

BPBO Beakon

Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory
RR#1, Miller Lake, ON, N0H 1Z0

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Bruce Peninsula
Bird Observatory

Latest News from BPBO

We bird-watchers now find ourselves at one of those “transitional” times of year, when all the hectic activity of the Spring and Summer is behind us, and we’re more or less preparing to go into “winter mode”. For some of us, that means putting out the bird feeders and hanging up the binoculars by the back door; for others, it’s more likely we’re getting those bins all cleaned up in those Christmas Bird Counts.

But I’m getting ahead of myself! Things have been quite busy here at BPBO over the last few months. Looking back into August, we hosted a very well-attended Open House at the Cabot Head Research Station (CHRS) on the 26th. A very good crowd showed up for a tour of the facilities and a barbecue lunch (I lost count of all the visitors - but I was able to estimate the number who came along on the bird hike, and it was over thirty-five! Next time I think we’ll go with two leaders). Anyway, thanks to all of you who came out to see us, we hope you enjoyed your visit! And thanks also to all the BPBO volunteers who helped prepare for and organize this event.

As always, a non-profit charitable organization such as BPBO has to keep its fund-raising nose to the grindstone, as it were. One of the chief initiatives in this area has been to organize another November fund-raising dinner (*see sidebar*) - the first two were big hits, and we’re optimistic that moving to a larger venue this year will make the event even more successful. Board members are also putting their heads together over other possibilities, including building a larger membership base and increasing the number of groups booking Grebe Lodge.

Turning now to the news from Cabot Head: we’re very fortunate indeed to have Stéphane Menu returning as our station scientist and bander-in-charge at the CHRS this fall. We very much (*continued on p. 6*)

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----- News Flash! -----

Third Annual BPBO Fundraising Dinner

*Saturday, November 25, 5:30 p.m.
St. Mary’s church hall,
6th Avenue East and 15th Street,
Owen Sound.*

The first two were so successful, we’re doing it again! And this year we are moving to a larger venue, so please bring all your friends!

We are very excited to have Mike Cadman, Co-ordinator of the second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, as our speaker this year. Mike will be previewing some of the results of this 5-year volunteer project. If you are a birder who contributed to the Atlas, or just want to learn about what’s going on with bird populations in Grey/Bruce, you won’t want to miss this event.

There will also be a return of the (ever-popular) silent auction*, plus a cash bar, and, of course, a delicious dinner. Tickets are \$40, and a \$25 charitable receipt will be issued at the event. Please contact Lorraine Brown (372-0322; lorraine@apropos.ca) for tickets, or any member of the BPBO board.

**Further donations gratefully accepted!
Please contact Bob Gray (kemblemt@log.on.ca or 519-371-9128) if you have items you would like to donate.*

2006 Spring Migration Monitoring Results from Cabot Head

This spring, 1,544 birds of 66 species were banded and 63 birds of 19 species were recaptured at the Cabot Head Research Station. Spring migration monitoring began on April 16th and ended on June 12th. Stéphane Menu was contracted, for a fourth year, as the Station Scientist. With the assistance of several volunteers, the banding and migration monitoring was conducted for a total of 58 days. Fifteen mist-nets were operated every possible day, depending on the weather. We now have five years of monitoring data collected with a similar protocol, which allows for interesting comparisons. Numbers of banded birds (see below for banding totals) are higher than the previous three years, mostly because of an abundance of kinglets in April. 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 of long-term data to better understand the migration and population dynamics and the importance of the Cabot Head Research Station.

Two new species were added for the area this year. First, a Snowy Owl was seen resting on the Basin shore sitting almost motionless for the entire morning of May 4. Then, a few days later, a Lark Sparrow was seen feeding on the ground around the banding lab. A very cooperative bird, it was observed for several hours feeding in company with a House Sparrow (a rather rare bird at the station as well) and lots of Chipping and White-crowned Sparrows.

