

Pelee Island Bird Observatory 2011 Year-end Report



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The Pelee Island Bird Observatory was established in 2003 and incorporated as a non-profit charitable organization in 2006. PIBO's mandate includes a commitment to long-term migration monitoring research on Pelee Island; long-term studies of Pelee's breeding bird communities, including national and provincial Species at Risk; serving as an educational centre for the public, school groups and the local community; and promoting the importance of Pelee Island's unique natural heritage.

PIBO Board – Graeme Gibson, the Elder (Chair), Ramsay Cook (Treasurer), Elizabeth Agnew, Wayne Grady, Paul Vasey.

Advisory Board – Margaret Atwood, Ian Davidson, Matthew Mann Gibson, Dr. David Hussell, Penny Kavanagh, Philip Slayton, Dr. Bridget Stutchbury.



Eastern Screech-Owl

Executive Summary

It was a busy twelve months at the Pelee Island Bird Observatory in 2011 and much was accomplished thanks to the hard work of a devoted group of volunteers and the generous support of numerous organizations and individuals. The observatory built on its pre-existing research and education programs and forged ahead with a range of new projects designed to protect birds and their habitats. Highlights this year included another successful spring and fall of migration monitoring at Fish Point; the completion of Phase One of PIBO's Breeding Birds of Pelee Island project; the production of a 15-minute educational video about bird migration, birding banding, and conservation; the hiring of a Species at Risk intern; classroom presentations to more than 750 students; and another successful pig roast and Spring Song festival in May.

PIBO's research activities were carried out from April 4th – November 15th including 173 mornings of diurnal migration monitoring; Northern Saw-whet Owl studies; breeding bird point-counts; marsh bird surveys, and amphibian and monarch butterfly counts. Two staff and nine interns/volunteers contributed more than 1466 field-hours to PIBO's population monitoring programs in 2011 and documented more than two hundred species on the island, including data on the nesting status of five Species at Risk. As in previous year's, the results of PIBO's 9th research season are being actively shared with numerous federal, provincial and local conservation organizations including Environment Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Essex Region Conservation Authority, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and Ontario Nature, among others.

2011 saw the completion of Phase One of PIBO's Breeding Birds of Pelee Island project. The BBPI was launched in 2006 in order to document the status of breeding birds on Pelee and to track long-term changes resulting from a broad range of influences including natural succession, habitat restoration initiatives, and climate change. The completion of phase one has produced a comprehensive snapshot of the current status of eighty-six species for which breeding evidence was documented on Pelee during the previous five summers.

PIBO's education and outreach programs continued to thrive in 2011 with an array of activities that helped get our conservation message out to tens of thousands of people of all ages. Foremost was the launch of a busy schedule of classroom presentations at local schools that brought home some of the wonders of birdlife in Southern Ontario to more than 750 students. Other highlights included the completion this spring of a 15-minute educational video about bird migration, the threats faced by migrants, and the importance of places like Pelee Island as a stopover site for migratory birds.

In addition to in-class presentations, the observatory hosted hundreds of visitors on the island with a range of educational programs including daily bird banding demonstrations, bird walks, workshops, our public owling nights, and reached thousands more with the *Auspice*, our seasonal newsletter, our weekly migration updates, and an increased web presence including Facebook and Twitter. As a result of these and other successful projects in 2011, PIBO reached its widest audience to date.

The work accomplished this year was made possible thanks to the critical help of many organizations and individuals. This has provided a solid base for PIBO to pursue a multitude of programs that benefit North American neotropical migrants, Canadian boreal forest species, national and provincial Species at Risk, and many Carolinian nesting birds with limited breeding ranges in Canada.

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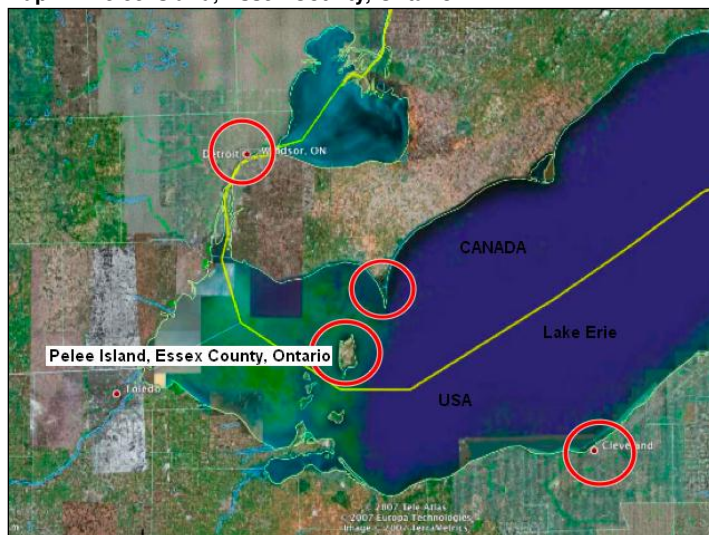
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INTRODUCTION

This year's report includes a summary of PIBO's research, education, and community outreach programs along with a number of other developments at the observatory in 2011. Section One presents the results of the 2011 research season including PIBO's ongoing songbird migration and Northern Saw-whet Owl monitoring programs, breeding bird surveys, Species at Risk transects, Monarch Butterfly counts, and a number of additional studies.

Section Two provides an update and description of PIBO's education and community outreach activities in 2011. In all, PIBO hosted 350 visitors on the island in 2011 with a diverse range of activities including bird banding demonstrations, bird walks, and owling nights. Additionally, PIBO's Species at Risk Coordinator visited seven local schools this Fall as part of a hugely successful campaign to raise awareness about Species at Risk in Essex County.

Map 1 – Pelee Island, Essex County, Ontario



The organization continued to strengthen ties with the community and PIBO staff and volunteers engaged more islanders in observatory programs than any previous year. Highlights included PIBO's involvement in Pelee Island's annual 'Green' Bird Race, the Canada Day parade and Pelee Fest celebrations, our successful mulled wine and owling nights, many potluck dinners, and a host of other activities.

RESEARCH

Migration Monitoring

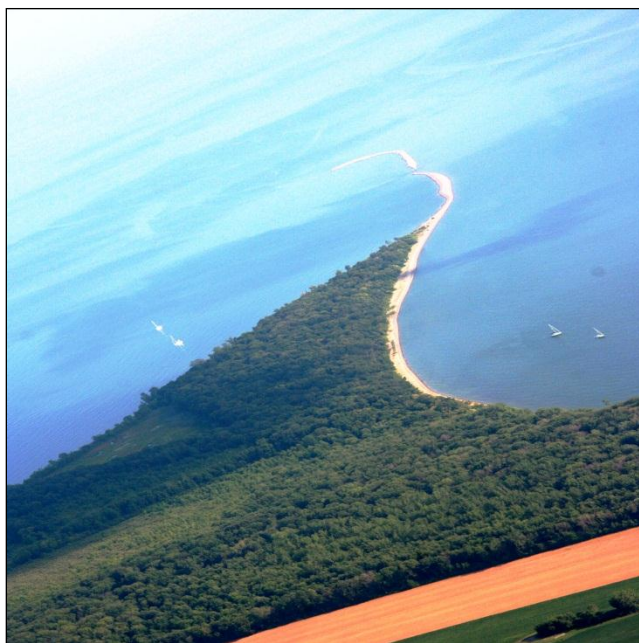
Migration monitoring research is an effective method for tracking changes in bird populations through the counting and capture of migrants. The data collected at migration stations is used to detect population trends of small landbirds that migrate to and from their breeding and wintering grounds each year. Many songbirds summer in remote northern regions and winter in equally isolated areas, which makes it difficult to survey these species using other monitoring methods.

The Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) oversees migration studies in Canada. The network is made up of more than twenty-five permanent sites established across the country that, like PIBO, generate daily migration counts for a wide range of species. Monitoring stations are committed to collecting standardized data that contributes to our collective understanding of the changes taking place

in populations of migratory birds, as well as to document migration at the station itself, and many other bird-related studies.

