

# BPBO Beakon

Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory  
PO Box 189 Tobermory, ON, NOH 2T0



Bruce Peninsula  
Bird Observatory

Volume 05, Number 02

August, 2005

## Summer and Fall Events You'll Flock To!.....

### **Open House at Cabot Head**

As a token of our appreciation for your continued support, the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory Board of Directors would like to invite you to our annual Open House at Cabot Head. On Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup> at the Cabot Head Research Station, BPBO will host tours of the banding station, a guided hike, and interpretation of our migration monitoring activities. The day begins at 9 am and visitors are welcome to observe the banding operations. The day will also include lunch between noon and 1 pm. Come on out and hear about our most recent findings, our plans for the next few months, and how you can get involved in BPBO activities. Stéphane may even band a bird you've been hankering to see in the hand. We hope to see you there!

### **Second Annual Fundraising Dinner**

Following the great success of last year's dinner in Owen Sound, BPBO will be hosting a second gala event for birders to visit with one another and enjoy an evening of great food and company. Last year, the support for this event allowed us to continue our migration monitoring work and begin a new and exciting initiative in Nicaragua. Many of you provided support for this important partnership with migration monitoring stations in Nicaragua. This year we would like to build on this excitement with a Nicaraguan themed event. The evening will feature Nicaraguan cuisine, and a keynote address by Ted Cheskey, Past President of BPBO. Ted will be travelling to Nicaragua this summer to follow up on the work that began with your support, and he promises to bring back many photos and stories from his journey. Ticket information will be made available closer to the time. This year's dinner will be held at St. George's Anglican Church in Owen Sound on Saturday, November 12. We hope to see you there!

### **Join Us for Owl Banding**

Join Stéphane Menu for an evening of Saw-Whet Owl banding. Beginning in mid-September Stéphane will welcome a handful of guests each night to keep him company on his net rounds. Spend the night at the Cabot Head Research Station and observe the owl banding. If you wish, you may also observe banding activities the next morning. Accommodations are in Grebe Lodge. Please bring your own food. Flexibility is important as weather conditions and availability in the lodge restrict the number of evenings that we can offer this opportunity. Details will be posted on our website in early August. After that, please contact Stéphane at the Research Station for more details (519-795-7484).

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## Message From The President

By Rod Steinacher, BPBO President

Recently, as I was completing the last of the off-road point counts for the final year of the Second Breeding Bird Atlas in my "square" at Cape Hurd, I was reminded of the value of and need for scientific data about birds. Governments, local, provincial and federal, are constantly making decisions that directly impact our avifauna. Without concrete information on which to base these decisions, wrong directions can easily be taken. Loss of habitat, food sources, and disruption of migration routes are some of the ways that bird populations can be directly impacted by ill-planned government actions. As a "citizen scientist", I feel that my involvement in projects like the Breeding Bird Atlas is directly contributing to bird conservation.

The Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory's very existence is a result of this desire to study and protect migratory birds in the area. A group of interested stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds worked together to have the area designated an Important Bird Area, in recognition of the large number of Red-necked Grebes that use the waters adjacent to the shoreline in the Dyers Bay/ Cabot Head area of the Bruce Peninsula to "stage"; feed and rest before continuing their spring migration to points west and north. The spring migration of the Red-necked Grebes has been monitored by volunteer surveyors each of the past six years and the data gathered is being compiled and shared with other observatories and researchers.

Six individuals from that group, including myself, formed the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory the following spring, entering into an agreement with Ontario Parks to use their facilities on Wingfield Basin at Cabot Head for BPBO's migration monitoring activities. Each spring and fall migration since has been monitored by our Field Ornithologists, using both censusing and banding techniques. They have been assisted by volunteers, both international (Germany, England, the USA), and from Canada (Quebec, Ontario, and from the local Grey / Bruce area). Our data of course is submitted to the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, but BPBO has also participated in projects to gather DNA from specific bird species (Swainson's Thrush and American Redstart) by collecting feather samples for analysis. BPBO has actively sought to educate the local public about birds on the Bruce Peninsula and the need to safeguard their habitat with workshops, displays, working with school children, and bird banding demonstrations. BPBO has formed partnerships with Ontario Parks and Parks Canada, local outdoor educators, and the business community to develop these programs.

