



THE PELEE ISLAND BIRD OBSERVATORY

Making Pelee Island a unique and vital part of the international effort to preserve wild and migratory birds

**Pelee Island Bird Observatory 2023 Annual Report:
Migration Monitoring and Education**



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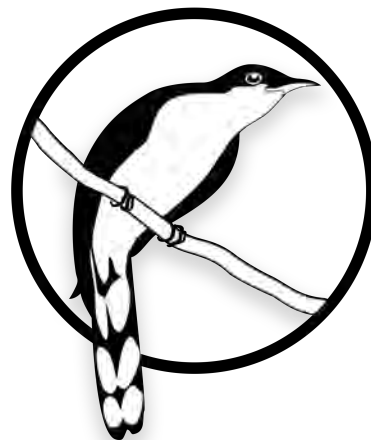


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Tennessee Warbler by Sumiko Onishi

Mission/Vision/Values

Pelee Island is a globally recognized and irreplaceable migratory bird stopover for tens of millions of migratory birds traveling along two major eastern North American flyways that converge over Pelee Island.

PIBO was established to shine a light on the island and its birds and to raise awareness of the Island's vital role in preserving the fragile avian hemispheric migration phenomena.

Over its 20-year history of collecting data, PIBO has documented the decline of migratory bird populations, contributing to a global call to action in 2019 to halt and reverse the loss of North America's breeding birds, whose populations have declined by 3 billion since 1970.

PIBO's data recently supported the formal designation of the Island as a Key Biodiversity Area by BirdLife International (formally designated as an Important Bird Area in 2008), one of a handful in the Americas.

Vision: Making Pelee Island a unique and vital part of the international effort to preserve wild and migratory birds and protect our threatened planet.

Mission: Uniquely situated in a globally recognized Key Biodiversity Area, Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO):

- Collects and collates scientific data related to migratory bird studies
- Delivers public outreach education programs; and
- Actively collaborates with avian organizations along the Americas flyways as part of a joint local - international effort to preserve migratory birds.

Values: Pelee Island Bird Observatory is committed to:

- Ethical, environmentally sensitive approaches
- Diversity and inclusion
- Teamwork, censuses, and collaboration
- Gathering and sharing responsible and trustworthy data
- Respectfully engaging with our Island community

Land Acknowledgements

Pelee Island Bird Observatory acknowledges that we live on the traditional territories of many nations, including the traditional territory of the Caldwell First Nation and the Walpole Island First Nation on Pelee Island and the Anishinabewaki (ᐱᐢᐸᐢᐢᐢᐠᐠᐠᐠᐠᐠ), Attiwonderonk (Neutral), Mississauga, Myaamia, Potawatomi (Bodwewadmi), Peoria, and Wyandot, in Windsor.

Pelee Island Bird Observatory acknowledges the inherent and treaty rights of the indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. We understand that Indigenous voices, knowledge, and ongoing work on and with the land are crucial for wild birds to thrive in healthy eco systems. We support Indigenous peoples' needs, aspirations, and rights to care for the land.





Red-eyed Vireo by Danielle Lacasse

The Year in Review

1. Migration Monitoring

2023 brought many opportunities and challenges for the Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO). After twenty years in operation, exciting developments are on the horizon, including constructing a new Bird Centre to house the research monitoring staff, engage the public, and offer opportunities for other researchers on Pelee Island.

On April 1, 2023, PIBO started its field season. The first census was bustling with activity, as many kinglets and lively tree swallows were recorded at Fish Point Nature Reserve. Over the following weeks, the chorus of spring birds slowly became louder. Three staff members arrived from different locations: British Columbia, London, Ontario, and Yorkshire, England. They included an enthusiastic young biologist as the assistant bander, a graduate student from Western University studying avian migration using a radio transmitter, and an experienced seabird researcher serving as an international volunteer. Conversations at the banding station were filled with exchanges about their fieldwork experiences in various regions.

The assistant bander and the field supervisor carried out the Purple Martin Annual Colony Survey, Marsh Monitoring Program, Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, and breeding Species at Risk monitoring from the end of June to August. Unfortunately, the weather conditions were not ideal for the local breeding species, resulting in smaller clutch sizes and nestlings suffering from nest mites. On a positive note, breeding evidence of Eastern Meadowlark was confirmed by identifying the fledged young in June, and Least Bitterns were frequently observed during the Marsh Monitoring Program.

