



Dear friends and supporters of [PIBO](#),

Now that the breeding season is over, it's time for the birds to get down to business! The breeding season can be one of the most stressful periods of a bird's life, not only do they have to provide for themselves, establish territories, and find a mate, they must also protect and raise a group of voracious young. The purpose of their gruelling journey can finally be fulfilled; by now most North American birds have settled down in their breeding habitats in order to take full advantage of the blooming summer resources. I'm sure by now you've noticed the hoards of mosquitoes and fishflies on the island (if you haven't, you should probably get out more). All these insects, including the biting flies that terrorize the shores, are invaluable sources of protein for developing chicks all over the island. Parents may feed their chicks over 500 times a day for more than 2 weeks until the fledge is ready to fledge: take wing and feed for itself. Take caution on roadways and in parking lots! Early breeders such as American robins, red-winged blackbirds, and killdeer are already tending to their teens, most of which stumble around unawares of the dangers that human activities pose. If you ever find a young bird on the road or in a dangerous location, if it is safe for you to do so, help the baby along by shooing it or carrying it to a safer area like long grass or under a bush. The parents will happily continue to care for their un-flattened young.

The island is certainly no stranger to species at risk; this beautiful place is a hotspot for vulnerable animals of many taxa. The most notable birds that PIBO helps to monitor are prothonotary warblers, red-headed woodpeckers, yellow-breasted chat, and our beloved purple martins; and I'm pleased to announce that this year, all these species are off to a great start!

The prothonotary warblers have been courageously singing their simple, but sweet, songs since the middle of May, and they continue to do so throughout June. Although, now that the breeding season progresses, you would think that their songs are less tailored towards finding a mate and more so towards establishing their territories and deterring sneaky males. So far, only one female has been continuously seen, so the males must echo their songs in the hope that a potential mate will pass through. There is some less despairing news though; one pair has recently hatched a clutch of at least three healthy chicks! Hopefully, these bouncing babies will survive to fuel the next generation and the parents will take on a new clutch.

The red-headed woodpeckers, although bountiful in May, have been a little more elusive as June progresses. The canopy burst with new life and green filled the forest following the late May rains making it much harder to detect these hardy birds. Their silence doesn't necessarily indicate a lack of success; the pairs that we identified earlier in the month are most likely hard at work caring for their young. With territories already established and pairs bonded, there is no reason to waste energy on petty arguments when you have several hungry mouths to feed.

The yellow-breasted chats are an absolute delight to monitor, all due to the fact that they are almost impossible to find. Perhaps the reward of a singing male or the contact call of a hidden female is all the sweeter when you have been searching for longer. This species has an incredible repertoire of hoots, whistles, whirrs, and clatters, that give it an almost comical energy as it pops its head out from the bush. Finding breeding evidence for chats takes a good deal of patience, but it's all worth it when these goofy birds finally show themselves. They're like little rays of sunshine in the dark of a dense thicket.

Last, but certainly not least, the purple martins! At the beginning of the month, our largest swallows were set on incubating the eggs they produced in May. Purple martins craft a little cup nest out of mud, twigs, and grass, in the cavity of an apartment. Once the cup is complete, martins line the nest with green leaves that they continuously replace as their eggs develop and their young grow. These leaves might be used to help maintain a constant temperature within the nest; to cover the eggs or young when it is too hot. Just recently, all their incubation efforts have brought forth a whole new generation of squirming baby birds! A majority of the boxes at the PIBO cottage have fresh new martins, with parents eagerly feeding and caring for them. We can't wait to see what the next weeks will bring for these delightful birds. Keep an eye out for purple martins carrying fresh food and leaves for their young in your area!

The summary was written by Alessandra Wilcox.

Purple Martins hatchlings by Alessandra Wilcox and sunset at Lake Henry by Sumiko Onishi.