As with all volunteer, non-profit organizations, BPBO needs the support of its members and other interested parties. Perhaps that support comes in the form of financial contributions (have you renewed your membership yet?) or more directly by participating in BPBO programs. An organization is only as strong as those involved in it, and while our Board of Directors works long hours to keep BPBO "ticking", there is always room for more help. Possibly you could volunteer to maintain the Cabot Head Research Station site, participate on one of the many BPBO committees, become a Red-necked Grebe surveyor, or, if you have the necessary experience, assist in migration monitoring activities. Details on how you can help out are available at our recently revamped (by a volunteer!) web site, <[bpbo.ca](http://bpbo.ca)>. Become a "citizen scientist", or support the Bruce

Peninsula Bird Observatory's efforts as we work towards studying, protecting, and informing others about the birds of the Bruce.

## **Baker's Blurb... (Hip-Hip-Hooray! Ron Is Back!!)**

By Ron Baker, BPBO Administrator

The Board granted me a sabbatical this past winter and Rita and I took a group to Iona, a small island in the Inner Hebrides: a very holy place and the cradle of Celtic Christianity in Britain. The Manx Shearwaters were causing problems on Mull as the young ones were landing in people's gardens and could not take off. People were being advised to take them down to the sea and put them in the water where they would be able to take flight. Our group also pursued our Celtic heritage with a week in Glencoe. Rita and I explored the border country in Northumberland with a 72 mile Secret Kingdom Walk, followed by a winter spent in a rented a cottage on the Welsh coast. ...daffodils in December, Blue Tits and other birds beginning their spring activities, and NO SNOW!

We arrived back in April to find BPBO in excellent shape thanks to a very energetic and devoted Board. We were well staffed with volunteers for the spring migration and things look good for the fall, although we could still use a few volunteers - especially for October. Grebe Lodge is in good shape thanks to a work crew from the Huron Fringe Field Naturalists who put up eaves troughs, repaired plumbing, stained decks and gave the place a good spring clean. Our first stewards have installed vertical blinds in the lounge area, which will make it more hospitable and minimize bird kill from birds flying into the windows.

Members have called me to ask if they can visit the site. Although the site is not open to the general public, members of BPBO are admitted. Please contact me beforehand so that I can alert the station. Please show them your Membership card. We also welcome group visits by arrangement. Grebe Lodge is available for group bookings. Check our website [www.bpbo.ca](http://www.bpbo.ca) for details and application forms.

## **2005 Spring Migration Monitoring Summary**

By Stéphane Menu, Station Scientist

This spring, 1,235 birds of 72 species were banded and 59 birds of 18 species were recaptured at the Cabot Head Research Station. Spring migration monitoring began on April 16<sup>th</sup> and ended on June 11<sup>th</sup>. Stéphane Menu was contracted, for a third year, under a new title, Station Scientist, instead of Field Ornithologist/Bander-in-Charge. With the assistance of several volunteers, the banding and migration monitoring was conducted for a total of 56 days (there was no monitoring on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April because of the AGM). Fifteen mist-nets were operated every possible day, depending on the weather. It has been now four years that the monitoring has followed a standard protocol, which allows interesting comparisons. Numbers of banding birds (see Table below for banding totals) were relatively similar the previous two years. It appears that the year 2002 (with over 2,300 banded birds) may have been out of the ordinary. The continuing monitoring confirmed the need for long-term data to better understand the migration and population dynamics and the importance of the Cabot Head Research

Station.

The weather for this season can be divided in 2 periods of about a month each. From the opening to May 18, despite a few fair weather days, it was frequently cold, overcast and windy, with the usual late snowstorm (hitting on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, this year). As a consequence, migration was almost blocked most of the time. When the conditions finally warmed up, the birds moved en masse, as the 2 highest days for banding attest (see Figure). On the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, with a strong south wind, we caught 124 birds of 17 species. Sparrows were dominant, especially White-crowned (58 banded this day, an all-time record). This big day was followed by more than a week of very slow visible migration. And then, on the 18<sup>th</sup>, we had our second-highest banding total of the season: 114 birds were caught and banded, this time mostly warblers (15 species banded, with 5 more detected). The most banded species was Nashville Warbler, followed by Magnolia Warbler.