A summer student joined the field supervisor in July to start the fall season. PIBO welcomed its first international intern from Mexico at the end of August. Staff had to navigate ankle-deep water and endure the worst mosquito conditions in seventeen years. Additionally, a severe storm occurred from the late evening of August 23 to the morning of the 24th, resulting in record-breaking rainfall that flooded the entire forest, except Fish Point Provincial Park, under above-knee-deep water. The road access to the census and netting area was closed for three days due to the flooding. On August 29, PIBO reopened the netting operation while wearing hip waders. The newly arrived fall assistant bander and intern were busy conducting the daily census and netting with the field supervisor under these challenging conditions.

In the 2023 season, 2,773 migratory birds belonging to 81 different species, 115 Purple Martin nestlings, and 24 owls were banded. Twelve staff and volunteers dedicated more than 2000 hours to this effort throughout the season. Despite challenging work conditions such as cold, heat, floods, mud, poison ivy, and mosquitoes, everyone cooperated and stayed positive while completing the research projects. In addition to banding, the daily census count resulted in a total of 206 species observed during the spring and fall, including standard and non-standard observations.

2. Community Education

PIBO played a vital role in the island community by hosting over 50 tourists, students, and naturalist groups. We conducted banding demonstrations during the season and participated in various activities



such as the 24-hour bird race in May – The Botham Cup – which supported the Pelee Island Heritage Centre. We also organized a bird -watching tour in June for the Pelee Buzz group to introduce the island's nature to visitors and friends. Additionally, we had a vendor table at the Quarry Farmers Market every Saturday during the summer, where we showcased our work and sold PIBO t-shirts. In September, we talked about American White pelicans on public radio. In the same month, our staff gave a short presentation about PIBO's research at a meeting of researchers and scientists studying the island's flora and fauna. Finally, we hosted a Christmas Bird Count in December.

In addition to our research operations, PIBO runs an education and outreach program concurrent with funding opportunities. PIBO's new Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) Education Coordinator engaged diverse youth and families in urban birding programs with funding from the Chawkers Foundation. Windsor's official bird, the Tufted titmouse, was announced at a press conference in April 2023. PIBO also hosted its first Urban Birding Challenge to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, featuring various activities and a presentation of awards. In 2023, PIBO distributed 24 binoculars and six scopes to conservationists and schoolchildren in Mexico through The Prismaticos Project. University of Windsor student Rahi Ahmed was hired as PIBO's first Campus Organizer to make the campus safer for birds, funded by grants from Nature Canada's Work to Grow Program and the KM Hunter Foundation.



Willet by Danielle Lacasse



Owl night Nov 22 Ojibway Nature Centre photo by Suzanne Friemann

MIGRATION MONITORING PROGRAM

Introduction

Migration monitoring is undertaken to track songbird population trends. It is one of the major research projects established by Long Point Bird Observatory, the oldest bird observatory in the Western Hemisphere. Since 2003, PIBO has contributed data to the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, one of 30 field stations nationwide.

The goal is to collect long-term, constant, standardized data by counting and capturing birds during the migration season. Many songbirds use the area along Lake Erie as stop-over sites between their breeding grounds in the Boreal Forest and their wintering grounds in Central and South America. During each spring and fall migration season, PIBO conducts a visual count (census) as well as constant mist-netting (banding) at Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve (Ontario Parks, Ontario Ministry of Natural



Resources) and collects thousands of records for migratory songbirds. The Island's unique location at the convergence of two major eastern North American flyways allows us to study a wide variety of species.

PIBO's census is a standardized 90-minute count, and the conductor records all the species and individual birds heard and seen along the census route at Fish Point. The banding operations consist of catching songbirds with mist-netting for six hours during the morning. The nets are checked every half hour, and all birds captured are recorded by taking some measurements and released. Meanwhile, all the birds seen in the netting areas are recorded as standard observation. The data from the birds we banded, re-trapped, captured during the netting, observed in the netting area, and during the census are tallied as a daily total and submitted to the Bird Banding Office and Canadian Migration Monitoring Network.



Danielle Lacasse during Marsh Monitoring



Rose-breasted Grosbeak by Sumiko Onishi

2023 migration monitoring at Fish Point was conducted from April 1 to June 10 and from August 1 to November 10 for 169 coverage days. The census covered all 169 mornings. Mist-netting was conducted on 109 mornings. A total of 206 species were recorded during the season, and 2,822 birds were captured, including 2,773 banded, during more than 600 field hours. In 2022, 210 species were recorded and 2,568 birds were banded during more than 1500 field hours.

