

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Weekly update - July 30th to August 8th, 2026

Keeping with the trend this year the continuing unpredictability of the weather caused issues. Despite the consistent rain, the flooding in the natural area receded markedly. Following this trend, the mosquito population has gone from “apocalyptic” to “horrible” but with our experiences over the last few weeks, “horrible” is a relative relief. Fortunately, what is a plague to use is a smorgasbord for our birds! The flooding plus the mosquitoes meant we weren’t sure whether our birds would have success with raising their babies. One species that seems to have done well this year is the Tree Swallow, with adults raising additional broods of babies much later than most years. As a result, a magnificent flock of over 600 babies used the natural area as foraging grounds for several days. Later on, we’ll see one species that, unfortunately, didn’t experience this same breeding success.



The best warbler: the Myrtle Warbler
(*Setophaga coronata coronata*)

Banding left much to be desired this week. Though the flooding has decreased, two of our three MAPS stations remain too wet to reasonably access, so only BLAB was completed this round. As usual, our oldest MAPS station is our least productive, with only eight birds captured, the highlight being an Eastern Warbling Vireo. Fall Migration Monitoring was also impacted by the weather, meaning we achieved relatively low net hours and capture rates. Despite this, we did catch a few notable birds, including a LeConte’s Sparrow and a Myrtle Warbler. Perhaps the most notable aspect of our captures was the absence of Clay-coloured Sparrows. In more typical years, this species should be among the most

frequently encountered in our nets, yet we caught none this week. This species is known to nest on the ground in grasslands, so the fact that their entire habitat was covered in almost a meter of water is likely the cause of their disappearance.

Besides banding, much of this week was spent preparing for the annual Young Ornithologists Workshop. This included putting everything sharp to work clearing the numerous branches and trees that had fallen or floated onto our trails. In spite of the many storms this week the low capture rates made it feel like we were in the calm before the storm of activity that comes along with the Workshop.



LeConte’s Sparrow
(*Ammodramus leconteii*)

Table 1. Fall Migration Monitoring banding totals

Species Name	Banded	Repeat	Return	Other	Grand Total
American Goldfinch	1				1
Black-capped Chickadee	1	1			2
Brown-headed Cowbird	1				1
Common Yellowthroat	1				1
Eastern Warbling-Vireo	1		1		2
Least Flycatcher	67	5	1	5	78
LeConte's Sparrow	1				1
Myrtle Warbler	1				1
Northern House Wren	2	1		1	4
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2				2
Red-winged Blackbird	1				1
Song Sparrow	4				4
Tennessee Warbler	7	1			8
Trail's Flycatcher	2				2
Unidentified Warbling Vireo	2	2			4
Yellow Warbler	21	4	2		27
Grand Total	115	14	4	6	139

562.5 net-hours

25.0 captures/100 net-hours

Repeat - banded 90 or fewer days ago, at the BBO
 Return - banded over 90 days ago, at the BBO
 Other - caught but not banded (e.g. escaped)

Table 2. MAPS BLAB banding totals

Species Name	Banded	Repeat	Return	Other	Grand Total
Least Flycatcher	4	1	1		6
Black-capped Chickadee		1			1
Eastern Warbling Vireo	1				1
Grand Total	5	2	1	0	8

59.0 net-hours

13.5 captures/100 net-hours

Repeat - banded 90 or fewer days ago, at the BBO
 Return - banded over 90 days ago, at the BBO
 Other - caught but not banded (e.g. escaped)