



Spring 2007

The Auspice

Pelee Island Bird Observatory

RARE BIRDS!

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

- Clay-Coloured Sparrow (April 25)
- Iceland Gull (April 28)
- Louisiana Waterthrush (April 29)
- Sandhill Crane (April 30)
- Prothonotary Warbler (May 2)
- Yellow-Breasted Chat (May 7)
- Grasshopper Sparrow (May 8)
- Hooded Warbler (May 9)
- Willet (May 17)
- Connecticut Warbler (May 23)
- Laughing Gull (May 25)
- Snowy Plover (May 29)

Spring Migration Report

It has been a beautiful and interesting spring on Pelee Island. Though the weather has been variable, PIBO conducted 76 consecutive days of census coverage with the nets being open for about 50 of those days.

We recorded 171 species in the official census area and banded over 600 birds. Both numbers are down from previous years.

Overall, the migration was somewhat unusual this year: there were no major

fall-outs in mid-May, as we have come to expect and many of the typically early season migrants, such as Black-and-white Warblers and Blue-headed Vireos, were still showing up towards the end of the month.

After a very wet year, with high lake levels, the netting area only started drying up towards the final week of May. We are all happy take off our rubber boots!

A few interesting species

found their way into the nets. The station banded its very first Louisiana Waterthrush and Red-bellied Woodpecker this spring. Perhaps the biggest surprise out of the bag this season was a Grasshopper Sparrow! It was quite a pleasure for everyone at the field station that day.

The fall fieldwork will be starting up again on August 1st. Visitors are always welcome so please give us a call if you'd like to join us!

Other Developments at PIBO

New PIBO Property

PIBO recently acquired a generously donated cottage at the corner of Stone Road and South Shore Road. It is a great relief to finally have our own home, especially one with such a fantastic view of the lake.

Education

PIBO's field station was open to the public every day and approximately 100 people visited the site this spring. Among them were 65 school kids. Visitors had the chance to

observe a variety of songbirds in-the-hand, and to learn something about the biology of birds and the extraordinary nature of their migratory impulse. Visitors were also introduced to some of the physical attributes that enable the birds to accomplish their lengthy journeys.

Breeding Bird Surveys

Researching the breeding birds on Pelee Island is an important part of the Observatory's mandate. We conducted a number

of official breeding bird surveys on Nature Conservancy of Canada property in 2006. Similar work will be undertaken this year on Ontario Parks land.

Other Research

PIBO assists other groups with collaborative research projects. For example, we collect feather samples for an isotope analysis project for the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, and keep an eye open for bird ticks for a researcher in Fergus, Ontario.



Pelee Island Bird Observatory

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Meet the PIBO Staff...

Claire Sanders – Executive Director. Claire spent three years as Director of the Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretive Centre in Moose Jaw before coming to PIBO in April 2007.

Graeme Gibson, the younger – PIBO Founder/Managing Director. Graeme has been studying birds since 1993 including migration

monitoring research studies at Long Point, Thunder Bay and Pelee Island, Ont, Victoria, BC, and Campeche, Mexico.

Sumiko Onishi – Field Assistant. Sumiko, from Japan, has a degree in biology from the University of Nevada and is also a trained nutritionist. This is her second field season at PIBO.

Adam Pinch – Field Assistant. Adam is from Leamington Ont, and honed his extensive birding skills in Point Pelee National Park.

Everyone will be back for the fall migration along with several invaluable volunteers including Jim and Pat Woodford from Horseshoe Valley, Ontario, and Robert Haupt from New York City.

Spring Song a Success!

PIBO participated in the 6th Annual Spring Song Festival in early May. Events included a Green Bird Race (no motorized vehicles) with 9 teams vying for the prestigious Botham Cup!

The winners logged 119

species and there was a total of 153 species seen. Both totals are down from previous years.

Thanks to Fred Bodsworth for being our guest-birder!

David Suzuki, gave a passionate and rousing speech at the banquet

and the dinner itself was excellent.

Congratulations and *Thank-You* to the Pelee Island Heritage Centre for putting on another successful celebration of spring's wonders on the island!

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, The EJLB Foundation, Graeme Gibson, the Elder, The Henry White Kinnear Foundation, The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation, The McLean Foundation, Mysterious Starling Inc., 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 volunteers!! We couldn't do it without you.

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.)

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