



The Auspice

Pelee Island Bird Observatory

Spring/Summer 2014

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And a sincere thank-you to our many individual donors, friends, supporters, partners and PIBO's hard-working volunteers!

Spring Migration Summary



Fish Point on April 1st, 2014. Photo by G.C. Gibson.

PIBO's 12th spring migration monitoring campaign got underway on April 1st under partially cloudy skies and with light winds from the south. Although it was a mild 11 degrees, evidence of the winter weather was all around, with the lake mostly frozen and with large snow banks still covering the east and west shores. Despite the conditions, there was a nice variety of birds around, with 43 species noted on the 90-minute walk.

Over the following days it became clear that the late breakup of ice on the Great Lakes had a significant effect on typical March migrant waterfowl. Most years these birds have passed through the area by April 1st, but this year there were record numbers of Common Mergansers and Common Goldeneyes. Mist nest were set up on the 16th and banding began the next day with 9 birds captured of 6 species, including White-Throated Sparrows, American Robins and Northern Cardinals.

Things began to pick up on May 5th after the previous night's thunderstorms pushed through a large group of warblers, including the season's first Chestnut-Sided, Magnolia, Black-Throated Blue, and American Redstarts. Several Nashville Warblers were banded. This diversity of warbler species continued in the following days with the first Orange-Crowned, Wilson's, Blue-Winged, and Hooded banded between the 6th and

the 11th. An Eastern Kingbird was banded on May 19th, an unusual capture as this flycatcher species prefers open spaces and usually stays up above the dogwoods in the netting area.

The first Mourning Warbler of the season was banded on May 22nd, signalling the beginning of the end of warbler migration. Warbler diversity declined precipitously in the following days, although Magnolia Warblers continued to be captured occasionally, and a male Hooded Warbler was banded on May 31st. June 1st was the final day of banding for the spring season and netted five birds, all of them local nesters: a Yellow Warbler, a Downy Woodpecker and a Gray Catbird among them. Census continued until June 10th, for the most part turning up a predictable roster of local nesting birds, along with a few waterfowl and shorebirds. The end of spring migration still held some surprises, however, with a Western Kingbird spotted at the tip of Fish Point on June 5th.

In all, PIBO staff and volunteers conducted 71 mornings of consecutive coverage (less one day) at Fish Point from April 1st to June 10th and recorded 172 species, including 27 warbler species. It was a good banding season, with 844 birds captured of 62 species in 1461 net hours for an average catch-rate of 0.58 birds/net-hour (much higher than last spring's catch rate of 0.40 birds/net-hour).



Hooded Warbler. Photo by Sachi Schott.



PIBO Trinidad and Tobago 2014

By Graeme Gibson, the Elder

Fourteen friends of PIBO flew to Trinidad/Tobago last April for a nine day exploration of these marvellous islands. Reputed to be unmatched in the Caribbean for biodiversity, Trinidad and Tobago are home to an extraordinary collection of flora and fauna. Between them they have 470 species of birds and 617 species of butterflies, not to mention countless other creatures in a country that is smaller than Prince Edward Island.