PIBO's 9th year of Spring and Fall migration monitoring coverage at Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve (Ontario Parks – Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources) ran from April 4th – June 10th and August 1st – November 15th, 2011, for a total of 173 coverage days. Eleven participants contributed 1300 hours to the migration study.

A total of 203 species was recorded at Fish Point during PIBO's standard count period and 2404 birds of seventy-eight species were banded in 4475 net-hours, for an average catch-rate of 0.54 birds/net-hour. 2011 was notable for the amount of rainfall, including 17 days of precipitation in the spring and 23 days in the fall, or almost 25% of PIBO's total coverage period.



Fish Point

A number of rare and unusual species were documented on the island by staff and volunteers including Snow Goose (first PIBO record), Hudsonian Godwit (first PIBO record), Red Knot, Nelson's Gull, Acadian Flycatcher, and Prothonotary Warbler, among others.

The following Spring and Fall migration summaries include excerpts from PIBO's migration updates and from written narratives found in PIBO's 2011 daily log book.

April

PIBO's 2011 migration coverage season got underway at Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve on April 4th under cloudy skies, with light rainfall and strong winds from the south. Despite the inclement weather, a nice variety of birds were observed on the day including ten waterfowl species and moderate numbers of songbirds including phoebes, Tree Swallows, both kinglet species, robins, a Brown Thrasher, and five sparrow species.

A typical mix of early-Spring migrants were recorded throughout the first half of the month and new arrivals were documented almost daily from April 4th - 15th. Large numbers of Red-breasted Merganser and scaup were counted including 800 mergansers on April 15th and 350 scaup on the 13th. Dabbling ducks at Fox Pond included Blue and Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Wood Duck and

Mallard. In all, sixteen waterfowl species were noted during the summary period. Cormorants and Bonaparte's Gulls were numerous, with 900 of the former on the 15th, and 800 Bonaparte's on the 13th. An adult Glaucous Gull was found at the tip on April 10th. A few raptors were observed on the island from the 4th - 15th including small numbers of American Kestrel, Merlin, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, and Sharp-shinned Hawk.



Belted Kingfisher

Songbirds were active and Spring-firsts were recorded on April 12th for many migrants including Tree, Barn and Rough-winged Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and an early Northern Parula. American Robins and Northern Flickers moved through the area in good numbers, with 46 robins tallied on the 10th. A lingering winter species - Common Redpoll - was found feeding with a small group of Field Sparrows on April 8th. A Grasshopper Sparrow at the tip on the 10th was one of eight sparrow species noted that day.

It was a busy second half of April and lots of migrants moved through the area from the 16th - 30th, including a dramatic influx of birds towards the end of the month. In keeping with the time of year, a nice variety of 'temperate' migrants were on hand mid-month, including twelve sparrow spp., followed by a steadily increasing number of long-distance 'neotropical' migrants such as the swallows and swifts, grosbeaks and tanagers, and a nice mix of warblers. It was also active on the lake, with large numbers of gulls, cormorants, and waterfowl recorded on a daily basis, along with good numbers of other waterbirds. Although the coverage effort was affected by numerous thunderstorms and lots of rain, it was one of our busiest late-Aprils on record.

The weather from April 16th - 20th left a lot to be desired, including a mix of rain, sleet, snow, and gale force winds, but a variety of species were recorded in good numbers including 750 Red-breasted Mergansers (April 16th), 265 scaup (17th), and 260 Bonaparte's Gulls (19th). Other waterfowl seen during this time included Hooded Merganser, hundreds of Buffleheads, and six Ruddy Ducks on April 19th. Songbirds were recorded in moderate numbers, although Tree and Barn Swallows were active (a mixed flock of 125 birds was counted on the 17th), along with smaller numbers of a variety of other species.

Another full day of rain on April 25th was followed by a dramatic fallout of birds on the morning of the 26th that produced one of the busiest April mornings at the station in eight years. Seventy-one species were recorded during the official count period along with thirty birds banded of eleven species in forty-five net-hours. While not many birds were captured, the netting area was active with a range of species including Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler and White-throated Sparrow, among others. Just five warblers species were noted on the day, but lots of other migrants appeared including spring 'firsts' for Chimney Swift, Eastern Kingbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Baltimore Oriole. Eleven sparrow species were recorded on the 26th including 105 White-throats, 64 Chipping Sparrows, and a Grasshopper Sparrow.

Eight warbler species were tallied the following day along with 'firsts' for Sora, Veery and Gray Catbird. An early Acadian Flycatcher and a Northern Mockingbird were also recorded on the 27th. Gale force winds from the west made for a quieter morning on April 28th, and there wasn't much to report during the final two days of April with the exception of the first Indigo Bunting of the spring (April 29th), and two Tundra Swans at the tip on the 30th.



Sanderling

May

The first week of May remained cool and wet but still quite active. Many new arrivals included Peregrine Falcon (May 1st), Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Golden-winged Warbler (2nd), Clay-colored Sparrow (3rd), Yellow-breasted Chat and Hooded Warbler (4th), and a Lesser Black-backed Gull (6th). After a brief pause from May 8th – 11th, a sustained wave of songbirds moved through the area for almost five days. Three staff and volunteers recorded more than eighty species during PIBO's official count period on four of the five mornings – a station first. Among numerous other species, a 1st year Nelson's Gull discovered at the tip by Ken Burrell and Brandon Holden was also noted by PIBO staff.

The pace continued into the third week of May and it was active in the netting area as well despite the rainy conditions. In all, 330 birds were captured from May 16th – 22nd including 83 individuals of twenty-six species banded on the 17th. Highlights included a Connecticut Warbler and Scarlet Tanager captured on the 18th and three Hooded Warblers from the 19th – 22nd. It remained fairly busy towards the end of the month and diversity remained high, with fifteen warbler species noted on May 28th. Although flycatchers and vireos and a variety of shorebirds were observed in good numbers throughout the last week of May and into early-June, diversity dropped off after the 29th and local breeding birds accounted for most observations, apart from an Olive-sided Flycatcher (29th) and White-eyed Vireo on the 30th.

Table 1 – Spring Coverage Effort

Description	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Coverage	Apr 4-Jun 8	Apr 2-Jun 10	Apr 1-Jun10	Apr 3-Jun14	Apr 1–Jun 15	Apr 2–Jun 8	Apr 5–Jun 6
Coverage days	66	70	71	73	76	67	61
Netting period	Apr12-May31	Apr4-May 28	Apr2-May24	Apr 5-Jun 10	Apr 2–Jun 1	Apr 15–Jun 7	Apr 6–Jun 5
Netting days	38	47	44	55	48	35	55
Birds banded	767	708	825	794	637	1033	1151
Net hours	1475	1923	2187	2569	1831	1796	2223
Bird/net hour	0.52	0.37	0.39	0.31	0.35	0.61	0.52
Species banded	61	67	68	69	67	62	72
Recaptures	70	65	77	95	66	68	147
Species recaptured	14	11	18	9	10	17	23
Species recorded	173	166	170	175	177	181	171

August

After a busy summer research season and a brief break in July, PIBO staff and volunteers launched our 9th autumn migration-monitoring coverage season at Fish Point on August 1st. Fieldwork from the 1st – 10th was limited to the daily 90-minute census and some additional observations.

In keeping with early-August, local breeding birds and dispersed young dominated the area during the first ten days of coverage. Although migration activity was minimal, a few shorebirds were recorded on most days – Ruddy Turnstones and Sanderlings – and a steady stream of southbound swallows (mostly Purple Martins and Barn Swallows) were noted from the 3rd – 10th, along with smaller numbers of kingbirds, waxwings, and orioles, among others.

Lots of gulls and terns were observed at the tip throughout the summary period including more than 900 of the former (mostly Ringed-bills and Herrings) and 60 Common Terns on August 3rd. Other water birds observed in the count area included Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Mallard, and Wood Duck, among others. A Least Bittern (a presumed migrant) was heard at Fox Pond on August 7th. Few birds-of-prey were noted apart from a couple of local Bald Eagles, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, a vocal Eastern Screech-owl in the netting area, and small groups of Turkey Vultures.