After May 18, although still relatively cool, the weather improved so much as to allow for an unprecedented 100% coverage (the 15 nets could be open for the regular 6 hours of banding period)! Only one day was lost in June. This good weather also allowed the birds to migrate almost at their will: as a consequence, there were no major fall-outs of birds, but more of a regular flow of birds (average of 31 banded birds per day). The migration then tapered off during the last week of banding (June 6 to 11), with only a few migrant Flycatchers captured. But almost on the last day, a female Whip-poor-will was captured and banded! We were hearing them singing very close to the station. On the morning of June 10<sup>th</sup>, again they were around. With a stroke of luck, one got caught in our nets!

Two new species were added for the area this year: Two adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen twice in Wingfield Basin in April. On June 10, at the very end of the migration monitoring, a Sage Thrasher was observed for several minutes while it was catching insects around the banding lab. It was a long way from its summer haunts on the High Plains and the Rockies! This bird was reported earlier on the other side of Wingfield Basin. Other noteworthy sightings include: a Golden Eagle on April 18; 2 Northern Mockingbirds on May 10 (one being captured and banded!), a Prairie Warbler and a Golden-winged Warbler on May 21; a Great Egret seen flying with 2 Great Blue Herons on May 26; and 3 Black-bellied Plovers flying fast over the Basin on May 31. The pair of Bald Eagles seen last year around the area seem to have returned, with the second-year immature now a third-year bird! We will see in the following years if the pair gets established or not!

With the number of banded birds building up, there were interesting recaptures from the previous years (27 birds from 10 species). They involved mostly local breeding birds, such as American Redstarts (16 in total, from spring 2001 to fall 2004), Red-eyed Vireos (2 from fall 2003 recaptured the same day), and even a Black-throated Green Warbler banded in fall 2003 was recaptured. One banded bird of "foreign" origin was also recaptured: a Hermit Thrush banded in northwest Ohio on April 23, 2002!

### Spring Banding Totals of birds captured in mist-nets: 2002-2004.

Species	2005	2004	2003	2002	Av.	Species	2005	2004	2003	2002	Av.
Sharp-shinned Hawk	10	10	20	29	17.3	Magnolia Warbler	116	109	144	184	138
Hairy Woodpecker	1			1		Cape May Warbler	2		1	9	4
<u>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</u>	2		1		1.5	Black-thr. Blue Warbler	19	21	64	36	35
Pileated Woodpecker	1		1			Yellow-rumped Warbler	28	49	68	244	97.3
<u>Yellow-shafted Flicker</u>	8		1	1	3.33	Black-thr. Green Warbler	15	25	27	38	26.3
<b>WHIP-POOR-WILL</b>	1					Blackburnian Warbler	5	2	4	13	6
Eastern Wood-Pewee	2	1	8		3.67	Pine Warbler	1	2	1	4	2
<b>Yellow-bellied Flycatcher</b>	22	17	22	15	19	Western Palm Warbler	38	55	61	216	92.5
<u>Traill's Flycatcher</u>	18	11	13	14	14	Bay-breasted Warbler	3	1	1	11	4
Least Flycatcher	20	22	17	9	17	Blackpoll Warbler	1	1	4	4	2.5
Eastern Phoebe	4	3	2	5	3.5	Black-and-White Warbler	42	45	72	78	59.3
Blue-headed Vireo	1			6		American Redstart	152	223	171	204	188
Philadelphia Vireo	1		2	2	1.67	<u>Ovenbird</u>	40	26	27	37	32.5
Red-eyed Vireo	10	14	13	10	11.8	<u>Northern Waterthrush</u>	7	2	3	2	3.5
Blue Jay	16	88	21	13	34.5	Mourning Warbler	9	11	12	14	11.5
Barn Swallow	2			1		Common Yellowthroat	49	45	60	56	52.5
Black-capped Chickadee	6	14	6	342	92	Wilson's Warbler	16	20	25	32	23.3
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	2	1	17	5.5	Canada Warbler	13	22	24	19	19.5
<i>Brown Creeper</i>	20	9	30	6	16.3	American Tree Sparrow	2	2	3	5	3
House Wren	2			2		Chipping Sparrow	20	17	14	47	24.5
Winter Wren	1	3	2	2	2	Clay-colored Sparrow	1			2	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	33	36	77	6	38	Field Sparrow	1			1	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	81	74	145	79	94.8	Savannah Sparrow	1	1	3	1	1.5
Veery	6	21	4	1	8	Fox Sparrow	1		2	2	1.67
<i>Gray-cheeked Thrush</i>	4	5	3	1	3.25	Song Sparrow	8	9	19	12	12
<u>Swainson's Thrush</u>	27	21	12	13	18.3	<u>Lincoln's Sparrow</u>	25	11	10	17	15.8
<u>Hermit Thrush</u>	16	6	14	8	11	<u>Swamp Sparrow</u>	6	6	4	3	4.75
<u>Wood Thrush</u>	2	1	1	1	1.25	<b>White-throated Sparrow</b>	91	26	25	71	53.3
American Robin	6	5	15	8	8.5	<b>E. White-cr. Sparrow</b>	69	14	19	17	29.8
<u>Gray Catbird</u>	17	11	16	11	13.8	Dark-eyed Junco	19	20	25	69	33.3
<u>Brown Thrasher</u>	8	6	7	3	6	Eastern Towhee	1	2			
Cedar Waxwing	3		4			Northern Cardinal	1		1	1	1
Orange-crowned Warbler	8	8	5	29	12.5	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2	3	4	1	2.5
Nashville Warbler	49	18	61	227	88.8	<i>Indigo Bunting</i>	4	5	1	3	3.25
Northern Parula	1		9	3	4.33	American Goldfinch	1	1	4	41	11.8
Yellow Warbler	4	8	16	22	12.5	<u>Total</u>	1236	1210	1479	2431	1589
Chestnut-sided Warbler	12	14	20	26	18	<b>Species Total</b>	72	62	69	74	69.3