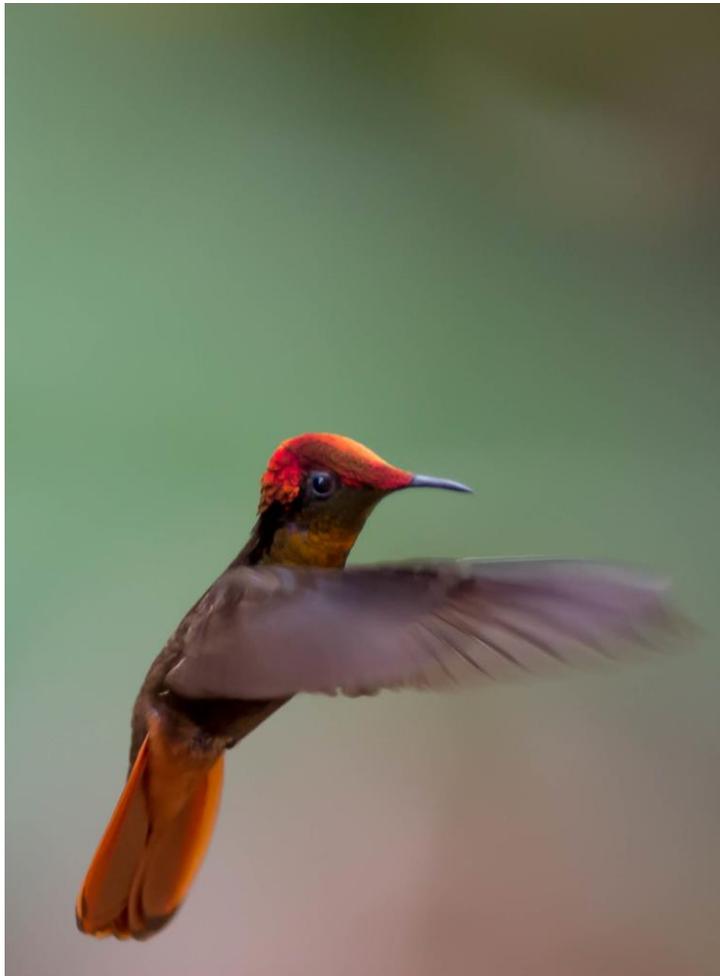
At the end of the day our own lists contained 216 bird species, including 10 varieties of Hawks and Kites, 22 Tyrant Flycatchers and a marvellous variety of Caribbean and South American specialities. Along with the birds we encountered rare Leatherback Turtles laying eggs, and watched Red Howler Monkeys protesting in an elegant forest.

Our accommodations were in the legendary Asa Wright Centre, and Tobago's Cuffie River Nature Retreat. The latter, both well situated and charming, was particularly memorable. It is clear PIBO will organise another visit to Trinidad and Tobago.

If interested in PIBO's next birding trip, please visit our website, pibo.ca, or get in touch with us at info@pibo.ca.



Ruby-topaz Hummingbird (left), Scarlet Ibis (above), female and male Green Honeycreeper (below), and Blue-crowned Motmot (bottom) photographed on the PIBO 2014 Trinidad and Tobago trip by trip participant Tim Stewart.





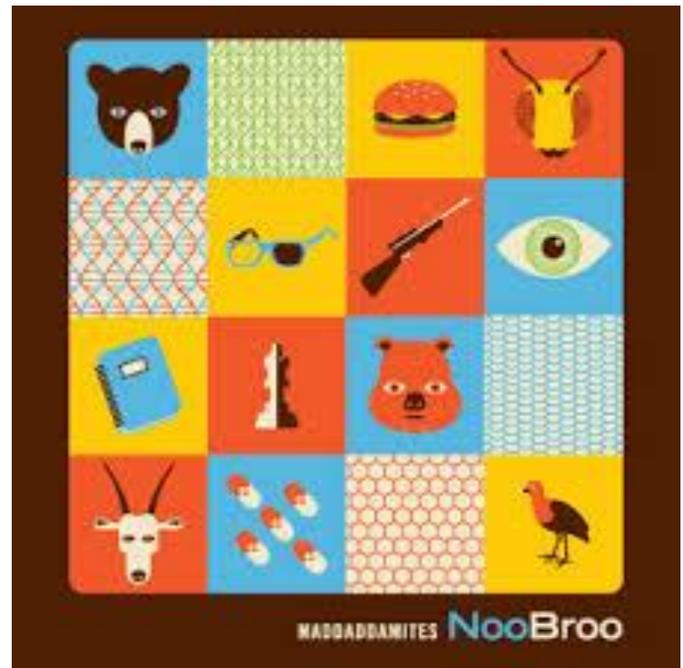
3rd Annual PIBO Windsor Fundraiser

PIBO's third annual Windsor Fundraiser Dinner, "Margaret Atwood and the Pelee Island Bird Observatory Present: An Evening with Wayne Grady", was held on May 7, 2014, at Beach Grove Golf and Country Club. It was a fantastic evening, with great food and wine, and of course great company. It was particularly nice to catch up with attendees from our previous Windsor fundraisers, and as always, the generosity of those in attendance this year is much appreciated. Money raised from the event will fund our research monitoring migratory songbirds, and breeding birds on Pelee Island, as well as our award-winning environmental education programs.

