



## Beaverhill Bird Observatory BirdSmart Education Report 2023/2024

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The 2023/2024 BirdSmart season was once again a resounding success! A total of 264 presentations were given from November 20, 2023 to April 27, 2024. These presentations reached over 20,000 students and nearly 2,000 adults, representing a 22% increase over the 2022/2023 season's totals! 208 (80.0 %) of this year's presentations were given to schools. Grades 1-3 and 4-6 were the most frequently booked presentations with 57 and 51 presentations, respectively.

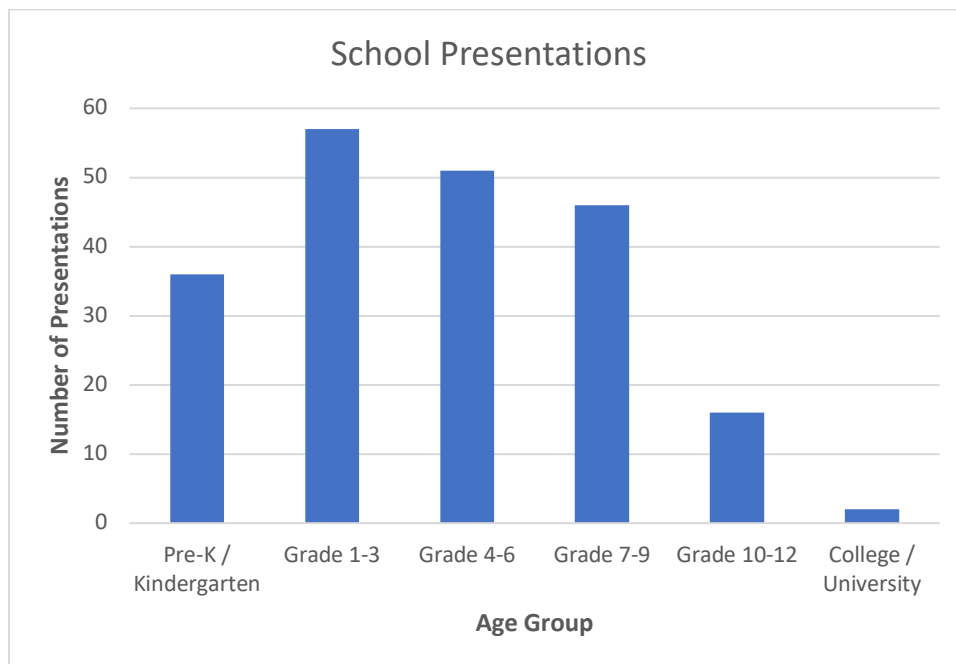


Figure 1: Total number of school presentations for each grade level

While the majority of presentations this year were in-person, staff continued taking bookings for virtual presentations to offer increased flexibility to teachers. 255 presentations were given in-person, with only 9 being given as virtual presentations.

The presentations and topics offered were updated this season to better the new Alberta curriculum as well as being refreshed with a more standardized appearance. This included the removal of some presentation topics that teachers were not booking, as well as the addition of new 'Raptors of Alberta' and 'Hawks of Alberta' presentations to match the greater diversity of ambassador birds this year. An updated list of presentation topics and curriculum links can be found on the 'BirdSmart' section of the BBO website.



Figure 2: Head Biologist Jana and Nina the Burrowing Owl present at the Christmas Bird Count for Youth (Photo credit: Natalie Semeniuk)

While schools are the primary focus of our education program, 57 (20.0%) of this year's presentations were given to non-school groups. These include after-school groups like Scouts and Girl Guides, senior centers (Shepherd's Care, Good Samaritan Society), in-store events (Backyard Birds Nature Shop), community events (hockey games, festivals), technical audiences and private bookings (birthday parties, meet and greets). We also participated in an Earth Day Event at West Edmonton Mall, and brought an ambassador bird to an art class in Forestburg for students to draw!

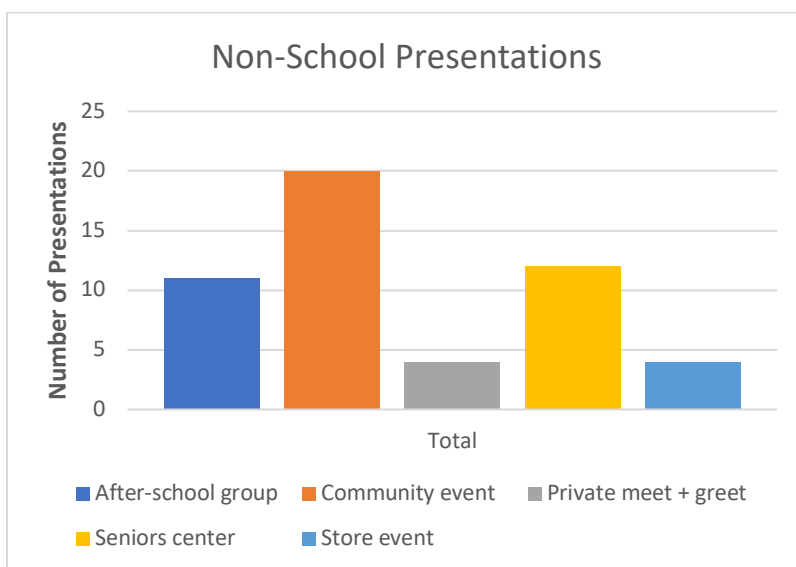


Figure 3: Total numbers of non-school presentations for each presentation type

The BirdSmart Education program was able to participate in the Edmonton Oil King's Hockey Hooky event once again this year! Head biologist Jana Teefy, Assistant Biologist Jon Van Arragon, and Seasonal Biologist Jasper June went on stage to present to an arena filled with over 15,000 students of all ages. Jana did an interview to talk about the Beaverhill Bird Observatory's monitoring programs, and Jon gave a talk about Burrowing Owl conservation. Both talks were extremely well received, and multiple teachers cited these talks as the reason why they booked a presentation afterwards.