Av.: Average (only for species captured at least during 3 seasons)

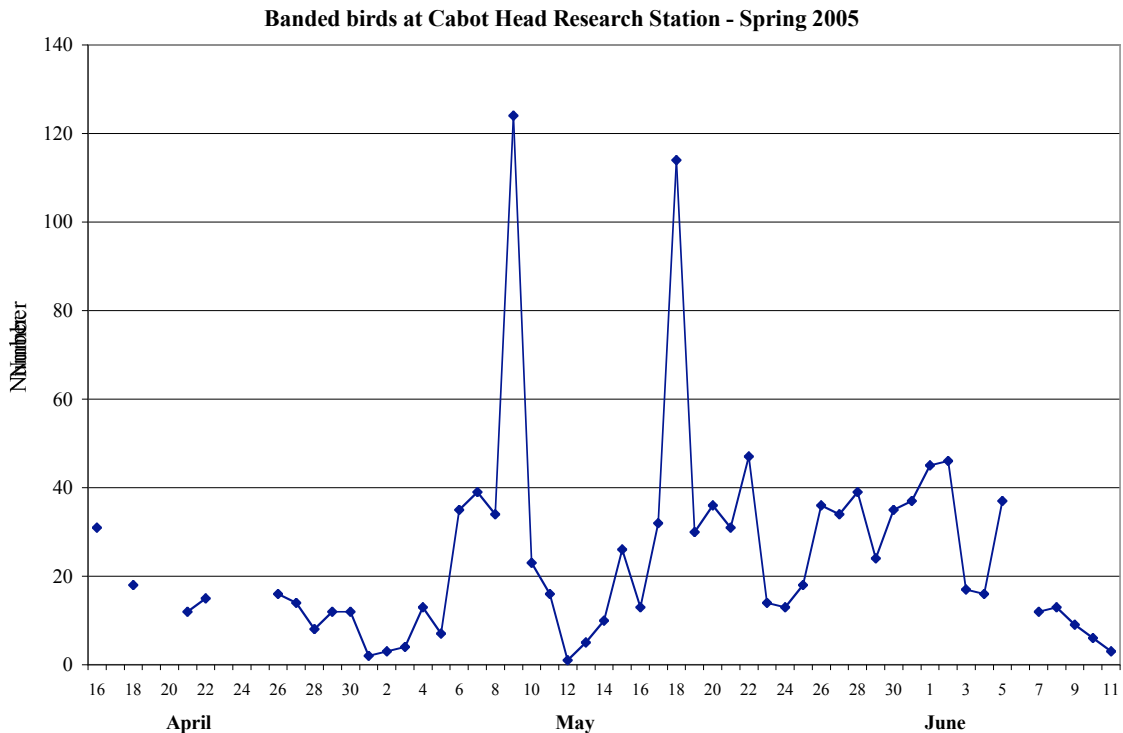
**Bold:** Record high established in spring 2005 (period 2002-2005)