Some songbirds were on the move including Least and Willow Flycatchers and Northern Waterthrushes, along with the species mentioned above. Purple Martins and Barn Swallows were especially active on August 5th, with more than 40 and 30 individuals recorded flying south off the tip, respectively. Other migrants noted during the study period included a Canada Warbler on the 7th, along with small numbers of Yellow Warblers.

Warm temperatures and southerly winds made for a quiet time at the Point from August 11th – 14th, but there was a noticeable upswing in activity mid-month thanks in part to some cooler weather towards the end of the summary period. Dawn temperatures dipped below 20° C on August 15th, which was enough to encourage a few migrants to move south over the following days, including 50 species recorded on the 19th. Although it was generally slow in the netting area as well, the banding season started off on an exciting note with the capture of two hatch-year Prothonotary Warblers on August 12th, side-by-side in

the same net. The youngsters were undoubtedly from the nest located within a kilometre of the banding station. Both captured birds were actively moulting. A variety of other species were banded in small numbers including eight other warbler species, Yellow-bellied, Least and Traill's Flycatchers, and a few Swainson's Thrush, among others.



Prothonotary Warblers

Gull numbers remained high, with over 800 Ring-billed and Herring and 48 Great Black-backs noted on the 20th, along with 2850 Double-crested Cormorants. Shorebirds continued to trickle through the area and small numbers of Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones, and Spotted Sandpipers were recorded almost daily. A Hudsonian Godwit appeared at the tip on August 18th and lingered for a couple of days – a station 'first'.

Swallows were active throughout the summary period – a station-high 102 Cliff Swallows were observed drifting south off the tip on August 12th, along with 50 Barn Swallows and 48 Purple Martins on the 14th, followed by another 70 Cliff Swallows on the 20th.

It was a productive and enjoyable ten days at the Point from the 21st to 31st and migration activity picked up steadily throughout the summary period, culminating on August 29th with the first significant fall-out at the station since coverage got underway on the 1st. In all, twenty autumn 'firsts' were recorded over the ten days including Pied-billed Grebe, Baird's Sandpiper, Philadelphia Vireo, Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, ten warbler species, and a nice variety of other others. The netting area was busy towards the end of the month, with 86 birds banded on August 29th and 82 on the following day.

After a relatively quiet morning on the 21st the winds went north and the mercury dropped to 15° C for the first time this month, which produced a small wave of migrants on the 22nd, including a nice mix of shorebirds, flycatchers, vireos, thrushes and warblers. In all, 57 species were noted in the count area including increased numbers of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, and American Redstart, among others. Interestingly, one of the Prothonotary Warblers banded at the station on August 12th was recaptured on the 22nd.

Another busy morning on August 23rd included the capture of nine warbler species and a Yellow-throated Vireo – the first banded at the station since operations began in 2003. Near-gale conditions on the 24th made for a quiet morning and there was little of note on the day with the exception of a windswept Red Knot at the tip. Three more days of light activity from August 25th – 27th gave way to another active morning on the 28th – 58 species were tallied including fourteen warbler species. Magnolias and

American Redstarts were numerous, along with the first Black-throated Greens and Bay-breasted Warblers of the fall.



Eastern Kingbird

August 29th proved to be the busiest morning this month and PIBO staff and volunteers were treated to a nice variety of birds (64 species) including small groups of five shorebird spp., six flycatcher spp., four thrush spp., and good numbers of fifteen warbler species. Magnolias once again led the way, with 32 birds recorded (20 banded), followed in order of abundance by American Redstart (21), Blackburnian (13), Blackpoll (12), and Black-throated Blue Warblers (11). An Eastern Screech-Owl was captured on the first net round of the day. The next day was almost equally busy – 58 species were noted and 82 birds of eighteen species were captured, including thirteen warbler species. The pace dropped off on the final day of the month, although 84 Purple Martins were observed departing south from the tip and eleven warbler species were counted in modest numbers.

September

September 1st

It was hot today and it will likely get even hotter tomorrow (32° C). Thunderstorms this morning cut short the netting effort. There were very few birds around, with just 27 species recorded on the census.

September 2nd

Extremely warm again this morning and not much activity after four days of south winds. Good numbers of Common Terns (312) at the tip, however, along with ones-and-twos of six warbler species.

September 3rd

More of the same, although a Carolina Wren on census was, surprisingly, a 'fall' first. Their numbers on the island have been reduced considerably in the last few years, likely due to some cold winter conditions.

September 4th

Intense thunderstorms last night but still warm, with a dawn temperature of 23° C. Nonetheless, a few birds were noted including ten warblers species in small numbers (mostly Redstarts and Magnolias). Lots of Purple Martins (93) departing south off the tip on census, and a Yellow-throated Vireo was banded. Up to 65 Great Black-backed Gulls at the tip.

September 5th

A nice change of pace with some north winds and a busy morning on both the census and in the netting area. Fifty-three species noted on the day including fifteen warbler species, increased numbers of thrushes, lots of Cedar Waxwings, swallows, and a nice variety of others. Sixty-nine birds captured of eighteen species, with Redstarts, Magnolias and Blackpolls leading the way.

September 6th

Another active day with 55 species recorded during the standard count period along with 119 birds of twenty-three species captured in sixty net-hours. Thirty-five thrushes banded including Veerys, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked, and eighteen warbler species tallied, including fifteen species banded. A Merlin and Palm Warbler were both new for the fall. More than 4000 cormorants observed at the tip.

September 7th

Some more rain (it ended up being one of PIBO's wettest Septembers on record) and not as many birds in the area today apart from an influx of 150 Bonaparte's Gulls, a Merlin, a few Sharp-shins, and small numbers of flycatchers, vireos, thrushes and warblers. Thirty-two birds banded of twelve species.



Black-throated Blue Warbler

September 8th

It rained on-and-off all morning and just the census and some additional observations were completed. Not much to report with the exception of a Broad-winged Hawk on the census.

September 9th

Lots of birds around today but persistent showers hampered the coverage effort and the nets remained closed. Despite this, fifteen warbler species were documented on the census along with a good variety of other migrants in moderate numbers.

September 10th

Yet more rain and minimal coverage on the day, Thirteen birds captured in twenty net-hours, including a couple of Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Red-eyed Vireos, one Gray-cheeked Thrush, 7 Swainson's, and two Magnolia Warblers.

September 11th

A full morning of coverage and some increased activity, with fifty species on the day and 30 birds of thirteen species captured. Still some flycatchers in the area – Great Crested and Pewees – five thrush species, and ten warbler spp.

September 12th

A fairly uneventful morning apart from 600 Common Terns at the tip, a swarm of more than 30 Black-capped Chickadees in the netting area (probably all resident birds), and ones-and-twos of six warbler species.

September 13th

Southwest winds, 22° C at dawn, and one of the quietest mornings for songbirds this fall, with almost all the seasonal residents having left and virtually no passage migrants in the area.

September 14th

A slight improvement in the weather and a small influx of birds, with 37 individuals captured of fifteen species and 50 species recorded on the day. Quite a few Sharp-shins in the area (22 tallied on the census), along with small numbers of a nice variety of songbirds including Philadelphia Vireo, Red and White-breasted Nuthatches, three thrush species, fourteen warbler spp., and few Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. A banded Northern Parula was new for the fall.

September 15th

Lots of activity this morning with two thrush species leading the way. Ninety-two thrushes banded of two species – 49 Gray-cheeked and 43 Swainson's – of the 109 birds captured on the day. Possibly a station-high for the former species.



White-throated Sparrow

September 16th

More thrushes and warblers again today including 23 banded Swainson's and 22 Gray-cheekeds, and smaller numbers of eight warbler spp. recorded throughout the morning. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was the first this autumn.

September 17th

Not much bird activity but quite a few human visitors, with thirteen people showing up at the station to see a nice variety of species banded including Philadelphia and Blue-headed Vireo, some thrushes, and small numbers of Magnolia, Black-throated Green, and Black-and-white Warblers.

September 18th

Generally quiet. Two Black-bellied Plovers and a Sanderling at the tip were the only birds of note on the day.