Other noteworthy sightings: A Pied-billed Grebe, a rather uncommon bird around the station, was seen in Wingfield Basin on April 18. The first Eastern Towhee detected was very early, on April 20; another individual was banded on May 13. Only one Golden Eagle was seen this spring, on April 28. One Northern Mockingbird was seen on May 9 (in the afternoon). This individual was rather odd-looking: it was entirely light brown where it should have been gray and black. Another, normally-plumaged, individual was seen on May 25. Over the Basin, two Semipalmated Plovers were flying fast on May 10. A Chestnut-sided Warbler in fall plumage was seen on May 12! A Whimbrel was seen and heard as it flew over Georgian Bay on May 25. On June 7, a four-year-old Bald Eagle was detected perched along the Bay shore, thanks to the

raucous calls made by gulls. Spooked by a boat wake, it took off and flew inland, passing west of Middle Bluff. The day before, 2 Bald Eagles (one adult and one undetermined) had been seen around the Basin during the morning; the adult one was seen perched on a tall red pine west of Middle Bluff. Although they were not observed afterwards, it is tempting to think they could be the pair seen the previous springs, with the immature slowly moving toward adulthood...

This season marked our fifth year of migration monitoring following a well-established protocol. This spring showed how weather systems can greatly influence migration. As shown by the sighting of two new species for the area, the unexpected is always to be expected at a migration station! Migration monitoring at Cabot Head, part of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, will certainly provide other surprises and ultimately will contribute to a better understanding and monitoring of bird populations.

Recognition of volunteers: Again, our bilingual station lured people from Ontario and Quebec, but a long-term volunteer came from overseas (the Netherlands) and is back for the entire fall season. BPBO and the Station Scientist would like to express their gratitude to the following volunteers and members of for their help at the field station during the banding season: Josh Shea, Anita and Bob Cunningham, Sandra Luisterburg, Aurélie Bourbeau-Lemieux, Manon Morissette, Al Woodhouse, Mary-Anne Cain, Ted Cheskey, Deb Diebel, Lyn Elliott (in order of appearance!).



Wood Thrush was one of the species that broke a record for number caught in a spring season, with four individuals banded.

Photo: Peter Coo

Table1: Spring totals of banded birds by year at Cabot Head Research Station

Species	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	Species	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Sharp shinned Hawk	14	10	10	20	29	<i>Magnolia Warbler</i>	81	116	109	144	184
Hairy Woodpecker		1			1	Cape May Warbler	8	2		1	9
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		2		1		Black-thr. Blue Warbler	29	19	21	64	36
Pileated Woodpecker		1		1		Yellow-rumped Warbler	34	28	49	68	244
Yellow-shafted Flicker	4	8		1	1	Black-thr. Green Warbler	25	15	25	27	38
FLICKER INTERGRADE	1					Blackburnian Warbler	3	5	2	4	13
Whip-poor-will		1				Pine Warbler	1	1	2	1	4
Eastern Wood-Pewee	1	2	1	8		Western Palm Warbler	42	38	55	61	216
<i>Yellow-bellied Flycatcher</i>	7	22	17	22	15	Bay-breasted Warbler	3	3	1	1	11
Traill's Flycatcher	13	18	11	13	14	Blackpoll Warbler	3	1	1	4	4
<i>Least Flycatcher</i>	6	20	22	17	9	Black-and-White Warbler	43	42	45	72	78
Eastern Phoebe	4	4	3	2	5	American Redstart	197	152	223	171	204
Blue-headed Vireo	3	1			6	Ovenbird	31	40	26	27	37
Philadelphia Vireo		1		2	2	Northern Waterthrush	5	7	2	3	2
Red-eyed Vireo	15	10	14	13	10	CONNECTICUT WARBLER	1				
Blue Jay	14	16	88	21	13	Mourning Warbler	11	9	11	12	14
Barn Swallow		2			1	<i>Common Yellowthroat</i>	27	49	45	60	56
Black-capped Chickadee	22	6	14	6	342	<i>Wilson's Warbler</i>	11	16	20	25	32
Red-breasted Nuthatch	17	2	2	1	17	Canada Warbler	19	13	22	24	19
Brown Creeper	45	20	9	30	6	American Tree Sparrow	6	2	2	3	5
House Wren	1	2			2	Chipping Sparrow	12	20	17	14	47
Winter Wren	2	1	3	2	2	Clay-colored Sparrow		1			2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	186	33	36	77	6	Field Sparrow	3	1			1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	228	81	74	145	79	Savannah Sparrow	4	1	1	3	1
Veery	21	6	21	4	1	Fox Sparrow	1	1		2	2
<i>Gray-cheeked Thrush</i>	1	4	5	3	1	Song Sparrow	15	8	9	19	12
Swainson's Thrush	42	27	21	12	13	Lincoln's Sparrow	13	25	11	10	17
Hermit Thrush	12	16	6	14	8	<i>Swamp Sparrow</i>	3	6	6	4	3
Wood Thrush	4	2	1	1	1	White-throated Sparrow	47	91	26	25	71
American Robin	10	6	5	15	8	E. White-cr. Sparrow	37	69	14	19	17
Gray Catbird	18	17	11	16	11	Dark-eyed Junco	46	19	20	25	69
Brown Thrasher	6	8	6	7	3	Eastern Towhee	1	1	2		
Cedar Waxwing	7	3		4		Northern Cardinal		1		1	1
Orange-crowned Warbler	6	8	8	5	29	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	6	2	3	4	1
TENNESSEE WARBLER	1					Indigo Bunting		4	5	1	3
Nashville Warbler	34	49	18	61	227	BALTIMORE ORIOLE	1				
Northern Parula		1		9	3	American Goldfinch	2	1	1	4	41
Yellow Warbler	11	4	8	16	22	Total	1544	1236	1210	1479	2431
Chestnut-sided Warbler	12	12	14	20	26	Species Total	66	72	62	69	74