*Italic:* Above average (period 2002-2005)

**SMALL CAPS:** Indicated first spring banding record for CHRS (period 2002-2005)

Data: for 2002: Derebyshire, 2002; for 2003: Menu, 2003 for 2004: Menu, 2004

E. White-cr. Sparrow: Eastern White-crowned Sparrow



### **Recognition of volunteers**

BPBO and the Station Scientist would like to express their gratitude to the following members of the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory and volunteers for their help at the field station during the banding season: Gilles Burelle, Dave Brewer, Mary-Anne Cain, Ted Cheskey, Deb Diebel, Alexandra Dufresne, Lyn Elliott, Réjean Gaudreault, Christine Marquilly, Sarah Richer, Larry Roszell, Al Woodhouse.

Ron Baker, as the BPBO's administrator, was again of invaluable help during the spring! BPBO and the Station Scientist would like to extend well-deserved thanks for his work.

### **Concluding remarks from Stéphane Menu, BPBO's station scientist**

Again, the attraction of a bilingual station lured people from over Ontario and Quebec, with some volunteers returning from previous years. We were also fortunate to have a talented and fast-learning summer student, Lindsay Miller, of Miller Lake (on the Bruce). She started in mid-May and will be with us up to the end of September.

This season marked the fourth year of a migration monitoring following a well-established protocol. Some trends are already emerging, like the 2-year cycle of the Brown Creeper (refer to the table). We also started to have a more accurate view of the migration on the Peninsula and the numbers involved. As shown by the sightings of two new species for the area, the unexpected is always to be expected at a migration station! Migration monitoring at Cabot Head will be ongoing for a period of at least 5 years, and will contribute to the efforts of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network. It will certainly provide other surprises and ultimately will contribute to a better understanding and monitoring of bird populations.

## **Education a Focus at Cabot Head This Spring...**

BPBO expanded its audience this spring with programs for three separate groups of people who made the trek to Cabot Head to learn more about birds, migration monitoring and banding, and the goals of the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory. Included in this edition of our newsletter are submissions from each group.

### **Young Naturalists of Owen Sound Get Taste of Birding at CHRS**

by Nancy White, Co-coordinator, Young Naturalists Club



Young Nats members look on as Allana Taylor is given the awesome opportunity to release a banded black-throated blue warbler. - Photo Credit, Nancy White

We had an awesome day as eleven Owen Sound and Area Young Naturalists visited the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory on an overcast May 15th. Our last outing of the year, this was a much anticipated event, as no one in our group had been up to the Observatory before except me. The Young Naturalists were accompanied by Club Co-coordinator, Bob Fletcher, myself, and parents and siblings.

Stephane welcomed our group and provided a tour and talk about the facilities and programs of the site. He was able to demonstrate banding and recording procedures with a Black-throated Blue Warbler taken from the mist nets. Young Nats member, Allana Taylor, was chosen to release the tiny and delicate bird. That very exciting and enviable event was but a fleeting moment as the little bird took off so quickly we weren't even sure if we had actually seen it in Allana's hand! Because of the threatening rain, we followed the bird banding lesson by a hot dog barbecue at the Lodge, overlooking beautiful Georgian Bay, then handed out awards and certificates. We really enjoyed our time at the Station, and hope to come up again in a couple of years! Thanks, Stéphane, for taking the time to spend with us!