September 19th

More soggy weather, some strong south winds, and just the census and a few additional observations completed this morning. Twenty-one species recorded in the official count area.

September 20th

A moderate but welcome increase in activity with 45 species on the day. A nice variety of birds were seen – Bald Eagle, Eastern Screech-Owl, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, House Wren, the first White-throated Sparrow of the fall, and eleven warbler species, including a banded **Connecticut Warbler**.

September 21st

A quiet census and not much activity in the netting area. It was warm at dawn (21° C) with light southeast winds and steady rain starting around 9 a.m..

September 22nd

Cooler this morning but winds still from the south. Not much to report apart from 16 Sanderlings at the tip, a few banded thrushes, four warbler species, 3 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and some catbirds.

September 23rd

Lots of rain but a few more birds including over 1000 Common Terns at the tip, 70 Bonaparte's Gulls, a Red – eyed Vireo, and nine warbler spp.

September 24th

Intense thunderstorms last night but still warm. More activity this morning including nine warbler species banded in small numbers along with some thrushes and kinglets. A female Peregrine on census along with a Merlin and 12 Sharp-shins. There was a small increase in diurnal migration including about 200 blackbirds and 61 Blue Jays.



Yellow-rumped Warbler

September 25th

Ones-and-twos of a nice variety of species – Philadelphia Vireo, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrush, the first pipits of the fall, a banded Northern Parula, along with eleven other warbler species.

September 26th

It was generally quiet with the exception of the first Green-winged Teal of the season and a season-high 11,500 cormorants at the tip.

September 27th

Some Sharp-shins and 3 Bald Eagles were noted on the census along with 46 Canada Geese and 72 Blue Jays.

September 28th

A similar day to the 27th, with 67 Blue Jays along with a couple of Wood Thrushes, a banded Bay-breasted Warbler and Ovenbird, and ones-and-two of a variety of others.

September 29th

Prolonged south winds and warm temperatures brought things to a near standstill, with few migrants around except for a handful of thrushes and warblers.

September 30th

A steady gale from the west and lots of rain on the last day of the month made for a quiet time, with only seventeen species tallied on the census, and just five songbird species. A few raptors of five species were noted including three falcon spp. – kestrel, merlin, and peregrine. Four high-flying Chimney Swifts were observed departing south from the point.

October

Migration continued apace into the first week of October although it was generally quiet throughout most of the coverage period with the exception of a few active mornings at the start of the month. Typically one of the busiest times of the season, migration at the Point from the 1st – 10th was casual compared to previous years.

October 1st

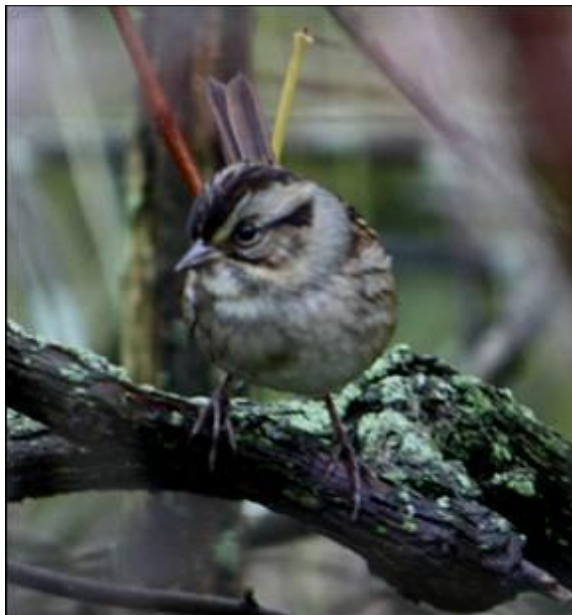
There was a noticeable increase in activity on the census with 30 *catharus* thrushes recorded along with a variety of other species in small numbers – Blackpoll, Palm., and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Swamp and Song Sparrows, some high-flying Tree Swallows, and a few hawks and falcons. Intermittent rain kept the nets closed.

October 2nd

Lots of birds in the area and a nice variety of early and late migrants including eight warbler spp., a few lingering Red-eyed Vireos, six sparrows species, and increased numbers of kinglets (47 Golden-crowns and 25 Ruby-crowns), 34 catharus thrushes (Swainson's, Gray-cheeked and Hermit, including 19 banded Gray-cheeks), 39 Yellow-rumped Warblers, and 48 White-throated Sparrows. Nine fall "firsts" were tallied including a banded Orange-crowned Warbler.

October 3rd

A wet and windy morning with just the census and some additional observations. Lots of Blue Jays (168) departing in groups from the tip and some kinglets, Yellow-rumps, and White-throats in the netting area, but not a lot of activity, with just twenty-eight species recorded by three staff and volunteers in 90-minutes of coverage.



Swamp Sparrow

October 4th

Another substantial fall-out last night and a wide range of species (57) reported on the day including 4 raptor spp., a banded Eastern Wood-Pewee, 3 Blue-headed Vireos, both species of nuthatches, lots of kinglets (73 Golden-crowns), thrushes (22 banded), and eight warbler species. A captured Fox Sparrow was new for the fall.

October 5th

It was active again this morning on census but there were fewer birds in the netting area. Totals on the day included 15 Yellow-rumps and 3 Black-throated Blue Warblers observed along with ones-and-twos of five woodpecker species (including Red-headed), Red-breasted Nuthatches, creepers, Winter Wrens, kinglets, and a few thrushes. Five raptor spp. including a Peregrine.

October 6th

It was warm (15° C) and calm this morning with not much bird news apart from a small contingent of Blue Jays, kinglets, some more thrushes, a few Yellow-rumps, and 2 Blue-headed Vireos. Cormorant numbers on census were down to sixty, but up to 500 gulls were found at the tip – mostly Ring-bills along with Herring and Great Black-backed.

October 7th

Just four birds captured today in four hours and not many migrants on census or in the netting area. Some Blue Jays (84) and Winter Wrens (9) along with small numbers of others – Hermit Thrush and Wood Thrush, waxwings and pipits, and a few sparrows – but generally not much activity on the day.

October 8th

A mostly uneventful morning and not much to report – 34 species noted on the day during four hours of coverage.

October 9th

A large group of Blue Jays (721) observed heading southwest off the tip during census and "official" fall-firsts for Horned Lark and Purple Finch.

October 10th

Light southeast winds, 17° C at dawn, and a quiet morning after a festive PIBO Thanksgiving dinner with eighteen friends and family the night before. Although there were no Wild Turkey, 56 Canada Geese were noted on census along with small numbers of the following species: Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Blue Jay, both kinglet *spp.*, robins and waxwings, and a few sparrows.



Cooper's Hawk

October 11th

Still lots of Blue Jays (214) on census and a nice variety of other species including Sanderlings, Hermit Thrush, both kinglets, some pipits and waxwings, and the first migrant Field Sparrows.

October 12th

A warm start to the day (18° C) and some rain off-and-on throughout the morning. Not much to report on census or in the netting area apart from a few kinglets and thrushes, 2 Black-throated Blue Warblers, and small groups of four sparrow species – White-throated, Song, Swamp, and some juncos..

October 13th

A similar morning to the 12th including mild weather and light rain. A few Sharp-shins still moving through, some White-throats on census, and a few kinglets and an Eastern Towhee in the netting area.

October 14th

Not many migrants today after a week of south/southeast winds. Just a handful of kinglets, a Gray-cheeked Thrush, and a few sparrows on the census.

October 15th

Strong west winds, more rain, and little of note except 6 Bald Eagles on census and a Northern Parula and Magnolia Warbler..

October 16th

A few Yellow-rumps (25) and White-throats (21) this morning and 65 Canada Geese at the tip. Another wet and windy day.

October 17th

Six warbler species this morning including Magnolia, Black-and-white, Black-throated Blue, Palm, Yellow-rumped, and American Redstart, along with the following raptors – 5 Bald Eagles, 5 Sharp-shins, a couple of Red-tails, and a Northern Harrier.

