



## Migration Summary September 1<sup>st</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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

A busy fall migration on Pelee Island continued for this period too!!

On September 1st, the strong north wind brought lots of migrants to the area. We started netting half an hour before sunrise and heard many thrushes calling from the bush and the dark sky. Many **Veerys** and **Swainson's Thrushes** began moving around at the crack of dawn, and we banded 35 of them. A total of 110 (35.6 net-hours) of 20 species, including 54 warblers and 16 vireos, were banded, and 54 species were recorded during both census and netting. On September 2nd, we banded 103 birds (26.25 net-hours) of 17 species, including 58 warblers (many **Magnolia** and **American Redstart**), 27 thrushes, 11 vireos and six flycatchers. Sixteen warbler species were observed, including an adult male **Golden-winged Warbler** we banded and an **Orange-crowned Warbler** seen on the census. We had only fifteen retraps after banding more than 500 birds since August 15th.

Our morning routine had been continuously busy from September 3rd to 7th. On September 3rd, it was an active census identifying a variety of warblers and many **Bay-breasted**. A total of 50 species was recorded, including quite a few **Eastern Wood Pewees**. The nets were opened after the census (25.1

net-hours) and banded 49 birds. Quite a few Monarch Butterflies were seen on the day as well! On September 4th, many swallows flew high up in the blue sky with autumn clouds and moved to the south - 15 **Chimney Swifts** were recorded, along with lots of **Purple Martins** and **Barn Swallows**. A total of 48 birds of 17 species were banded and recaptured five birds from August 31st to September 2nd.

The wind was northwest on September 5th. A hundred **American Robins** were along the road on my drive to Fish Point (non-standard observation), and **Blue Jays** started teaming up and calling energetically in the area. **Veerys** and **Swainson's Thrushes** were still numerous in the forest, and a lot of **Blackpoll Warblers** showed up on September 6th, but we recorded a smaller number of warblers day by day. We banded 54 birds (26.25 net-hours) of 16 species, including 20 thrushes and 27 warblers. The morning temperature of September 7th dropped quite a bit but warmed up to 30C with strong south wind for the afternoon. It had been dry weather since we had rain many weeks ago. Noisy calls of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** echoed at the pond on the census, and some warblers and flycatchers were busy chasing after numerous tiny moths and crane flies in the sun. We had a busy net-round early in the morning and captured a season first **Gray-cheeked Thrush** and a **Connecticut Warbler**. A total of 48 birds (24.4 net-hours) were banded, and a total of 54 species was recorded during the count period.

On September 8th, a total of 53 species was recorded during the standard count period, and we banded 27 birds (33.8 net-hours). Thrushes were seen everywhere along the trail for September 9th, and 10th and lots of flight calls were heard before daybreak when we walked into the netting area. Listening to thousands of birds flying over in the clear dark sky is one of my favourite moments. We banded 50 birds (42 net-hours), including 29 **Swainson's**, 4 **Gray-cheeked** and 3 **Veery** on the 9th and banded 69 birds (38.4 net-hours), including 27 **Swainson's**, 6 **Gray-cheeked**, and 5 **Veery** on the 10th. In the late afternoon, five **Common Nighthawks** flying over was seen!

It was a gentle south breeze on September 11th and a quiet morning for the census and the netting. A **Merlin** flew over my head at the west beach, and a group of more than fifty **Purple Martins** were high up in the sky at the tip. The south wind became stronger on September 12th, with a few **Eastern Kingbirds** observed at the pond. Many **Great Black-backed Gulls** had been seen at the tip since last week. We captured some thrushes in the early morning and hardly heard any birds in the late afternoon, but a **Western Kingbird** sitting on a hydro line was spotted on the way back home!

On September 13th, a total of 56 species was recorded, including some **Western Palm Warblers** along the east shore on the census. We started the netting from a half-hour before sunrise and banded 69 birds (45 net-hours) – 41 warblers and 25 thrushes, including many **American Redstarts**, **Magnolia** and **Bay-breasted Warblers**. On September 14th, three **Merlins** were hunting at the pond, and most of the warblers were in the inland bushes. We banded 46 birds (20.6 net-hours) – 21 warblers and 15 thrushes – and recorded a total of 62 species, including 14 warbler species during the standard count period.

Small birds changed their behaviour since falcons and accipiters began to arrive and became more secretive with hiding in the vegetation. A season first **Peregrine Falcon** and lots of **Yellow-rumped** and **Western Palm Warblers** were recorded for the census on September 15th. When we opened the nets, we heard lots of birds calling and singing soon after the sunrise. Eighty-three birds (45 net-hours), including 31 warblers and 45 thrushes, were banded.

It seems like the fall migration on the island has been busy so far – we banded 162% more birds than the 2019 fall season (no netting operation due to COVID-19 in 2020) for about half of the net hours. Where did these birds come from since we had a noticeably quiet spring banding a lower number of birds? Did they have a successful breeding season? Or access a different area for their breeding range? Or a change in their migration route? We are interested to see how the latter half of the season goes.

The summary was written by Sumiko Onishi.

Gray-cheeked Thrush and Swainson's Thrush by Sumiko Onishi