Bold and *italic*: Record **high** and *low*, respectively, established in spring 2006 (period 2002-2006)

SMALL CAPS: Indicated first spring banding record for CHRS (period 2002-2006)

Data: for 2002: Derebyshire, 2002; for 2003, 2004, 2005: Menu, 2003, 2004, 2005

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

(Continued on Page 4)

Figure 1. Daily number of banded birds at Cabot Head Research Station, spring 2006.

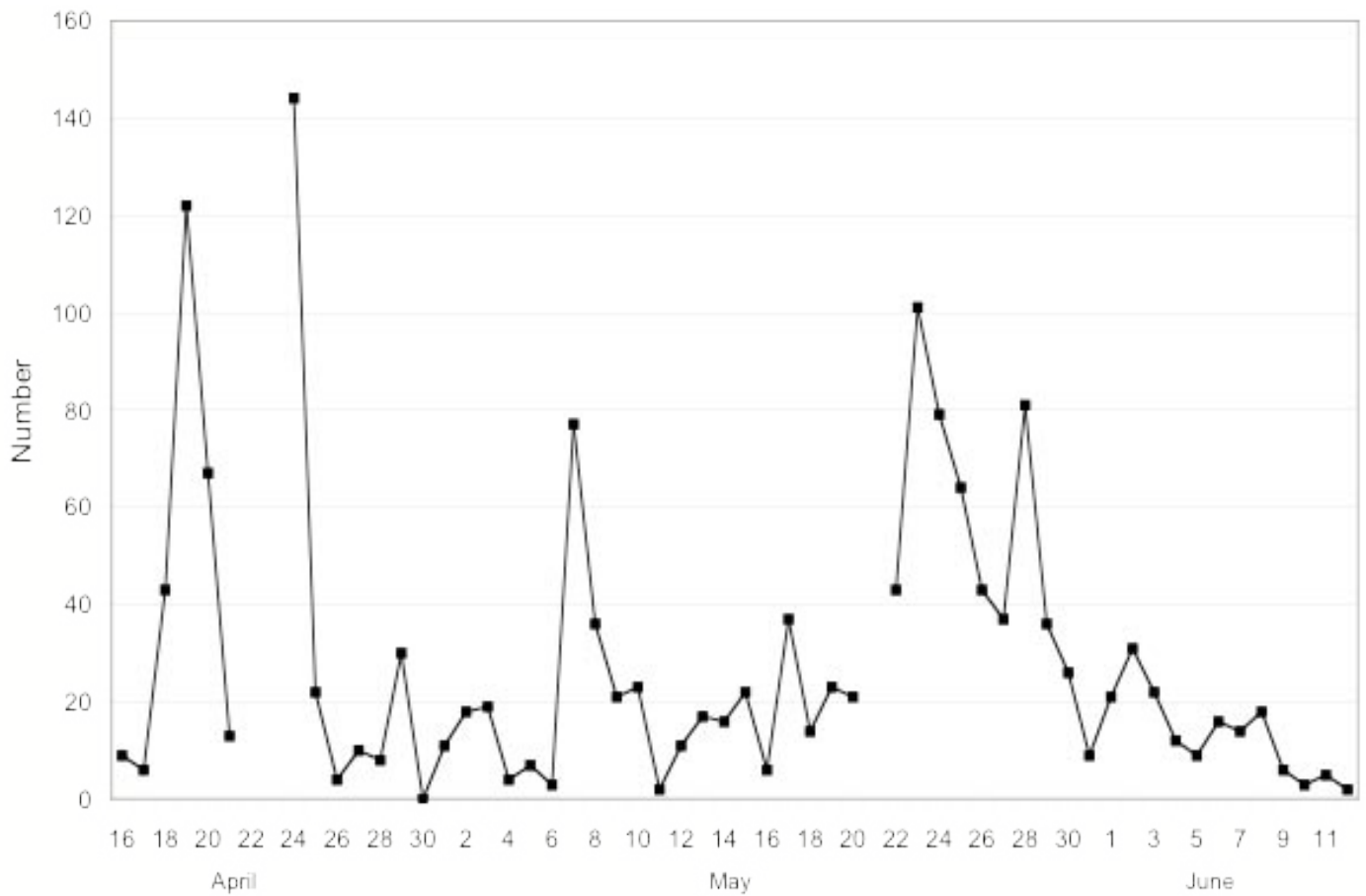


Table 2. Total recaptures at Cabot Head Research Station, spring 2006, by species in relation with the year of banding.

(Only one recapture per individual is included and within-season recaptures are excluded).

Species	1998	2001	2002	2003	2004		2005		Foreign	Total
	S	S	S	F	S	F	S	F		
Sharp-shinned Hawk								1		1
Red-eyed Vireo	1			1			1	2		5
Black-capped Chickadee		1	1							2
American Robin							1			1
Black-throated Green Warbler						1				1
American Redstart		2	1		3	1	4	7		18
White-throated Sparrow									1	1
Total Recaptures	1	2	1	2	3	2	6	10	2	29
Species Total	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	2	7

S: spring; F: fall.

-Stéphane Menu

Ontario Stewardship Rangers - Road Brushing Project

The Ontario Stewardship Ranger (OSR) program is a youth employment initiative of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The program is sponsored locally by the Grey County Forest Stewardship Network and the Bruce Resource Stewardship Network. The work focuses on community-based environmentally related projects, organized in partnership with local conservation groups. This past July, BPBO was fortunate enough to have a Rangers team come and help us out at the Cabot Head Research Station for a weekend. BPBO board member Bob Gray was the team leader, and sends this report:

On July 24 and 25 the Ontario Stewardship Ranger crew for the Grey-Bruce area worked on road brushing at BPBO. To save on travel time from Owen Sound, the crew stayed over at Grebe Lodge the first night. Bob Lesperance from Ontario Parks supplied the hand tools, and did chainsaw work on the larger problem trees along the road edge. The objective was to improve vision lines along the road for safety, and to protect vehicles from being scratched by branches.



The summer '06 OSR crew enjoying a much deserved break in front of Grebe Lodge. photo : Bob Gray

The main problem trees were removed along the entire length of the access road, and then all smaller trees and shrubs were trimmed close to ground level on the road shoulders for the first 0.5 km from the cottages out towards the entrance gate.