October 18th

There were lots of birds at the Point today with 47 species recorded during the count period. Good numbers of Yellow-rumps (87) and Golden-crowned Kinglets (60) along with a nice variety of others in moderate numbers including Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Blue-headed Vireo, Nashville, Black-throated Green, Blackpoll, and a banded Mourning Warbler.

October 19th

A rainy morning and just the census and some additional observations, but a fairly active day, with 61 Golden-crowned Kinglets and 55 White-throated Sparrows noted during 90-minutes of coverage. Seven sparrow species recorded including 2 Eastern Towhees.

October 20th

It was another active morning and a nice mix of birds were recorded throughout the day including a Sora, 6 Eastern Phoebe, a Red-eyed Vireo, 65 and 29 Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, respectively, 30 Hermit Thrushes (including 17 banded), and 72 White-throated Sparrows.

October 21st

There were lots of birds around this morning including 123 Golden-crowned Kinglets, 83 White-throated Sparrows, 67 Yellow-rumped Warblers, and 35 Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Five raptor species were noted along with the first Buffleheads of the fall.



Nashville Warbler

October 22nd

Another active day with lots of kinglets (87 Golden and 42 Ruby-crowns), Yellow-rumps (100) and Dark-eyed Juncos (51), along with a nice variety of additional species. Almost 4000 blackbirds flew over the count area during the census, heading southwest off the tip (mostly red-wings, grackles, and some Rusty Blackbirds). The first Northern Saw-whet Owl of the year was captured during PIBO's first of four public owling nights.

October 23rd

It was another busy morning with a similar mix of birds recorded throughout the day including six sparrow species, a couple of Black-throated Blue, and a single Nashville Warbler. Not as much diurnal migration apart from 44 robins, a few pipits, and up to 800 blackbird *spp.*

October 24th

Some light but steady rain and not much of note apart from small numbers of phoebes, kinglets, flickers, yellow-rumps, white-throats, and a lone Tree Swallow.

October 25th

Light southwest winds and another busy morning with lots of Golden-crowned Kinglets (115) and a nice range of other species including Sanderling, the first Dunlins and American Coots of the fall, Blue-headed Vireo, Winter Wren and Brown Creeper, among others.

October 26th

Not much to report today apart from an American Coot at Fox Pond, ones-and-twos of Sharp-shinned Hawk and Northern Harrier, and a small batch of Golden-crowned Kinglets (50).



Northern Saw-whet Owl

October 27th

Although the nets were quiet this morning there were a fair number of birds observed in the netting area and lots activity on census, including over 120 sparrows of six species feeding along the west beach. Juncos (56) and White-throats (50) were numerous along with the first fall record for American Tree Sparrow (22). In all, 44 species were recorded in the official count area.

October 28th

Another busy day for sparrows with seven species recorded including lots of Juncos and White-throats and a couple of Fox Sparrows. Diurnal migration picked up significantly as well with more than 6000 blackbirds noted flying over the station in mixed flocks (mostly Redwings along with Common Grackles and some Rusty Blackbirds). Three Horned Grebes and a single Snow Bunting were new for the fall.

October 29th

Not as active this-morning but still a nice variety of species in moderate numbers. A Red-shouldered Hawk was new for the fall.

October 30th

A station-high 91 Horned Grebes recorded on census along with smaller numbers of Red-breasted Merganser, Mallard, and Bufflehead. Another push of kinglets (111 birds recorded of both species) along with moderate numbers of a nice range of others including Eastern Bluebird, Cedar Waxing, and Purple Finch, among others.

October 31st

Southwest winds, a mild morning (11° C), and not much bird news. All the sparrows from the previous week up and left except for six individuals of three species, and even the cormorants were few-and-far between, with just 40 birds noted at the tip.

November

November 1st

A slight increase in activity with 38 species tallied during the morning coverage including a near record-late Red-eyed Vireo. Lots of European Starlings overhead as well, with more than 2500 blackbirds counted on the day.

November 2nd

More southerly winds and mild temperatures and very few birds documented on the day.

November 3rd

An active morning including good numbers of Horned Grebes (70) and Buffleheads (80), a few lingering Killdeer and Sanderlings, lots of American Crows (514 heading south off the tip), and a station-high 22,000 high-flying blackbirds (mostly redwings and grackles) departing from the point. This count, the bulk of which was observed during a 45-minute walk up the west beach, likely represents a mere fraction of the total number of diurnally migrating blackbirds on the day.

November 4th

Although redwings and grackles were reduced to about 2000 birds, a host of other species were observed in good numbers today, with 47 species detected during five hours of coverage. Red-breasted Mergansers were more in evidence, with 250 individuals noted on the census, along with fall-firsts for Common Loon and Greater Scaup.

November 5th

Strong east winds and not much to report on the day.

November 6th

A similar morning to the 5th and very little of note on census or in the netting area.

November 7th

Two days of south winds, more mild temperatures (12° C at dawn), some rain this-morning, and just 24 species recorded during the morning coverage period.

November 8th

Another very mild day and a relatively quiet morning apart from good numbers of waterfowl on the lake. Over 1000 unidentified waterfowl species (too distant for identification) – likely Red-breasted Mergansers for the most part – along with a mix of Horned Grebes, Greater and Lesser Scaups, and Buffleheads.

November 9th

Fifteen degrees at dawn, more south winds, and steady showers made for another uneventful morning, with just 21 species noted during the 90-minute census.

November 10th

The ups-and-downs of migration were witnessed again today – just 48 waterfowl were recorded yesterday compared to almost 1000 Red-breasted Mergansers, 145 Buffleheads, and 330 unidentified waterfowl species recorded on the lake this morning.

November 11th

A very active morning with more than 3000 Red-breasted Mergansers tallied during the census along with good numbers of scaup (150), Buffleheads (82), and the first Hooded Mergansers of the fall. Other noteworthy sightings included the first Tundra Swans of the season and a Golden Eagle.

November 12th

Still lots of birds on the lake (2100 Red-breasted Mergansers) but not much songbird activity apart from small numbers of kinglets, robins, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a variety of sparrows.

November 13th

It was mild this morning (13° C) and not too busy on the lake or in the woods, although a station-high 267 American Robins were noted moving south through-out the coverage period and a Golden Eagle (likely the same bird from the 11th) was observed at Fox Pond.

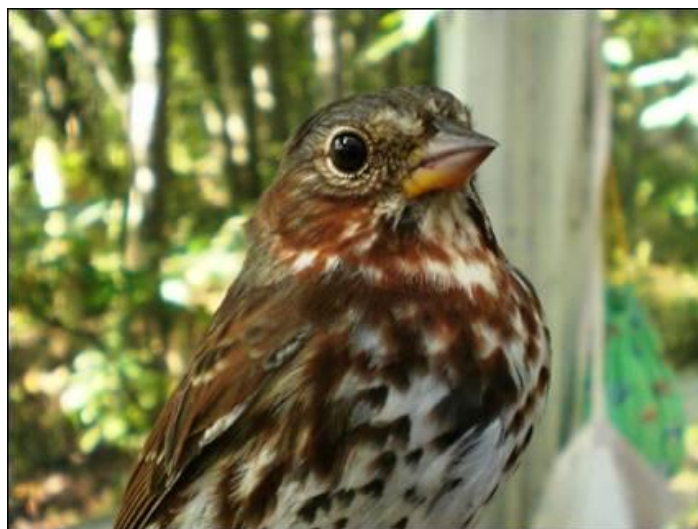
November 14th

Steady rain and 14° C at dawn, and little to report with the exception of another 215 American Robins, a few thousand blackbird *spp.*, more than 1000 European Starlings, and a group of 41 American Goldfinches.

November 15th

The final day of the fall coverage season was generally uneventful, although there were still lots of Horned Grebes at the tip (54) along with a small group of Sanderlings (13), a few dozen Golden-crowned Kinglets, another 80 American Robins, and a nice variety of sparrows including 43 Dark-eyed Juncos and

10 American Tree Sparrows. While migrants continue to move through Southwestern Ontario, it's time for the PIBO crew to pack up after another successful year on Pelee Island.