Banding Highlights

American woodcock – First bird banded on October 20, since 2003.

Acadian flycatcher – 7th banded on May 30 in 2023.

Marsh Wren – 9th banded on October 21 in 2023.

Swainson’s thrush – 6787 banded since 2003.

Brewster’s warbler – 4th banded on May 15 and 5th on September 6 in 2023.

Hooded warbler – 12th banded on September 10 in 2023.

Summer Tanager – 2nd banded on May 11, since 2005.

European starling – 2nd and 3rd banded on May 14 in 2023.



American Woodcock by Sumiko Onishi





Brewster's Warbler by Sumiko Onishi



Summer Tanager by Danielle Lacasse



European starling by Danielle Lacasse



Swainson's Thrush by Sumiko Onishi





Marsh Wren by Gill Holmes

RECAPTURES

A total of 106 birds from 26 species were recaptured during the spring and fall of 2023. Most birds were recaptured a few days after we banded them and were local breeding birds, such as Yellow warblers. Yellow warblers arrive in early May and stay through their breeding season. Their preferred nest site is in dogwoods around our banding station. Many pairs are busy nesting by the end of May and leave in early August after the breeding season when they return to Central and South America. We often recaptured them during spring, with almost no recapture in the fall.

A Yellow warbler recaptured this spring was initially banded as a second-year bird at our station in May 2019. This means the bird possibly fledged in 2017 and has been migrating between Pelee Island and Central and South America for at least six years. A distance of 12,914 kilometres round trip (to Panama)!

We also recaptured an American redstart originally banded on August 28 2019 as after hatching year. This five-year-old (at least) male was a local breeding bird and was singing lively in our netting area all summer.



molt patterns by Danielle Lacasse

Recapture from 2010 to 2023 Migration Monitoring Season

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
American goldfinch									1		N/A		1	1
American redstart	1						1	1			N/A	5	3	5
American robin	12	10	1		9		3	1	4	3	N/A	10	7	2
Baltimore oriole	1	10			12	3	7	4	3	2	N/A	5	9	4
Black-and-white warbler	1	1					1			4	N/A	3	2	2
Bay-breasted warbler											N/A			1
Black-capped chickadee	32	17	12	6	22	19	8	11	18	5	N/A	9	3	3
Brown-headed cowbird		2			1	1	3	5		2	N/A	4	7	4
Blue-headed vireo											N/A		3	
Brown creeper			1	1				1	1		N/A		1	
Black-throated Blue warbler			2	2							N/A	4	3	
Canada warbler	1	1								1	N/A			
Carolina wren					2			6	3	3	N/A	3	2	4
Common grackle	2				3			1	2		N/A	1	1	
Cooper's hawk							1				N/A			
Common yellowthroat	1	1								1	N/A		3	1
Chestnut-sided warbler	1		1								N/A			
Downy woodpecker	9	7		1	6			1			N/A	2	2	5
Eastern Wood pewee											N/A	1		
White-crowned sparrow	1										N/A			
Golden-crowned kinglet	2		8	11	1	1		4	8		N/A		3	1
Gray-cheeked thrush	2	1	2	3	2	5	4	1	2	1	N/A	2	1	
Gray catbird											N/A			2
Hermit thrush	8	1	9	3	2	1	7	1	3		N/A			7
House wren		1			1			2		3	N/A	1	7	16
Indigo bunting								1			N/A			
Magnolia warbler	2	3					2	1	1	2	N/A	1	2	
Yellow-rumped warbler		1	6								N/A	1		
Mourning warbler								1		1	N/A			
Nashville warbler						1			1		N/A			
Northern cardinal											N/A			3
Northern parula											N/A	1		
Northern waterthrush	2	1		1	2			1	1		N/A		3	
Ovenbird		3	3	2		1	1	1		1	N/A	5		1

