



Fall 2007

The Auspice

Pelee Island Bird Observatory

RARE BIRDS!

PIBO staff had a number of interesting sightings on the island this Fall:

- Whimbrel (August 2, 11)
- Willet (August 7)
- Olive-sided Flycatcher (August 21)
- Yellow-breasted Chat (August 31)
- Kentucky Warbler (August 31)
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper (August 31)
- Lesser Black-backed Gull (September 27)
- Connecticut Warbler (September 28)
- Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (October 12)
- Cackling Goose (October 22)
- Whip-poor-will (October 29)
- Black Scoter (November 2)
- Cave Swallow (November 7)



Fall Migration Report

We finished our diurnal migration work November 15th. This year has been our best coverage to-date, with 183 consecutive days (76 spring and 107 fall), which is the most complete coverage in North America.

While our banding totals are down dramatically from previous years, our banding effort has been our most consistent to-date. This is due, mostly, to improved staffing in 2007.

While the total number of net hours this Fall was the highest at the station to-date, the number of birds

banded was the lowest since operations began in 2003. The catch-rate this Fall was .45 birds/net-hour compared to the last three-year average of 1.14, which is a decline of 63%.

This dramatic decline appears to be mostly a result of record-breaking temperatures in Ontario in September and October. It was 30 degrees on the Thanksgiving long-weekend!

At the same time, and while some other stations in Ontario had record quiet season's as well, it's becoming apparent that

local weather conditions may have a greater influence on bird movements over the lake (and consequently on Pelee Island) than it does at mainland stations. We can look at this in more detail in the future.

PIBO was extremely well staffed this year and the field crew achieved the greatest number of net hours ever. Thanks, and congratulations, to Sumiko Onishi, from Japan, Adam Pinch, from Leamington, and to Kerry McGuire. And a particular thanks to our 4 short-term unpaid volunteers.

Species at Risk Partnership Acquires Funding

Pelee Island and the surrounding Canadian Islands provide some of the most biologically diverse natural heritage in the country and has one of the highest densities of species at risk. The Ontario Natural Heritage Information Centre currently tracks over 150 species on the island, 11 of which are globally rare.

PIBO, in partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), the

Township of Pelee, and the Pelee Island Heritage Centre, recently received funding from the Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk fund for a coordinated stewardship approach to provide for the long term conservation and restoration of Pelee Island's species at risk. The funding will support a number of projects on the island including botanical inventories and invasive species control on NCC

properties, an island eco-trail study, and websites for the Heritage Centre and the Township of Pelee.

PIBO's portion of the funding will assist with the Migration Monitoring Program, the initiation of a formal Breeding Bird Program, and various educational programs, both in-house and outreach activities on the mainland.

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CMMN Meeting in Slave Lake, Alberta

The sixth national Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) meeting was hosted by the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory on October 11-14, 2007.

As well as enjoying the beauty of Alberta's boreal forest and the splendors of the new Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation, it was an excellent

opportunity for us to see the work that other migration stations have been undertaking.

The CMMN is supported by Bird Studies Canada, but involves the cooperation of 25 bird observatories across the country and the Canadian Wildlife Service. Fifteen of those stations were represented at this meeting that occurs every

two years. The agenda included reports from the stations and the Steering Committee, presentations on research projects, and discussions on staffing issues, funding, collaborative projects, education programs, and data analysis.

It was exciting for us to be at the meeting as this was the first time PIBO has been represented at a CMMN meeting.

Other PIBO News...

Owl Prowls

PIBO officially started a Northern Saw-Whet Owl banding project this fall. These fantastic little birds, the only truly migratory species of owl, are about the size of a pop can, and weigh less than 100 grams. We lure them into the netting area by broadcasting their calls from a CD player.

We captured 48 owls over a 3 week period. Interestingly, 3 of them were 'foreign encounters', meaning that they had been banded elsewhere. We learned that one was banded in Wisconsin in 2003, and it will be very telling to find out where

the other two were captured.

We hosted two Owl Prowl nights for the public and enjoyed drinking hot apple cider while listening to the local Great-Horned Owls and Screech Owls.