Fox Sparrow

Table 2 – Fall Coverage Effort

Description	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Coverage Period	Aug 1 – Nov 15	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 1–Nov 15	Aug 7–Nov 15	Aug 4–Nov 14
Days	107	107	107	107	107	101	102
Netting Period	Aug 11-Nov 15	Aug 4-Nov 10	Aug 5-Nov 11	Aug 3-Nov 11	Aug 1–Nov 13	Aug 8–Nov 15	Aug 9–Nov 11
Netting Days	81	90	90	92	n/a	82	89
Birds Banded	1639	2788	2471	2711	2035	3426	4325
Net Hours	3000	3783	4003	4199	4488	3246	4182
Birds/Net Hour	0.55	0.74	0.62	0.65	0.45	1.05	1.03
Species Banded	65	74	72	69	74	74	82
Recaptures	33	61	59	56	60	77	112
Species Recaptured	14	18	15	18	18	17	25
Species Recorded	167	166	172	171	178	174	180

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Table 3 – Combined Spring and Fall Coverage Effort

Description	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Coverage Period	Apr 4-Jun 8	Apr 2-Jun 10	Apr 1-Jun 10	Apr 3-Jun 14	Apr 1-Jun 15	Apr 2-Jun 8	Apr 5-Jun 6
	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 7-Nov 15	Aug 2-Nov 14
Days	173	177	178	180	183	168	163
Netting Period	Apr 12-May31	Apr 2-May 28	Apr 2-May 24	Apr 5-Jun 10	Apr 2-Jun 1	Apr 15-Jun 7	Apr 6-Jun 5
	Aug 11-Nov15	Aug 4-Nov 10	Aug 5-Nov 11	Aug 3-Nov 11	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 8-Nov 15	Aug 9-Nov 11
Netting Days	119	139	134	147	139	117	144
Birds Captured	2404	3498	3296	3505	2672	4459	5490
Species Captured	78	85	88	82	84	81	91
Net Hours	4475	5706	6190	6767	6319	5042	6393
Birds/Net Hour	0.54	0.61	0.53	0.52	0.41	0.88	0.85
Recaptures	103	126	136	151	126	145	259
Species Recaptured	24	23	28	25	23	24	35
Species Documented	203	193	198	194	205	201	199



Sanderlings

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Table 4 – Birds Captured at Fish Point in 2011 and previous years¹

Species	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	Total
Sharp-shinned Hawk	24	26	12	14	16	7	11	8	12	130
Cooper's Hawk	1									1
American Woodcock		1								1
Mourning Dove			1							1
Yellow-billed Cuckoo				1		3		1	3	8
Black-billed Cuckoo				2			1	2	2	7
Northern Saw-whet Owl	9	21	5	48	44	7	12	1		147
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	2	1	1	2		1		1	9
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	14	7	9	7	7	11	15	4	1	75
Red-bellied Woodpecker		2	1		1					4
Downy Woodpecker	17	27	13	14	13	12	9	12	14	131
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			3	1		2	2	1		9
"Yellow-shafted" Flicker	2	4	5	3	3	1	2	1	2	23
Eastern Wood-Pewee	4	6	2	6	1	4	3	3	7	36
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	27	32	61	76	32	79	134	58	39	538
Acadian Flycatcher		1		1			1			3
"Trail's" Flycatcher	7	14	15	17	12	20	57	23	38	203
Least Flycatcher	14	11	13	12	30	36	73	18	51	258
Eastern Phoebe	3	1	13	6	2	4	5	3		37
Great Crested Flycatcher			2			1	4		1	8
Eastern Kingbird								2		2
Red-eyed Vireo	27	64	30	53	40	141	113	71	48	587
Warbling Vireo			1	1		11	6	3	4	26
Philadelphia Vireo	5	12	8	3	8	27	35	31	15	144
White-eyed Vireo		2	3			4	1	1	1	12
Yellow-throated Vireo	2									2
Blue-headed Vireo	17	10	20	16	14	26	36	28	17	184
Blue Jay	5	11	9	14	17	3	50	8	13	130
Tree Swallow		1	1							2
Black-capped Chickadee	15	19	8	14	15	8	29	16	21	145
Red-breasted Nuthatch		6	2	1	8		5	2	1	25
White-breasted Nuthatch									1	1
Brown Creeper	20	28	43	74	21	25	29	30	13	283
Carolina Wren			1	3	5	9	7	5	13	43
House Wren	14	25	23	24	17	28	46	16	22	215
Winter Wren	13	22	44	48	26	21	80	48	14	316
Marsh Wren			2					1	1	4
Golden-crowned Kinglet	110	229	244	312	168	218	766	312	151	2510
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	82	115	254	211	102	423	485	325	134	2131
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1	1						3	1	6
American Robin	11	18	21	34	6	9	6	11	6	122
Wood Thrush	12	19	11	21	27	24	18	18	12	162
Veery	51	62	49	66	74	128	83	67	79	659
Swainson's Thrush	270	463	272	315	314	389	542	314	312	3191
Gray-cheeked Thrush	190	146	156	152	110	91	222	100	56	1223
Hermit Thrush	108	241	176	166	154	228	269	143	141	1626
Gray Catbird	31	33	32	39	44	51	48	43	64	385
Brown Thrasher		2	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	14
Cedar Waxwing		6	4	5	2		1	2	2	22
European Starling				1						1
Northern Parula	1	3	1	7	2	6	1	2	2	25
Orange-crowned Warbler	5	5	6	1	5	7	4	17	10	60
Tennessee Warbler	25	25	5	24	14	39	23	16	85	256
Blue-winged Warbler	1	3	2	3	1	5	3	9	4	31
Golden-winged Warbler	1	3			1	3	1	1	1	10
"Brewster's" Warbler				2			1			3

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Nashville Warbler	33	71	46	53	64	67	127	57	90	608
Yellow Warbler	41	34	31	59	50	41	88	45	70	459
Chestnut-sided Warbler	26	43	33	39	40	117	75	45	45	463
Magnolia Warbler	203	244	289	349	236	617	410	337	335	3020
Cape May Warbler	6	11	2	3	3	6	6	5	6	48
Black-throated Blue Warbler	61	101	93	100	38	84	67	104	60	708
Blackburnian Warbler	14	9	10	6	10	33	31	5	9	127
"Myrtle" Warbler	85	168	109	168	143	154	270	156	131	1384
Black-thr. Green Warbler	14	10	8	10	10	21	7	14	10	104
"Western" Palm Warbler	3	4	5	6	4	1	5	14	2	44
Bay-breasted Warbler	11	4	7	4	6	25	19	10	6	92
Blackpoll Warbler	41	121	24	28	19	17	41	55	22	368
Worm-eating Warbler		1					1	1		3
Prothonotary Warbler	2						1			3
Black-and-white Warbler	77	65	44	57	49	146	71	38	39	586
American Redstart	172	212	109	161	84	273	162	141	159	1473
Ovenbird	87	131	111	95	77	119	107	82	73	883
Louisiana Waterthrush			1		1					2
Northern Waterthrush	41	57	41	38	26	27	38	35	43	346
Kentucky Warbler			1		1	2				4
Connecticut Warbler	2	1	1		2	4	3	2	3	18
Mourning Warbler	9	26	12	11	12	18	22	8	16	134
Common Yellowthroat	32	35	34	38	42	41	57	35	43	357
Hooded Warbler	5	4		2	2	1				14
Wilson's Warbler	17	29	24	19	30	46	32	33	28	259
Canada Warbler	50	59	36	50	38	54	60	24	44	415
Yellow-breasted Chat			1	1	1	1	1	3	1	9
Summer Tanager							1		1	2
Scarlet Tanager	1	1			2	2	3		3	12
Northern Cardinal	14	18	10	13	9	6	10	9	22	111
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	8	1	3		3	3	12	13	5	48
Indigo Bunting	4	9	6	6	9	8	19	4	20	85
Eastern Towhee		1	1		2	1	3	1	1	10
American Tree Sparrow	1	4		7	1	13	3			29
Field Sparrow				1	2		3	3		9
Chipping Sparrow	3				1		2	1	3	10
Grasshopper Sparrow					1					1
White-throated Sparrow	53	70	87	112	72	105	146	137	118	900
E. White-crowned Sparrow	3	6	3	5	8	9	7	6	6	53
Fox Sparrow	4	7	2	6	3	9	14	3	2	50
Song Sparrow	9	12	6	19	10	14	10	5	12	97
Lincoln's Sparrow	5	11	6	7	10	11	20	10	18	98
Swamp Sparrow	14	6	12	20	15	2	27	31	17	171
Dark-eyed Junco	18	14	9	29	25	16	91	34	24	260
Brown-headed Cowbird	2	4	2	2		4	9	1	5	29
Red-winged Blackbird	48	75	103	100	45	35	75	60	34	575
Rusty Blackbird		9	6							15
Common Grackle	16	54	12	33	15	6	23	18	24	201
Baltimore Oriole	24	2	20	6	6	12	23	9	15	117
Orchard Oriole	1						1	1	5	8
Purple Finch		12	1	5	2		1	1	1	23
Pine Siskin						1				1
American Goldfinch	3	13	2	46	6	4	41	10	14	139
Total Captured	2403	3498	2949	3534	2594	4288	5488	3388	3002	31172
Species & Forms	78	85	86	82	84	81	91	87	86	109
Net Hours	4475	5706	6000	6767	6319	5042	6393	3269	4530	48501
Birds/Net Hour	0.54	0.61	0.54	0.52	0.41	0.88	0.85	1.06	0.73	0.64