Prothonotary warbler		1									N/A			
Red-breasted nuthatch							2	1	5	9	N/A			1
Ruby-crowned kinglet			8	5	1			3	7	4	N/A		3	3
Red-eyed vireo			1		1	1	2	1	1	4	N/A	6		1
Red-winged blackbird	14	13			14	9	11	7	5	11	N/A	9	9	6
Dark-eyed junco			1					1			N/A			
Sharp-shinned hawk	1	1	1							1	N/A		1	
Swainson's thrush	1	2	2	2	4	4	2	1	1		N/A	1	1	1
Tennessee warbler							1				N/A			
Tree swallow											N/A		1	
Veery	1	2	3			2	2	3	5	2	N/A	15	2	8
White-breasted nuthatch											N/A			1
Wood thrush					1					1	N/A	3	1	2
White-throated sparrow			1				2			1	N/A			
Yellow warbler	29	22			20	15	35	37	51	16	N/A	32	52	21
Northern flicker	1			1						1	N/A			
Total	125	101	62	38	104	63	95	98	123	79	N/A	124	133	106

Note: not including owling, no netting operation during 2020



Foreign encounter record from 2003 to 2023

Species	Banded Location	Year	Month	Day	Age	Sex	Encounter Location	Year	Month	Day
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2006	11	08	SY	U	Kelley's Island, Erie county, OH, USA	2006	12	16
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2007	10	22	HY	U	Port Rowan, Long Point?	2008	10	28
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2007	10	28	HY	U	Gilford (Innisfree)	2008	09	29
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2008	10	29	ASY	U	Kelley's Island, Erie county, OH, USA WHITEFISH POINT, CHIPPEWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN, USA Desc: WHITEFISH POINT	2008	11	29
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2008	10	29	SY	U	Long Point	2010	3	24
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2010	10	18	HY	U	Long Point	2010	10	31
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2011	10	29	SY	U	near Yellowwood Lake, Indiana, USA	2012	11	02
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2012	11	16	HY	U	Sandusky, Erie County, Ohio, USA	2013	03	26
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2012	11	16	SY	U	Kelley's Island, Erie county, OH, USA	2012	11	20
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2015	10	18	SY	U	HALDIMAND COUNTY, ONTARIO,	2016	10	13
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2016	11	04	HY	U	Peterborough,	2017	10	19
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2017	11	07	HY	U	Kelley's Island, Erie county, OH, USA	2017	11	11
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2017	11	08	HY	U	Kelley's Island, Erie county, OH, USA	2017	11	13
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2018	11	11	HY	F	LAC-LAPERRIERE, QUÉBEC, CANADA WHITEFISH POINT, CHIPPEWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN, USA Desc: WHITEFISH POINT	2019	10	18
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2021	11	23	AHY	M	WHITEFISH POINT, CHIPPEWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN, USA Desc: WHITEFISH POINT	2022	05	11
Northern Saw-whet owl	Cobalt, ON	2011	10	04	SY	F	Pelee Island	2012	11	13
Northern Saw-whet owl	Long Point COOK COUNTY, MINNESOTA, USA	2010	11	01	SY	U	Pelee Island	2012	11	08
Northern Saw-whet owl	Pelee Island	2010	10	01	HY	U	Pelee Island	2012	11	14
Sharp-shinned hawk	Pelee Island	2019	09	21	HY	F	Kelley's Island, Erie county, OH, USA	2019	10	22
Blue jay	Pelee Island	2005	10	03	HY	U	near Innis Point, Ottawa	2006	5	19
Sharp-shinned hawk	Pelee Island	2007	9	22	HY	M	near Rochester, NY	2011	12	28
Blue jay	Pelee Island	2009	5	04	SY	U	Buffalo, NY, USA	2009	5	23
Common grackle	Pelee Island	2010	10	12	HY	U	Pelee Island, Ontario, Canada, Desc: 634 East West Road, Pelee Island, ON	2013	03	28
Sharp-shinned hawk	Pelee Island	2013	10	24	HY	M	XENIA, GREENE COUNTY, OHIO, USA	2014	03	27
Gray catbird	Pelee Island	2003	9	21	HY	U	SE of Lake Simcoe MANITOU BEACH, MONROE COUNTY, NEW YORK, USA Desc: BRADDOCK BAY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA	2006	5	03
Sharp-shinned hawk	Pelee Island	2021	09	28	HY	M	Desc: BRADDOCK BAY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA	2022	05	06
White-throated sparrow	Pelee Island	2009	10	10	AHY	U	13.7 mi ESE from The Cottages, Ontario, Canada	2015	10	29
Common yellowthroat	Pelee Island	2003	9	30	AHY	M	near Chicago, Illinois, USA	2006	5	17
Black-throated Blue warbler	Pelee Island	2004	9	09	HY	M	Kelley's Island, Erie county, OH, USA	2005	9	24
House wren	Pelee Island	2005	5	11	AHY	U	near Toledo, OH, USA	2006	6	14
Red-winged blackbird	Pelee Island	2014	05	11	ASY	F	Kelley's Island, Erie county, OH, USA	2014	07	12
Yellow-rumped warbler	Pelee Island	2009	10	06	HY	U	Tommy Thompson, Toronto, ON	2011	10	18
Dark-eyed junco	Pelee Island	2009	10	16	HY	U	near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA	2011	3	22
Canada warbler	Pelee Island	2010	8	18	HY	F	location??	2010	8	22
American redstart	Pelee Island	2010	9	10	HY	F	near Carey, OH, USA	2010	9	11
Swainson's thrush	Pelee Island	2013	09	14	HY	U	Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa, USA, Desc: 2917 48th Street, Des Moines, IA	2016	05	08
Swainson's thrush	Pelee Island	2015	09	20	HY	U	TRAPPER CREEK, MATANUSKA-SUSITNA, BOROUGH, ALASKA, USA TORTUGUERO, LIMON, COSTA RICA Desc: COSTA RICA BIRD OBSERVATORIES STC STATION	2016	07	01
Veery	Pelee Island	2016	09	03	HY	U	Desc: COSTA RICA BIRD OBSERVATORIES STC STATION	2016	10	02
Canada warbler	Pelee Island	2011	05	17	AHY	M	OAK HARBOR, OTTAWA COUNTY, OHIO, USA Desc: NAVARRE UNIT, OTTAWA NWR	2014	05	12
Yellow warbler	Pelee Island	2012	05	09	SY	M	Oak Harbor, Ottawa county, Ohio, USA	2013	04	30
Yellow warbler	Pelee Island	2017	05	18	SY	F	HEATH, LICKING COUNTY, OHIO, USA Desc: 47 LANCASTER DR, HEATH, OH 43056	2018	05	07
Northern waterthrush	Pelee Island	2014	05	08	SY	U	Vestaburg, Montcalm county, Michigan, USA PUT-IN-BAY, OTTAWA COUNTY, OHIO, USA	2014	06	23
Yellow warbler	Pelee Island	2015	05	06	SY	M	Desc: VINEYARD B&B, SOUTH BASS ISLAND, OTTAWA	2016	05	11
Red-winged blackbird	Pelee Island	2011	05	13	AHY	F	Put-in-Bay, Ottawa county, OH	2014	07	18
Red-winged blackbird	Put-in-Bay, Ottawa county, OH	2015	04	28	SY	F	Pelee Island	2021	04	30

