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# The Auspice

Pelee Island Bird Observatory



## Migration Summary April 15-30

After a spell of extreme winds, Pelee Island Bird Observatory's (PIBO) spring banding began on April 15. Banding started with the early migrants, including many Hermit Thrushes, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Red-winged Blackbirds. We observed large flocks of herons, waterfowl, and shorebirds arriving from the south, including 80 Dunlin flying in a tight formation off the tip of Fish Point. A sure sign of spring, Dutchman's Breeches were in full bloom in the forest. These low-lying, flowering plants provided ample cover for between two to three dozen White-throated Sparrows, which popped out from under the foliage as we walked along the trail every day.

On April 18, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, three Pine Warblers and three early Northern Parulas joined over 70 Yellow-rumped Warblers dripping from the trees along the east shore of Fish Point. The next few days of favourable winds brought the first Blue-headed Vireos, Palm Warblers, and another big wave of Ruby-crowned Kinglets. During the census on April 20, we spotted an unbanded Piping Plover at the tip of Fish Point. Unbanded Piping Plovers are a rare sight in Ontario, where most individuals are colour-banded and uniquely identifiable as

part of conservation efforts to monitor their population. Later in the day, this small sand-coloured Piping Plover was joined on the sandbar by largest of all North American plovers, a Black-bellied Plover.

After April 21, there was a short lull in arrivals of new migrants. Cold northwesterly winds postponed the arrival of some anticipated species, but a stunning Red-headed Woodpecker and two chatty Pied-billed Grebes were lovely to see at the pond. On April 24, Fish Point was relatively cold and quiet during standard migration monitoring hours, but we banded an Eastern Phoebe and observed a Black-throated Green Warbler above the banding station.

Though most mornings were stormy and banding was limited to scattered moments of clear skies, the last week of April was filled with new arrivals to the Island. An estimated 1.2 million birds crossed Sandusky county—just south of the Island— on the evening of April 26. The next morning, we observed 18 new species for the year, including a Yellow-breasted Chat and a Louisiana Waterthrush on the census. After the rain, the netting lanes were quite swampy, and apparently wet enough for shorebirds: we banded a Solitary Sandpiper that was caught in a particularly wet net lane. Field Supervisor Sumiko Onishi could not believe how small it was!

The highlights from the last few days of the month were a bright Blue-winged Warbler and a beautiful Hooded Warbler. Several boldly marked Red-headed Woodpeckers foraged on the dead trees around the station and during census, we saw up to 23 individuals at the tip, debating whether or not to fly back across the lake to Ohio! We recorded up to 75 species on the daily census each morning, and observed significant reverse migration of warblers, blackbirds, and woodpeckers off the tip at Fish Point. Since netting began on April 15, we banded 190 birds of 34 species and recaptured 12 individuals.

Summary written by Olivia Maillet, Assistant Bander





A Solitary Sandpiper caught and banded at PIBO on April 26. Shorebirds are banded on the upper leg to reduce metal band wear because they spend a significant amount of time foraging in deep water. Photo: Olivia Maillet

## **SPREAD THE WORD**

Did you know that insects are essential sources of energy for many migratory

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bird species, not only during breeding seasons but also during their extensive journeys and greatly affect the timing, duration, and success of bird migrations?

That's why, this year, the theme for World Migratory Bird Day is INSECTS.

For the second year PIBO is celebrating World Migratory Bird Day by hosting a series of events that includes talks, urban birding and guided walks. Check out the schedule below.

### Urban Birding Challenge

## 2024 PIBO Bird Talk

There are three chances to hear Rodrigo Lopez Valdes speak about the story of the Rose-bellied Bunting. Two in Windsor and one on Pelee Island. Don't miss this opportunity to hear this passionate conservationist talk about one of Mexico's most beautiful native birds. No registration required.

Wednesday May 8 at the Ojibway Nature Centre 7 pm

Thursday May 9 at Cafe Amor and Art at 9 am

Sunday May 12 at the Pelee Island Winery (on Pelee Island) at 10 am

## UPCOMING EVENT

Do something you've never done before and support PIBO's important work! On **June 23**, Join some very special guests, including **Margaret Atwood**, for PIBO's **exclusive garden party fundraiser** hosted by philanthropists Salah Bachir and Jacob Yerex. Located in the historic town of Paris ON, Salah and Jacob's beautiful home is the perfect setting for this one in a lifetime event. Your ticket will help to support Pelee Island Bird Observatory's critical research and education operations.



[Buy your tickets today!](#)



Photos by Olivia Maillet and George Pimentel

**Our mailing address is:**

PO Box 24001 Market Square, Windsor ON N8Y 4Y9

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