

Biweekly Summary

August 1-14, 2025



A Northern waterthrush at Fish Point. Photo by Sarah Bonnett

The fall migration monitoring season began for PIBO on August 1st, with the daily census beginning again. The session started with relatively cool seasonal temperatures around 17°C, but rose to 25°C (it felt like 37°C with humidex!) towards the end of the first two weeks. Thankfully, we came prepared with sunscreen and plenty of drinking water for daily census.

The first weeks of monitoring consisted of mostly the local breeders we expected to see, and Wood duck and mallard chicks were observed floating in the ponds during census throughout the session. On August 11th, adult Red-headed woodpeckers were observed feeding freshly fledged young in the afternoon. Other species feeding young spotted at Fish Point were American robin, Northern cardinal, and Common tern. A young Prothonotary warbler was spotted the morning of August 11th as well; we assumed it to be a young from one of the local breeding pairs, which is a treat to see here on the island.

The most visible signs of migration during the period were observed in the gathering flocks of swallows and blackbirds at the point. We observed them flying south off the tip (although some quickly returned). Some mornings driving to the point were slower than usual due to large flocks of these birds on the roads and also along the telephone wires. Purple martins were observed feeding young at the martin houses on the north side of the island early in the session, but quickly the houses were empty and only used for roosting, with the young flying and catching their own food on the wing. Even with the flocking action of the swallows, some young Barn swallows were still observed in the nest near East Park Beach on August 10th, too young to fly or leave the nest and join the flocks yet.

The number of famous American White pelicans increased steadily at the point throughout the period, from only 10 on the 1st to a high of 235 on the 10th. By the morning of the 12th, however, there were only 70 pelicans observed at the tip, and the numbers of gulls had also decreased from the night before.

Some shorebirds have been steadily arriving at Fish Point, including the expected locals, killdeer, and Spotted sandpiper, and some Arctic and Subarctic migrants like Solitary sandpipers, Semipalmated plovers, Black-bellied plovers (one adult observed on August 8th), Least sandpiper, Semipalmated sandpiper, a single Baird's sandpiper (observed non-standard on August 10th, and sanderlings.

When Sumiko and Sarah went to set up the net lanes after census on the 9th, they were greeted with lots of overgrown vegetation in the lanes and trails, and very dry conditions on the trails. While hiking shoes are fine for walking, the poison ivy has been thriving during this hot and humid summer, so boots are still a good choice for any visitors.



Figure 1. Northern Waterthrush at Fish Point. Photo by Sarah Bonnett