Spring Migration Monitoring:

Many migratory birds arrived a few weeks late this spring. For example, numerous kinglets were observed on the season's first census, but most of them had already passed through by that time. The first Purple martin, usually seen before the middle of April, arrived late in early May. We captured 22% fewer birds than last spring, and the capture rate ($\frac{\text{\#banded} + \text{\#captured}}{\text{total net hours}}$) was 0.41 bird/net hour.

The busiest migration period occurred in the first two weeks of May (TABLE). The temperature warmed slowly between April 27 and May 4, with some precipitation. A variety of warblers started arriving on May 1. A good diversity of species of songbirds was observed during the following three weeks. On May 23, a mixed flock of shorebirds was observed at the Tip, and the species diversity gradually decreased after May 25.

The notable difference was the decrease in the number of warblers we captured. In the spring of 2022, we banded 479 warblers of 27 different species; however, we banded only 179 warblers of 22 different species this spring. Meanwhile, this spring, we banded twice the number of catharus species, including Veery, Swainson's, Gray-cheeked, and Hermit thrush. Also, we banded 52 White-throated sparrows compared to 16 last spring.



Indigo Bunting by David Aitken



Fall Migration Monitoring

The fall migration started late, which probably resulted from the late start in the breeding ground and food availability during the post-breeding due to the warmer weather. Overall, the fall capture-rate of 0.81 (bird/net-hour) was lower than last year's 1.02 (bird/net-hour), although two full-time experienced banders made it possible to obtain 2637 net-hours.

