

Biweekly Summary

August 15-31, 2025

By Sarah Bonnett, Assistant Bander

During the month of August, staff and volunteers recorded 105 species during standard observations, and an additional 22 species during non-standard observations around the island. We opened nets for the first time on August 14, and were greeted with two exciting recaptures on our first day: the first was an adult male Indigo bunting, originally banded by PIBO on August 21, 2021, making him four years old! The other recapture was an adult Northern House wren, banded by our neighbours on Middle Bass Island this past spring on April 28, 2025.

The rest of the first few days were slow for banding, but busier on our morning census walks as the winds overnight changed to come from the North and brought mixed flocks of migrating warblers (and friends) with them. By the end of the month, we were having busier days on census (with songbirds concentrated mostly near the pond or the tip of Fish Point).

Another bird that was captured with a band already on its leg was an Eastern screech-owl, which we netted on August 21. The owl was going through heavy moult (as you can see in the photo). It was originally banded by us in 2017 as a first-year bird, making this owl eight years old. Birds must replace their feathers as they wear over time from sun damage, weather, and use. Banders take advantage of this to tell the age of a bird, as feathers grown by a young bird all at once and are of a lower quality than adult feathers moulted a few at a time.

On August 27, we also recaptured a Downy woodpecker that had originally been banded on May 6 as a second-year bird.

We finished August off with a total of 201 individual birds banded, representing 33 species, with the top species a tie between Swainson's thrush and Veery (25 of each). The woods were active with thrushes just after sunrise. American robins and Wood thrushes were also common.

Warbler diversity picked up throughout the month, with 21 species recorded during banding and census, plus an additional species recorded during non-standard observations. Many Bay-breasted and Blackburnian warblers were observed on census, while the arrival of Magnolia warblers filled our nets (a total of 21 banded during this period). We also banded a beautiful Connecticut warbler on the 31st, always a treat as they tend to be rather skulky and like to stay in thicker vegetation, out of sight.

It should also be noted that we saw a great many Red-breasted nuthatches, and that their numbers increased throughout the month. It appears to be a good year for them, and we hope to see more of their adorable faces on the trees in coming weeks. Stay tuned!



Eastern Screech-Owl in heavy moult, captured on August 21. This same bird had been banded by PIBO in 2017. Photo by Sarah Bonnett



A Connecticut warbler caught and banded on August 31. Photo by Sarah Bonnett.