¹ includes birds captured but not banded

Northern Saw-whet Owl Monitoring

PIBO's autumn Saw-whet Owl monitoring program was limited to ten evenings of netting during the period October 9th to November 16th. Five mist-nets were erected at the south end of Stone Road on property under the stewardship of the Essex Region Conservation Authority and operated approximately four hours each night for a total of 170 net-hours. In all, 11 Northern Saw-whets and one Eastern Screech-Owl were captured, for an average catch-rate of 0.06 birds/net-hour. One of the saw-whets was a foreign encounter originally banded five days earlier on Kelley's Island, Ohio, just south of Pelee Island.

By comparison, 20 Saw-whet Owls and two Eastern Screech-Owls were captured in 2010 for an average catch-rate of 0.07 birds/net-hour, and 26 saw-whets and one screech-owl were captured in 2009 on thirty-two nights (608 net-hours) from October 1st to November 10th, for an average catch-rate of 0.04 birds/net-hour.



Visitors watch a saw-whet being banded

Breeding Birds

It was an active summer on the island and PIBO staff and volunteers kept busy conducting a variety of population monitoring surveys. These studies are part of PIBO's long-term Breeding Birds of Pelee Island (BBPI) project, launched in 2006. The goal of the BBPI is to generate data on the current status of the breeding bird communities on Pelee, with an emphasis on provincial, national and international priority species, and to establish permanent survey points for ongoing research designed to monitor changes over time.

The results of the BBPI, including those summarized in this report, have produced an accurate inventory of the birdlife on Pelee and a framework for monitoring changes resulting from current and future habitat-restoration projects at the sites. Long-term studies will also measure changes brought about by a variety of other influences ranging from natural succession to climate change.

Point-count Surveys

In all, 154 five-minute point count surveys were conducted in 2011 at seventy-seven sites on Pelee Island on properties under the stewardship of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ontario Parks, Ontario Nature, and the Essex Region Conservation Authority. With the completion of this year's fieldwork PIBO has now collected two years of data from all 120 permanent point count sites on the island.

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Two staff and volunteers carried out forty hours of fieldwork in 2011 and documented breeding evidence for 52 species during the official 5-minute surveys from June 1st to July 7th (Table 5). Five national and provincial Species at Risk were documented – Bald Eagle, Chimney Swift, Barn Swallow, Prothonotary Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat. Breeding evidence was also recorded this summer for a number of other uncommon island nesters including White-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Map 2 – Point count sites surveyed in 2011



Table 5 – Species recorded in 2011 during 154 five-minute point count surveys

Species	Status	Species	Status
Great Blue Heron	n/a	N. Rough-winged Swallow	PO
Great Egret	n/a	Tree Swallow	CO
Turkey Vulture	PO	Barn Swallow	CO
Wood Duck	PR	Black-capped Chickadee	PR
Bald Eagle	CO	House Wren	CO
Red-tailed Hawk	PR	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	PR
Ring-necked Pheasant	PR	American Robin	CO
Wild Turkey	CO	Wood Thrush	PR
Killdeer	PR	Gray Catbird	PR
Mourning Dove	PR	European Starling	CO
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	CO	Cedar Waxwing	PR
Black-billed Cuckoo	PR	Yellow Warbler	CO
Red-bellied Woodpecker	PR	Common Yellowthroat	PR
Downy Woodpecker	CO	Scarlet Tanager	PR
Northern Flicker	PR	Northern Cardinal	CO
Eastern Wood-Pewee	PR	Indigo Bunting	PR
Willow Flycatcher	PR	Eastern Towhee	PR
"Traill's" Flycatcher	PO	Field Sparrow	CO
Least Flycatcher	PO	Chipping Sparrow	PR
Great Crested Flycatcher	PR	Brown-headed Cowbird	CO
Eastern Kingbird	CO	Red-winged Blackbird	CO
Red-eyed Vireo	PR	Common Grackle	CO
Warbling Vireo	PR	Baltimore Oriole	CO
Blue Jay	PR	Orchard Oriole	PR
American Crow	PR	House Finch	PR
Horned Lark	PR	American Goldfinch	PR
Purple Martin	CO	House Sparrow	CO
PO - possible			
PR - probable			
CO - confirmed			

Species at Risk (SAR)

The Pelee Island Bird Observatory is involved in a long-term stewardship strategy to monitor and conserve habitat for multiple Species at Risk and neotropical migrants on Pelee Island, a designated Important Bird Area (IBA). With funding received through the OMNR Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, PIBO was able to hire a temporary SAR Coordinator to implement community-based stewardship projects, specifically educational programs, that support Pelee's globally significant biodiversity. The Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) completed several SAR projects in 2011 that will contribute valuable data to recovery and management plans for a variety of SAR found on Pelee Island, including

Prothonotary Warbler (Endangered), Chimney Swift (Threatened), Bald Eagle (Special Concern), Least Bittern (Threatened), and Yellow-breasted Chat (Special Concern), among others.

In 2011, PIBO conducted several standardized surveys on properties under the stewardship of the Township of Pelee Island, Ontario Parks, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ontario Nature and the Essex Region Conservation Authority. A number of monitoring methods were used to detect the presence or absence of SAR including point count surveys following the Ontario Atlas of Breeding Birds protocol, SAR transect surveys using playback tapes, Marsh Bird & Amphibian Monitoring Program surveys, and Chimney Swift population monitoring following the Bird Studies Canada (BSC) protocol. Five PIBO staff and volunteers compiled 66 field hours during these studies.

Marsh Bird & Amphibian Monitoring

PIBO completed its fifth year of marsh monitoring on Pelee Island this summer. Playback recordings of eleven focal bird species were played in addition to collecting visual and auditory monitoring at Lake Henry, Lighthouse Point. Our efforts revealed at least two Least Bittern territories. Additionally, visual and auditory monitoring for thirteen frogs species, including the Blanchard's Cricket Frog (Endangered) was conducted at Lake Henry, Lighthouse Point, and Fox Pond at Fish Point.

Species at Risk Transect Surveys

Walking transect surveys were conducted by PIBO staff between May 25th - June 20th at three separate locations on Pelee Island. The surveys focused primarily on identifying territories and breeding habitat of Yellow-breasted Chats using playback recordings and visual/auditory observations. Surveys revealed the abandonment of four previously used territories and the formation of one new territory in an area with no previous records.

Chimney Swift Population Monitoring

Following the BSC Swift Watch protocol, weekly population monitoring of Chimney Swifts was conducted at a known nesting and roosting site on Pelee Island. PIBO staff collected observations from two chimneys between July and October. Both chimneys were confirmed roosting sites for up to 33 individuals during fall migration. Confirmed nesting locations in 2010, both chimneys were investigated once again this year and one, possibly two nests were found. A survey of the entire island revealed 6 potential nesting and roosting sites in addition to the one which was monitored and a map of their locations was created as well as details of each site. Due to the uncertainty of structure types used by Chimney Swifts, these locations will be monitored during 2012 to confirm whether they are active sites and will provide more information on the current population of Chimney Swifts on the island in addition to nesting/roosting location preferences.