The species diversity was relatively low from September 12 to the 28. On September 29, various warbler species were observed and captured. Also, quite a few raptors flying over were recorded during the census. Since October 8, the number of kinglets has increased and peaked from the 12 to the 21. The species diversity decreased, and the wind direction shifted to the north on October 21, and the temperature dropped to 6C on the 23rd.

Because of the differences between fall 2023 and 2022, the net-hour comparison of the number of each species we captured was not significant enough to describe the change. However, the number of banded Cape May and Tennessee warblers was higher than usual. The most notable sighting during the fall season was over 700 American White pelicans observed on September 18, and the flock was seen until the 23rd. We also note fewer sightings of cuckoo species throughout spring and fall migration and summer breeding season.

Interesting and Unusual Species Record

An unusual sighting is a bird species not often seen in that place at any time or year. Or if it is seen at an unusual time of year or if it is a species at risk.

Golden eagle

On April 12, we observed an immature bird fly over, which was unusual timing to see them.
Nov 15, flew over around East - West Road.

Hooded warbler

On April 24 during the census at Fish Point.
September 10, banded during the netting at Fish Point.

Willet

April 27, observed during the census at Fish Point.

Lesser Black-backed gull

April 28 and September 28, observed at the Tip during the census.

Fish crow

May 6, heard calling from the north end of the Pond during the census at Fish Point.

Cerulean warbler

May 7, observed during the census.

Summer tanager

May 11, banded during the standard netting operation.

Yellow-throated warbler

May 14, observed in a flock of warblers near the Tip during the census.

Mississippi kite

May 14 flew over the parking area at Fish Point at the end of the census.

Brewster's warbler

May 15, 1st generation young bird banded during the netting.
On September 6, a backcross adult male was banded during the netting.

Acadian flycatcher (endangered)

May 29, heard in the netting area.
May 30, banded an adult bird during the netting.

Black vulture

May 30, observed a bird in a group of Turkey vultures at the pond during the census.

Marbled godwit

August 10, observed at the Tip during the census.



Number of Birds & Species Captured at Fish Point in 2023				
Species	Total		Species	Total
Swainson's thrush	391		Swamp sparrow	9
Golden-crowned kinglet	250		Blue jay	8
Ruby-crowned kinglet	183		Dark-eyed junco	8
Magnolia warbler	170		Sharp-shinned hawk	8
American redstart	155		Baltimore oriole	7
Hermit thrush	153		Black-throated Green war	7
White-throated sparrow	105		Indigo bunting	7
Veery	102		Mourning warbler	7
Gray-cheeked thrush	94		Brown-headed cowbird	6
Ovenbird	84		Carolina wren	6
Myrtle warbler	73		Lincoln's sparrow	6
Tennessee warbler	66		Yellow-shafted flicker	6
Black-throated Blue warbl	60		Western Palm warbler	5
Cape May warbler	60		Eastern Wood-Pewee	4
Bay-breasted warbler	59		Fox sparrow	4
Black-and-white warbler	56		Wilson's warbler	4
House wren	46		Cedar waxwing	3
Brown creeper	36		Eastern phoebe	3
Gray catbird	36		Philadelphia vireo	3
Common yellowthroat	32		Song sparrow	3
Northern waterthrush	30		Trail's flycatcher	3
Yellow warbler	30		Brewster's warbler	2
Blackburnian warbler	29		Eastern towhee	2
Red-winged blackbird	25		European starling	2
Winter wren	25		Great-crested flycatcher	2
Chestnut-sided warbler	24		Northern parula	2
Least flycatcher	22		Rose-breasted grosbeak	2
Red-eyed vireo	22		Scarlet tanager	2
Yellow-bellied flycatcher	22		Tree swallow	2
Blackpoll warbler	21		Acadian flycatcher	1
Nashville warbler	21		American woodcock	1
Wood thrush	20		Blue-winged warbler	1
Red-breasted nuthatch	19		Connecticut warbler	1
Common grackle	18		Hooded warbler	1
American robin	17		Marsh wren	1
Northern cardinal	17		Rusty blackbird	1
Canada warbler	15		Summer tanager	1
Blue-headed vireo	12		White-breasted nuthatch	1
Downy woodpecker	11		White-crowned sparrow	1
American goldfinch	9		White-eyed vireo	1
Black-capped chickadee	9		81 species	2773