As visitors to BPBO know, poison ivy along the road edge is quite thick in places. The PI and rattlesnakes (we did encounter one big one!) were deemed to be the greatest potential safety hazards on the job. To protect ourselves from PI, we washed up with a bucket of warm water and Sunlight dish detergent each time we entered the cottage for meals. It must have worked because none of the rangers came down with a rash.

Many thanks to BPBO for allowing us to stay at Grebe Lodge. The after- hours swimming, hiking and card games in such a beautiful setting will be one of the highlights of the summer for the rangers.

-Bob Gray

Letter to the Editor: Beware the Turkey!

The following letter crossed Deb Diebel's desk some months ago, when she was the Beakon editor; I thought the onset of winter (and hence, birdfeeding) would be a good time to print it. -ed.

Much as we hate to disagree with such a prestigious birder as Rod Steinacher; we would question his advice to go out and buy a sack of cracked corn and feed Wild Turkeys.

They first appeared on our quite small property four years ago. By last winter we had twenty coming every day, in spite of all our efforts to avoid feeding them. They kept coming for food spilled by the other birds and we had to stop feeding ground feeders such as Juncos. By the end of the winter, our garden smelt like a stock yard and we were in serious danger of having our well contaminated. This year in November thirty appeared! Our regular small bird visitors and our rabbits and squirrels are all on strict rations but however much we shoo off the turkeys they keep coming.

These birds do not belong in this area (see Sibley, *Guide to Birds*). They have proliferated rapidly since they were introduced only a few years ago, as there are few predators. They are becoming a nuisance to farmers and they are eliminating other ground feeding birds, such as Ruffed Grouse, which we used to enjoy seeing. Feed them at your peril!!

**-Joan & Walter Crowe,
Owen Sound**



The leader of the bird hike at the August Open House making an eloquent gesture (which translates, "Where's all the birds? Gee, I dunno.")
 - photo: Steve Patterson

(continued from p.1) appreciate the sense of continuity that his extended tenure brings to BPBO. Here follow some late-breaking news items from the station:

- The Wingfield cottage now has its propane stove hooked up. Given the problems they've had with the hydro up there over the last couple of seasons, this is a big relief for the migration monitoring crew.
- Owl banding has begun, and will continue throughout October. This year, there's an extra volunteer bander dedicated to owl monitoring, so the station is able to achieve a very good level of coverage - dusk to four

a.m. every night (weather permitting). The expanded coverage has already paid off: As of press time, 12 Northern Saw-whet Owls had been banded already, compared to only 7 for all last year!

- In the diurnal banding department, Stéphane reports the recent capture of a hatch-year female Black-backed Woodpecker. This is a source of considerable excitement, as it is a fairly uncommon species at the best of times, and represents another banding "first" for the station.

That's all the latest, for now. Look for a full fall migration report in the next *Beakon*.

-Peter Coo

Hear ye, Hear ye!

There will be a General Meeting of the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 25. It will take place at St. Mary's Church Hall, 6th Avenue E & 15th St., Owen Sound (in advance of the fundraiser). This meeting will be to discuss BPBO business, and is open to all members - we hope that you will be able to attend.

A BPBO Who's Who:

The Board of Directors

- * Rod Steinacher
- * John Haselmayer
- * Rob Kearns
- * Peter Coo
- * Bob Gray
- * Anne Range
- * Steve Patterson
- * Gord Cottrill

President & BoD Chair; Fundraising Committee Chair
 Vice President; Membership Committee
 Treasurer; Membership Committee Chair
 Newsletter
 Secretary
 Event Planning; Fundraising Committee
 Marketing, Publicity, Webmaster; Information Technology,
 Fundraising & Membership Committees
 Director at Large

Staff

- * Ron Baker
- * Dr. Stéphane Menu

Administrator
 Cabot Head Research Station Scientist

Non-Board Volunteers

- * Noreen Steinacher
- * Ted Cheskey
- * Lorraine Brown
- * Deb Diebel
- * Norah Toth

Workshop Coordinator; Fundraising Committee
 Research Station Volunteer Program
 Fundraising Dinner
 Education Committee
 Ontario Parks Liaison