary weather, spring migration banding is “taking off” at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory! The majority of captures occurred in the second half of the week, bringing back numerous fan favourites. Capture highlights from this week include a Blue Jay, a Hairy Woodpecker recapture who was first banded way back in 2014, and the first Western Palm Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes of the season! An interesting non-avian sighting was that of a Red Squirrel, which have never been seen before at the Observatory. The team was captivated by this little visitor, who only stayed for the day but raises questions about the trajectory of this species in the area. Additionally, at the weir, a hiker spotted an American Badger!

World Migratory Bird Day took place on the sunny day of May 10th, and the BBO hosted a pleasant drop-in event and welcomed approximately 20 visitors. Attendees were able to watch the banding process, including that of a handsome Golden-crowned

Kinglet, get their faces painted by the talented Emelie, treat

themselves to some sweets, and

participate in a joyful feather toss for a flurry of nesting Tree Swallows. The birds certainly knew to show up for the festivities, and a few of the season’s “firsts” were observed on this day, such as Tennessee Warblers and Warbling Vireos! In preparation for this and future events, Emelie finished transforming the second floor of the Banding Lab into an immersive and educational space, with displays on everything from bird nests to insects to skull anatomy!

Individual staff monitoring projects are also gaining momentum. Jon has performed numerous dedicated Shorebird Surveys, spotting birds such as American Golden-Plovers, Black-bellied Plovers, and thousands of dowitchers and sandpipers! In continuation of the Least Flycatcher Nest Monitoring program, Emelie has discovered four new nests to



On May 11th, the banding of this Western Palm Warbler signified the migratory return of this species to the area!



Blue Jays, such as this lovely lady we banded on May 9th, are a rare sight at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory!

study throughout this year’s breeding season. Xavier is preparing to embark on his

Breeding Bird surveys, and Willow, with the generous help of Jon and El, scoped out Marsh Monitoring survey locations on the northeast shores of Lister Lake.

On May 10th, Jana and Jon left to spend a few days with the biologists at the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory, and it will be exciting to hear the tales of their banding experiences when they return!

This week was made amazing thanks to the presence of volunteers. Long-term volunteer El Whitby was in the second of her five week stay at the BBO, rapidly gaining banding skills and ceaselessly boosting morale with her quick wit. On Migratory Bird Day, Patrick Robinson put his exceptional identification abilities to work and helped ensure a wonderful visitor experience! The lovely staff, volunteers, and interns at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory all guarantee a fantastic field season to come!

Table 1. Migration Monitoring Banding Totals

Species	Banded	Repeat¹	Return²	Foreign³	Other⁴	Total
American Robin	2					2
Baltimore Oriole			1			1
Black-and-White Warbler	1					1
Black-capped Chickadee		1	3			4
Brown-Headed Cowbird	1	1				2
Chipping Sparrow	5					5
Clay-coloured Sparrow	41	2	2			45
Common Yellowthroat	1					1
Gambel's White-Crowned Sparrow	1					1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1					1
Gray-Cheeked Thrush	3					3
Least Flycatcher	16		3			19
Lincoln's Sparrow	1					1

Myrtle Warbler	5					5
Northern House Wren	2					2
Orange-crowned Warbler	1					1
Song Sparrow	4					4
Swainson's Thrush	5					5
Tennessee Warbler	3					3
Tree Swallow	1		1			2
Western Palm Warbler	1					1
White-Throated Sparrow	5					5
Yellow Warbler	11		3			14
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			1			1
Totals	111	4	14			129

Total Net Hours: 609 net-hours

21.18 captures/100 net-hours

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).