*Figure 3: Jon and Nina present at Hockey Hooky*

This year the BirdSmart Education program received a grant from Beaver County to subsidize mileage costs for schools within the Battle River School Division for the 2023/2024 season. This allowed us to offer presentations at a reduced cost for more distant communities within the division and further increased the reach of our program. In the 2023/2024 season, 28% of presentations were given to schools outside of the immediate Edmonton area, compared to only 21% of presentations in the previous year. We hope to continue expanding our reach throughout Alberta for the next BirdSmart season!

The BirdSmart Education program reached students across the province including Bawlf, Beaumont, Bon Accord, Calgary, Carvel, Cooking Lake, Drayton Valley, Edmonton, Forestburg, Hastings Lake, Lacombe, Lac La Biche, Leduc, Morinville, Morley, Namao, Round Hill, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove, St. Albert, Stony Plain, Thorhild, Tofield, Vegreville, Wabasca, and Wetaskiwin.



*Figure 4: (left to right) Nina the Burrowing Owl, Jana, Jasper, and Keith advertise BirdSmart at the Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention*

This year's presenters were Head Biologist Jana Teefy, Assistant Biologist Jon Van Arragon, and Seasonal Biologist Jasper June. BBO's Chair, Dr. Geoff Holroyd gave 10 presentations to public and technical audiences, most on Zoom. Jasper also worked behind the scenes to coordinate bookings, scheduling, and invoicing for the presentations. They were joined by educational ambassador birds Nina the Burrowing Owl, Keith the Red-tailed Hawk, and Tansi the Great Horned Owl.



*Figure 5: Tansi the Great Horned Owl poses during a presentation*

After each presentation, teachers received a link to a survey where they could give feedback on the talk. Feedback for this year's presentations was overwhelmingly positive. 96.5% of survey respondents said they would book another presentation with BBO in the future, and 100% of respondents also said they would recommend the BirdSmart program to other teachers. BirdSmart Education is increasingly being recognized as a classroom resource, with many teachers booking presentations year after year.

#### Q9 Would you participate in BBO's educational program again?

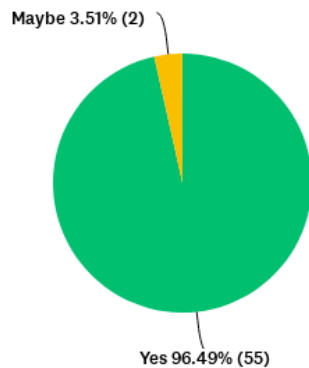


Figure 5: Number of survey respondents who would participate in the BirdSmart program again.

#### Q8 Would you recommend BBO's educational program to other teachers?

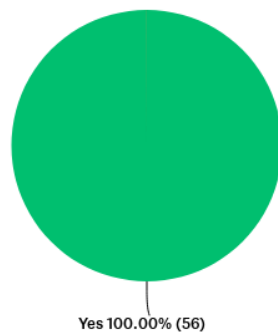


Figure 6: Number of survey respondents who would recommend BirdSmart to other teachers.

### Sample Survey Responses:

*"This is our 5th year, I think, and it gets better each year! It is always wonderful when we have time to interact with the ambassador bird ... that is truly the exciting part .. the kids and staff are always looking forward to it!!! Thank you .... we will book a full day for next year!!!"*

- St Hilda School

*"The students really enjoyed this presentation and were very interested. Jana did a great job fielding all of the questions. She handled the students very well."*

- Lendrum School

*"I have never seen that group of kids sit that still and quiet for that long before. Jasper was an amazing presenter who kept the attention of everyone in the room and managed to keep everyone on topic as well. All of us (adults included) had an awesome time and would do the program again"*

- Girl Guides of Canada

*"Jon was amazing! He was dynamic, enthusiastic, energetic, knowledgeable, and engaging with our kids, and you could tell he was genuinely excited to share with us."*

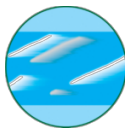
- Bon Accord Day Camp

The BBO would like to thank our presenters Jana Teefy, Jon Van Arragon, Jasper June and Geoff Holroyd for all their hard work this season. We must also thank our ambassador birds Nina, Tansi, and Keith for making our presentations as memorable as they are. We also extend a special thanks to Bill and Inger Paulsen, Billy Teefy, and Geoff Holroyd for their assistance in transporting our education birds in and out of Edmonton. We would also like to thank Gord Court for lending us his Peregrine Falcon, Vinnie, for a few presentations this year. And finally, we would like to extend a hearty thank you to Phil and Helen Trefry for all they do daily for housing and taking care of our ambassador birds year-round as well as preparing them often early in the morning to be transported into the city.





The Beaverhill Bird Observatory is a proud member of the Beaver County and Tofield communities. We thank our many supporters and funders that are shown below along with personal donations including in memory of Mary Hughes Weir and the Wainwright Wildlife Society. Visit [www.beaverhillbirds.com](http://www.beaverhillbirds.com) for more information.



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