## **Huron Fringe Birding Festival Includes Outing to Cabot Head Research Station**

By Lorraine Brown, BPBO Secretary

On Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, BPBO board members Doug van Hemessen, Lionel Gould and Lorraine Brown led a group of birders on an outing to the research station as part of the Huron Fringe Birding Festival. We left MacGregor Point Provincial Park at 7 am and headed up to Cabot Head. En route we stopped at the Warton Sewage Lagoons and another location near Dyers Bay to look for a Red-headed Woodpecker that had nested there last year.

The birding was a bit slow at these two stops, but when we arrived at Cabot Head the group was thrilled to see a hummingbird in the hand that Stéphane had just extracted from one of the nets. They watched as Stéphane and summer student, Lindsay Miller, extracted some American Redstarts from the nets and put them through the protocol of measurements, weighing, fat deposit analysis, banding and releasing.

During lunch in Grebe Lodge, Ron Baker greeted the group and said a few words about the lodge and how its use will help pay for running the migration monitoring. We handed out brochures for the lodge.

After lunch, Lionel Gould gave a demonstration of digiscoping – taking photos with a camera attached to a spotting scope.

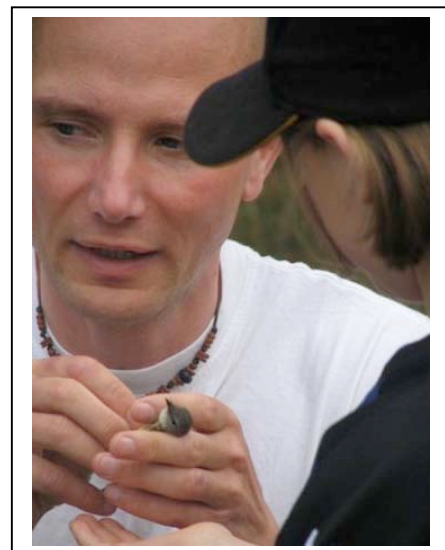
We birded around the site, watching warblers in the bushes, then headed over to the Cabot Head lighthouse. By then it was time to head back. We stopped at Isaac Lake where we saw Black Terns, Black-crowned Night Herons, and Ospreys on their nesting platform nest.

The group really enjoyed the outing. We are planning to offer this as an annual event for the Huron Fringe Birding Festival.

### **Roots and Shoots Take Flight!**

By Jennifer Barrat-Parker, R & S Coordinator

On June 5, 2005, twelve young members of Bruce Peninsula Roots & Shoots had the privilege of visiting Stéphane Menu and his team of researchers and volunteers at the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory. Our visit included a tour of the research station, learning about bird migration, and observing and participating in songbird netting and banding. Our members gained awareness of the local banding program and its relationship to bird banding internationally. The hands-down highlight of the visit was seeing an American Redstart and a Black-and-White Warbler up close, and helping to release them once the scientific data was collected.



The Roots & Shoots group very much enjoyed observing and participating in the bird banding program. The impact of this experience on these young people will show in the years to come as they make choices that value research activities such as those happening at BPBO. Thank you Stéphane, Deb, Al, and everyone for sharing with Peninsula youth the important work that you are doing on behalf of birds!

Roots & Shoots is the Jane Goodall Institute's environmental and humanitarian program for youth, whose mission is to foster respect and compassion for all living things, to promote understanding of all cultures and beliefs, and to inspire each individual to take action to make the world a better place for animals, the environment and the human community. Bruce Peninsula Roots & Shoots is sponsored by the Bruce Peninsula Environment Group. For information about Bruce Peninsula Roots & Shoots activities, please contact Jennifer Barratt Parker at 793-6223.

