



Breeding Bird/Banding Summary June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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

The breeding season is in full swing! By now, most birds are settled down with eggs or are taking on their second brood while their fledged young begin to explore the world. During the summer months at PIBO, we survey as much of the island as possible and document any breeding evidence that we can find. Confirmed breeding evidence might present itself as a nest with chicks or eggs, but the most frequent observation is catching a glimpse of the devout parents tirelessly bringing food back to their voracious chicks. There are many species of birds that breed on Pelee Island; it is an incredibly biodiverse area with unique habitats that accommodate species that rarely frequent anywhere else in Ontario! Some of these habitats include the mature flooded forests that prothonotary warblers require, the Carolinian forests with plenty of deadwood for red-headed woodpeckers, and the scrubby alvars that are perfect for yellow-breasted chats and white-eyed vireos.

This year is a very special time in the breeding bird world because it is the beginning of the third Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas! This is a vast project that only occurs every 25 years and spans for a period of five. With the combined knowledge and effort of nature lovers and birders alike, by the end of the five years, we will have a detailed account of all breeding bird evidence across Ontario! The process of collecting this data is very similar to how we document breeding birds on the Island, but of course, on a much larger scale. In order to cover such a vast area in such detail, 10x10 km squares were designated and are surveyed by local bird enthusiasts. Anyone can contribute to submitting general observations for the Breeding Bird Atlas; all you have to do is read their website for details ([www.birdsontario.org](http://www.birdsontario.org)), sign up

for data submission on NatureCounts, and get out to look at some birds! Community involvement in this project is incredibly important; even if you might be completely new to birding, or have just started, five years is plenty of time to improve your skills and get involved! Pelee Island happens to fall within three of these 10 km squares; if you want to improve your bird identification skills, while also helping with local bird conservation, now you know what you can do!

Right now, PIBO is contributing to Atlas data collection by conducting a series of point counts within each square. These point counts help to determine breeding evidence, and the abundance of bird species, in a standardized and reliable manner so that the data can be used to help support conservation studies.

And now for the purple martin update. The colony at the bird observatory is doing phenomenally: 123 hatched young and 16 eggs between 30 hardworking pairs. So far, there have been no casualties among adults or young, and the chicks look healthy and strong. Over the last two weeks, we have banded five clutches with the hope that we will see some return to the same colony in the following years to raise further generations. The first hatchlings of the summer are just starting to lose their baby fat and develop the tools they need for flight: fresh flight feathers, smooth body contour feathers, and strong flight muscles. Soon some of them will be strong enough to take their first steps out of the nest and dive into the open world!

The summary was written by Alessandra Wilcox.

Purple Martin chick being weighed by Alessandra Wilcox and Purple Martin nest check by Sumiko Onishi.