2011 Field Effort

The following staff, interns, and volunteers logged 1466 hours of fieldwork in 2011 during PIBO's 8-month research season. A big thanks to everyone who volunteered their time.

Table 6 – 2011 Field Effort

Participant	Days	Hours
Sumiko Onishi	160	535.5
Graeme Gibson	134	337.5
Sachiko Schott	94	333.5
Claire Sanders	41	100.5
Pat Woodford	12	55

Jim Woodford	11	26
Ricky Dunn	7	26
David Hussell	7	24.5
Katy McFadyen	5	19
Kerry McGuire	1	5
Kirk Stewart	1	3.5
	473	1466

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

In-School Programming

This year, PIBO delivered in-class, curriculum-based, Species at Risk presentations to local high schools for grades 9-12. Additionally, SAR presentations linked to the grade 6-8 curriculum were developed and delivered to several local elementary schools in an assembly format. To promote the program, we visited local schools and delivered a poster to distribute to teachers with the details of the presentation. A total of seven schools were visited, reaching over 750 students. The focus of the presentation was Species at Risk and the importance of Essex County for migratory birds. Students were engaged in interactive discussions and activities about the threats facing species at risk and how they can help. They were also shown an educational video produced by PIBO about bird migration in Essex County and how banding birds contributes to ongoing research and monitoring of migratory bird populations, especially Species at Risk. Table Seven shows the schools visited and the number of students in attendance.

Table 7 – Schools visited with programming

Date	School	Number of Classes	Number of Students	Location
30-Sept	Kingsville District High School	2	50	Kingsville
3-Oct	Harrow District High School	2	46	Harrow
19-Oct	Sandwich West Public School	8	214	LaSalle
20-Oct	Essex District High School	3	65	Essex
21-Oct	Leamington District Secondary School	4	89	Leamington
3-Nov	St. John de Brebeuf Elementary School	4	110	Kingsville
4-Nov	École Bellewood School	8	200	Windsor
TOTAL		31	774	

Student Evaluations

In order to evaluate how much information the students retained, a short 10-question quiz was given to high school classes that received the presentation. The quiz was given one to two weeks after the presentation so it was a good measure of how much students actually recalled from the presentation. Of the ten classes that completed the quiz, the average score was 9.05, and more than 70% of the students scored 9/10 or higher.

The elementary school students were more difficult to evaluate because of the assembly format of the presentation. In an attempt to gauge their retention and understanding of the material that was delivered, they were engaged in a SAR activity following the presentation. During the activity, students were asked questions about SAR that had been discussed during the presentation. Overall, students provided correct answers while at the same time gaining a better understanding of the material by seeing it demonstrated in the activity.

The response from the students was outstanding. As a result, PIBO will continue presenting to elementary schools and will develop programs designed for individual classrooms, along with improved methods for student evaluations.



Teacher Evaluations

High school and elementary teachers were given an evaluation form and asked to score, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent), various aspects of the presentation. The average scores for each component are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 – Average scores on teacher evaluations

Encourage students to develop positive attitudes toward nature	4.59
Met curriculum objectives	4.59
Help students to gain a better understanding of SAR & Migratory	4.65
Professional teaching demeanor of presenter	4.88
Teaching appropriate to age level	4.70
Knowledge of subject matter of presenter	5.00
Enthusiasm of presenter	4.88

Teachers were asked if they would like to see the presentation delivered to their class again and if they would recommend it to others. The response was very favourable and many provided comments about their impressions including :

- Wonderful!!
- Great presentation! Provided lots of good information for students to think about.
- Really liked the video that accompanied the presentation. Students could see first-hand what the banding station looks like, and gained a better understanding of how PIBO works e.g. daily counts.
- Katy was enthusiastic and encouraging! Her presentation became a great spring board from which other topics developed. Many geography themes appeared throughout the presentation

and the power point graphics really demonstrated how geography skills are used in species tracking/monitoring. I hope to visit PIBO as a field trip for these students in the future.

- I loved the student activity - it was met with enthusiasm and I wanted to do it again with my own class!
- Katy McFadyen did an excellent job. She held the students attention for the whole hour. The activity was very effective. She was knowledgeable and informative.
- Informational, creative and very interactive according to my students. They felt the activity was a great way to show how development can affect birds' lives.
- This would be an excellent presentation for the grade 4 level as well since they do animals and their habitats, food chains, structural & behavioural adaptations.
- Very informative. Students were able to connect better with the visuals and the "real" coordinator.



PIBO Educational Video

With generous financial support from the Pelee Island Winery, and in the capable hands of the team at Prisma Light studios in Toronto, the Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) produced a video this spring about birds and bird migration. The 15-minute presentation looks in to the world of migratory songbirds that pass through Southern Ontario each spring and fall and addresses the issue of long-term declines of native birds throughout the Americas. Migrants in particular are exposed to enormous threats, and one of the film's central themes is the importance of natural spaces like Pelee Island for birds to rest up and refuel en route to their summer and wintering grounds.

The video is presented in a series of vignettes that follow PIBO staff and volunteers through a typical day of fieldwork at the observatory's migration monitoring station at Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve. Viewers are introduced to the daily routine and learn about the objectives and methods behind the research. The Prisma Light crew tags along on the 90-minute census (a standardized walk carried out each morning by an experienced observer who records bird activity along a fixed route) and spend a couple of days at the bird banding station. In addition to learning about the role of banding in population studies, and the techniques involved, the video provides the audience with an up-close look at a wonderful array of songbirds – from raucous catbirds and jays to energetic warblers and wrens.

As intended, the program conveys an important conservation message along with an interesting and informative 'behind the scenes' look at one of the more than twenty not-for-profit research organizations that make up the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network. Like our sister stations, PIBO is committed to raising awareness about the threats facing wild birds through outreach and educational programming, and Prisma Light's production will make a lasting contribution towards this goal.

SAR Outreach Material

Resource packages provided by the OMNR Species at Risk Branch along with other resource materials were distributed to school teachers that attended the PIBO educational programs this fall. The packages contained SAR materials including lesson plans which they can implement in their classrooms. It is hoped that these resources will encourage SAR education in schools and promote awareness of SAR in local communities.

SAR Interpretive Signage

Two 1 x 2.25 metre retractable interpretive banners were designed and produced this fall. One banner focuses on Species at Risk, threats against them, and how the public can help. The second banner focuses on bird migration and Pelee Island as a biodiversity hot spot and the role of monitoring stations. The banners will be on display at the Pelee Island Heritage Centre in 2012 during peak spring and summer tourism periods. In the fall, when island tourism is lower, the banners will be used for school programming to enhance our display. The banners will also be utilized for fundraising, promotion, and special events.



Communications

PIBO's Fall 2011 issue of The Auspice, our seasonal newsletter, highlighted the Species at Risk presentations delivered this fall at local schools, including details about Species at Risk encountered on Pelee Island in 2011. A copy of this edition was sent to over 100 recipients, including all the elementary and high schools visited this fall.

Twitter and Facebook

Twitter and Facebook was used by PIBO to post up-to-date information on Species at Risk and other activities at the observatory in 2011. It allowed followers to interact with PIBO staff and inquire about SAR on Pelee Island.

Partnerships

In addition to our own research initiatives, PIBO staff and the SAR intern took part in a variety of projects hosted by the Nature Conservancy Canada. Additionally, field support was provided for the Toronto Zoo in locating and assessing the quality of potential habitats of Blanchards' Cricket Frogs on Pelee Island.

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Explore Pelee

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Pelee Island Bird Observatory – 2011 Year-end Report

Pelee Island Heritage Centre

Toronto Zoo

Township of Pelee

Photos thanks to: Katy McFadyen, Sumiko Onishi and Claire Sanders