PIBO Open House

On the same weekend as the Pelee Island Heritage Centre's Heritage Weekend, PIBO hosted an open house in the netting area at Fish Point. About 50 people came to a barbeque and later visited the nets where Graeme, described the work of a migration monitoring station.

Collecting Feathers

As one of our additional projects, PIBO is assisting the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network with its feather isotope study. PIBO staff collected over 325 feather samples from 20 different species. These samples, along with those from other participating stations across Canada, will be analyzed for isotope content. Through this analysis, it is possible to determine geographically where the bird grew the feather and, therefore, where it spent the breeding season!

A Big Thanks to our Supporters!

The success of this year's migration monitoring study, and the positive new developments at PIBO, were made possible by the unflagging enthusiasm and generous support of many individuals. The Pelee Island Bird Observatory is particularly grateful for the critically important help from:

Margaret Atwood, Avie Bennet, The EJLB Foundation, Graeme Gibson, the Elder, Nona Macdonald Heaslip, The Henry White Kinnear Foundation, The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation, The McLean Foundation, Mysterious Starling Inc., Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and The University of Toronto.

And a big thank-you to our individual donors, to our friends and supporters, to our partners and PIBO's hard-working interns and volunteers!! We couldn't do it without you.

SPRING SONG 2008

Mark your calendars for the 7th Annual Spring Song Festival, May 9-11, 2008.

Bring your birding friends and join in the 'Green Bird race' and compete for the Botham Cup. Then join guest author, Joseph Boyden, and guest birder, Bridget Stutchbury, for a banquet on Saturday evening.

Can't do your own bird race? Support PIBO's Birdathon by pledging us.

Contact us for more information.

Need a gift for the person that has everything? Adopt a Wild Bird!



By symbolically adopting a wild bird, you are helping to support the many programs at the Pelee Island Bird Observatory. PIBO is a non-profit, charitable organization and we depend on your support to continue to be an active participant in the migration research community as well as delivering quality educational programming on the importance of Canada's songbird communities. Donations to PIBO are tax-deductable!

For your support, you'll receive an adoption package including:

- A certificate with details about your adopted bird, including a picture, as well as, an additional photo ready for framing, and an informative fact sheet about your adoptee.
- If the individual we band for you is recovered, we will contact you immediately and let you know the details, so that you can track your adopted bird's progress.
- The satisfaction of knowing that 100% of your money goes to support research and education on North American songbird populations
- Would you like us to send this package as a gift? We will include a personalized letter to the recipient acknowledging your gift to them!

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Canada Warbler \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Thrush \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Saw-whet Owl \$100 |
| <p>The Golden-crowned Kinglet is one of the smallest songbirds and most numerous of Fall migrants at PIBO. You can't help but enjoy their sweet nature and lovely golden crown!</p> | <p>The brilliant yellow colouration of the male Canada Warbler and the distinctive streaky black necklace make this little wood-warbler one of PIBO's favourite spring visitors.</p> | <p>Though the Wood Thrush may look similar to the other thrushes, its song is arguably the most beautiful of all North American songbirds.</p> | <p>The most commonly caught hawk in our nets is the Sharp-shinned Hawk. We have to be on our toes when this skilled and elegant hunter is in the netting area.</p> | <p>Adopt a Northern Saw-whet Owl and you will help PIBO to run our Fall Owl Monitoring Program. These endearing little birds are always a pleasure to see and hear.</p> |

Please print your name and address below. If you are giving this gift of adoption to someone else, please provide their name and address below as well.

My Information:

I would like to give this gift of adoption to (if different from above):

_____ Name

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_____ Address

_____ Address

_____ Email Address & Phone Number

_____ Email Address & Phone Number

Mail cheque to: PIBO, Box E2, General Delivery, Pelee Island, ON N0R 1M0

Become a Friend of PIBO...

Please enroll me as a Supporter of the Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO), in the category indicated below. (You will receive a charitable receipt for the full amount of your donation. Cheques should be made out to the Pelee Island Bird Observatory.)

- Friend of PIBO at \$35.00 to \$99.00** **Companion of PIBO at \$100 to \$249** **Benefactor at \$250 and above**

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