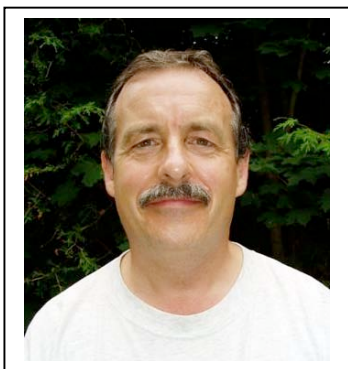
## **Nicaragua Update**

By Ted Cheskey, BPBO Past President

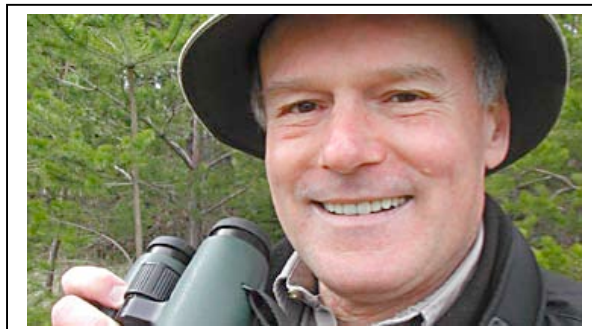
Funds from BPBO (\$1000 CAN) were received in April by ALAS, (Alianza para las Areas Silvestres), and will be divided amongst 4 of the 7 monitoring stations in Nicaragua. Thank you so much for those who have supported this campaign to date. Your support goes a long way. Rod Steinacher and I will be visiting Nicaragua in August and meet with some of our Nicaraguan friends and collaborators to discuss projects and future collaborations. Watch for a feature article on Nicaragua that highlights BPBO's support of the winter bird monitoring to appear in ONNature this fall. I look forward to sharing more of these stories with our membership at the fall members meeting and banquet.

## **BPBO Welcomes New Board Members**

BPBO would like to take this opportunity to welcome their two new board members to the flock; Bob Gray and Lionel Gould. We look forward to working with both of you!



Bob Gray



Lionel Gould (Photo Credit, Shawn Gilck)

Bob Gray is a graduate of the University of Toronto, with a background in physical geography, biology, and education. Recently retired from the Ministry of Natural

Resources, he worked for the Province for 30 years as a park naturalist, information officer and ecologist, primarily in Grey and Bruce counties. He resides with his family on a farm in Keppel Township, and enjoys the finer things in life such as boiling maple sap, natural history, growing veggies, canoe tripping and cross-country skiing.

Birding has been a 30-year passion for Lionel Gould, taking him to Ellesmere Island in the high Arctic to Pelee Island in Lake Erie, from the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea to Cape St. Mary's in Newfoundland and Labrador. He has birded widely in the United States, Central America and Caribbean. He recently completed Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology distant learning course in bird biology. Lionel is a member of the Ontario Field Ornithologists, Bird Studies Canada, American Birding Association and the Outdoor Writers of Canada. He recently retired from a 35-year career in marketing, promotion and event planning with a major Canadian financial services company and he now writes an award-winning birding column for five daily newspapers in Ontario.

### **It's the Next Best Thing To Being There...**

By Steve Patterson, BPBO Volunteer WebMaster

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to find out *exactly* what is really going on at the Banding Station during migrations without actually being there? And in timely fashion to boot? Well now you can!

BPBO's intrepid ornithologist, Dr. Stéphane Menu, has been submitting migration reports online, a "digital diary" so to speak, since April 2005. You too can share in Dr. Menu's wit and wisdom of all things avian, and otherwise, by joining BPBO's Yahoo! Groups newsgroup. It's easy to do and your privacy is protected. This is not a discussion board, as no one may submit postings except Stéphane. This is simply a venue that enables interested parties (you!) to stay informed about the latest sightings and bandings. You will find Stéphane's reports fascinating and interspersed with interesting facts and dollops of humour.

Here's a snippet from Stéphane's report, dated June 10, 2005:

*On a quiet morning, the whip-poor-will was again singing just around the cottages. As usual, we opened the nets at 5:00am, before sunrise. On our first net check, half an hour later, in the second net, to our biggest surprise, was a whip-poor-will! We rapidly untangled it and finished the round (no other bird) to rush back to the banding lab.*

*Then, we took the time to admire her incredibly huge gaping mouth, the partially webbed feet, the pectinate comb on the middle claw, the stiff bristles around the bill. The buffy tips of the outer rectrices reveal her gender (female) and the brood patch is a good sign of her breeding status!*

*We put a band on (size 2, same size than for a Robin), measured her wing length (155 mm), weighed her (65.3 g) and took a lot of pictures. Finally, we released her by putting her on a rock.*

*You would think that would have made our day... Not quite! Around 7:00am, another bird hopped into view, in the open area between Wingfield Cottage and the shrubs that hide the first nets. We were having tea on the porch, but rapidly grabbed our binoculars. I was barely able to stammer out : "Sa... Sa... Sage... Sage Thrasher!"*