We would like to thank our honoured guests, Margaret Atwood and Wayne Grady, who read from his highly acclaimed novel, *Emancipation Day*. Both Margaret and Wayne were very gracious to sign copies of their books after the dinner and live auction.

PIBO would also like to thank our event sponsors: An Anonymous Bird Lover; Dr. Alan Wildeman, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Windsor; TD Friends of the Environment Foundation; Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation; Sean White, Associate Director, Wealth Management at Scotia McLeod; Dr. John Strasser, President of St. Clair College; Sanson Estate Winery; Balzac's Coffee Roasters; and Phog Lounge. We also thank Martin Deck and staff from the University of Windsor Book Store for setting up and running the book sale display, and the management and staff at Beach Grove for all of their assistance.

Noo Broo and Atwood Blend



Beau's All Natural collaborated with Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson to create a new ale, Maddaddamites Noo Broo. Proceeds from sales will fund PIBO's ongoing research. The new fruit ale was released at the Session Toronto Craft Beer Festival taking place on June 13th and 14th and is entered in the Collaboration Nation Competition.

Balzac's Coffee Roasters and award-winning author Margaret Atwood have partnered to create an organic coffee blend that benefits the Pelee Island Bird Observatory. For more information, visit:

<http://www.thedieline.com/blog/2014/8/12/atwood-blend>



Wayne Grady reads from his award-winning novel, *Emancipation Day*, at the 3rd annual PIBO Windsor fundraiser.





Summer Breeding Activity



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nest. Photos by Sumiko Onishi.

PIBO had another successful summer season, during which we completed breeding bird censuses, participated in the Marsh Bird Monitoring Program, and conducted Species at Risk Transect Surveys.

Breeding Bird Census (BBC)

Surveys conducted from June 3rd – July 2nd (10 visits at each location during the period)

Examiner: Sachiko Schott, Sumiko Onishi

Location: 2 sites: Ontario Nature Stone Road Alvar Conservation Area and Essex Region Conservation Authority Stone Road Alvar Conservation Area

Hours: 80 (55 field hours, 25 data compilation)

Result: one Yellow-breasted Chat (federally and provincially endangered) territory recorded at Ontario Nature site

[It's worth mentioning that the BBC is a specific study protocol (info can be found online under "Breeding Bird Census"). It's a thorough approach i.e. up to 30 hours of fieldwork at each study plot compared to the useful but

minimal 5-minute point counts usually conducted by other researchers. As such, I think it's fair to say that the work this summer at Stone Road is some of the most comprehensive breeding bird research carried out in the province. Results will be published in the Journal of Field Ornithology.

Marsh Bird Monitoring Program

Examiner: Sachiko Schott, Sumiko Onishi

Hours: 20 hours (12 field hours, 8 data entry, etc.)

Results: a Least Bittern (threatened) was observed, but no confirmation of breeding

Results from the marsh bird study will be sent to Bird Studies Canada

Location: Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve, Ontario Parks, MNR

Species at Risk Transect Surveys

Examiner: Sachiko Schott, Sumiko Onishi, Graeme Gibson (the younger)

Hours: 8 hours (7 field hours, 1 admin)

Location: various sites including NCC Stone Road Conservation Area, Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve (Ontario Parks)

Details: put up ten new Prothonotary Warbler boxes, observed and checked PROWs and the nestlings, visited possible YBCH's territory

Result: confirmed a pair of Prothonotary's (federally and provincially endangered) nesting and four successfully fledged young. Also located one 'probable' Y.B. Chat territory at NCC Stone Road Alvar property (i.e. in addition to the 'probable' territory mentioned above.

Acknowledgements [for all summer surveys]: thanks to Ontario Nature, ERCA, NCC, and Ontario Parks for permission to conduct the surveys on their sites. Thanks to John Kraus for volunteering to build Prothonotary boxes.



Yellow-breasted Chat. Photo by Sumiko Onishi.