*That's right! SAGE THRASHER! About 10 meters away, in plain view, hopping and catching insects on the ground, the Sage Thrasher gave us plenty of time to....".*

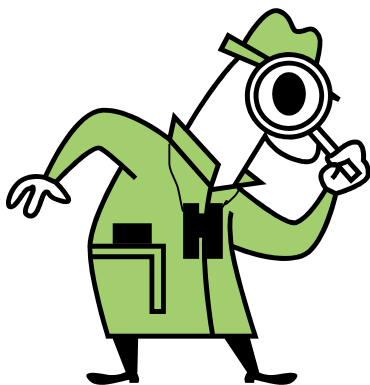
If you're dying to know what happened next, just point your web browser to <http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/bpbo/> and register now! Get yourself ready for the fall migration reports so that you won't miss a thing! The next round of reports will begin in mid-August when Stéphane returns to the station.

### **BPBO – Pass It On!...**

You will notice that with this edition of the newsletter we have enclosed a copy of our updated brochure. Please take time to read it over, and then pass it on to someone you know who is also interested in birds. We are asking all members for help with spreading the word about the great things BPBO is accomplishing toward our goal of being the voice for birds on the Bruce. By taking time to pass the brochure along to someone who you think would be interested in becoming a member or supporting BPBO in some other way, you are not only increasing awareness about BPBO, but you become an ambassador for our feathered friends. Our hope is that you may reach folks who share our interest in birds, but may not be part of our more obvious target audience. Thank-you in advance for your help!

### **"Focus" on the American Redstart (AMRE)**

By Rod Steinacher, BPBO President



Almost everyone on the Bruce Peninsula will have heard an American Redstart. Maybe, like I once did as a beginning birder enjoying the orchids at Petrel Point, you have followed an ever-changing song through thickets and woods, hoping to catch a glimpse of a new and unknown bird. This is because, unlike most bird species in our area, the Redstart male commonly switches his songs from one call to another. Whether it is an emphatic "tsee tsee tsee tsee-o" (the last phrase rising, then falling) or a softer "teetsy teetsy teetsy", reminiscent of a Black-and-White Warbler's call, Redstart males make their presence well known.

Once seen, however, the American Redstart male is easy to recognize. The jet black and orange of an after second year male is shown off by the darting, acrobatic flights it makes as it "fly catches" insects from perches along forest edges. Just to confuse the issue, however, male Redstarts take two years to develop this striking plumage. In their second year (the year after they were hatched), the orange areas on the male have yet

to darken and appear "salmony". The overall colouration of the bird is duller, especially on his head with black areas being more brownish. Females are generally less visible and look like very subtle versions of the second year male. No matter which variation of the Redstart you see, its habit of quickly fanning its tail, and constant movement are sure to help you identify it.



The American Redstart may well be the most abundant bird species on the Bruce Peninsula. The mixed deciduous-coniferous and second growth forests, woodlots, and tall shrubbery it prefers are very common in this area. Its nest is usually made in the fork of a young tree, 1 m to 7 m up. This habitat provides all the flies, midges, moths, caterpillars, and spiders a Redstart could possibly need to feed its hungry brood. The four speckled white eggs take just under two weeks to incubate before hatching. While the Redstart is commonly thought to raise just one brood a season, it is quite common at the Cabot Head Research Station (where resident Redstarts are extremely common) to band newly fledged Redstarts in August. These are definitely second brood youngsters!

As can be seen when we "focus" our attention on it, the American Redstart is at the same time both very common and very different. As a final twist, although it has been grouped in with the *Dendroica* warblers (where it will likely remain), there is some discussion that the Redstart might not be a true warbler at all! Its bill is very wide at the base, quite unlike that of any other warblers, even having stiff "bristles" around its mouth. It somewhat resembles the Flycatchers, with whom it shares these features and the habits of noisily snapping its bill shut when alarmed.

Wherever it belongs, our handsome Redstart is a visual treat that can be enjoyed almost anywhere on the Bruce!

Have you renewed your membership for this year?

BPBO counts on support from its members to continue their migration monitoring and associated projects.

We appreciate your continued support!

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