TABLE # - Migration Monitoring Coverage Summary 2007-2023									
Year	Census Coverage			Netting Coverage			# Captured	# Spec. Banded	# Spec. Observed
	Spring	Fall	Days	Spring	Fall	Days*			
2023	Apr1-Jun10	Aug1-Nov10	169	Apr15-May31	Aug14-Oct31	109	2822	81	196
2022	Apr1-Jun10	Aug1-Nov10	170	Apr14-May31	Aug12-Oct31	114	2645	79	210
2021	Apr1-Jun10	Aug5-Nov10	168	Apr12-May31	Aug15-Nov10	114	3009	75	180
2020	Apr1-Jun10	Aug1-Nov10	168	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	185
2019	Apr1-Jun8	Aug5-Nov10	166	Apr15-Jun1	Aug16-Oct20	115	2462	84	185
2018	Apr1-Jun10	Aug1-Nov10	173	Apr20-May31	Aug17-Nov8	110	2820	79	190
2017	Apr1-Jun11	Aug1-Nov15	179	Apr21-May31	Aug17-Nov10	118	3266	80	185
2016	Apr1-Jun10	Aug1-Nov15	178	Apr15-Jun2	Aug17-Nov4	113	2479	77	193
2015	Apr2-May29	Aug1-Nov15	165	Apr20-Jun3	Aug15-Nov8	111	2483	76	194
2014	Apr1-Jun10	Aug1-Nov15	178	Apr18-Jun5	Aug15-Nov8	133	2448	75	197
2013	Apr1-Jun6	Aug1-Nov15	170	Apr15-Jun5	Aug15-Nov8	120	2485	82	200
2012	Apr4-Jun10	Aug1-Nov15	174	Apr13-Jun15	Aug13-Nov8	125	3714	81	201
2011	Apr4-Jun8	Aug1-Nov15	173	Apr12-May31	Aug11-Nov15	119	2408	78	203
2010	Apr2-Jun10	Aug1-Nov15	177	Apr2-May28	Aug4-Nov10	132	3482	85	193
2009	Apr1-Jun10	Aug1-Nov15	178	Apr2-May24	Aug5-Nov11	134	3222	88	198
2008	Apr3-Jun14	Aug1-Nov15	180	Apr5-Jun10	Aug3-Nov11	147	3505	82	194
2007	Apr1-Jun15	Aug1-Nov15	183	Apr2-Jun1	Aug1-Nov15	139	2672	84	205

Notes: Only census was conducted for 2020 due to a staff shortage under the COVID-19 restriction
 Netting Days* : the number of days the nets were opened



Species and Forms Recorded by PIBO Staff During 2023

1 Common loon	70 American Woodcock*	139 Hermit Thrush
2 Horned grebe	71 Bonaparte's Gull	140 Grey Catbird*
3 Pied-billed grebe*	72 Ring-billed Gull	141 Brown Thrasher*
4 American White pelican	73 Herring Gull	142 European Starling*
5 Double-crested cormorant	74 Lesser Black-backed gull	143 American Pipit
6 Least bittern*	75 Great Black-backed Gull	144 Cedar Waxwing*
7 Great Blue heron	76 Caspian Tern	145 Northern Parula
8 Great egret	77 Common Tern	146 Tennessee Warbler
9 Black vulture	78 Forster's Tern	147 Blue-winged Warbler
10 Turkey vulture	79 Mourning Dove*	148 Brewster's warbler
11 Black-crowned Night-heron*	80 Yellow-billed Cuckoo*	149 Nashville Warbler
12 Trumpeter swan	81 Black-billed Cuckoo*	150 Yellow Warbler*
13 Tundra swan	82 Great Horned Owl*	151 Chestnut-sided Warbler
14 Canada goose*	83 Northern Saw-whet Owl	152 Magnolia Warbler
15 Wood Duck*	84 Eastern Screech-Owl*	153 Cape May Warbler
16 American Black Duck	85 Whip-poor-will	154 Black-throated Blue Warbler
17 Mallard*	86 Common Nighthawk	155 Cerulean Warbler
18 Gadwall	87 Chimney Swift	156 Blackburnian Warbler
19 Northern pintail	88 Ruby-throated Hummingbird*	157 Yellow-rumped Warbler
20 American wigeon	89 Belted Kingfisher*	158 Black-throated Green Warbler
21 Blue-winged teal	90 Red-headed Woodpecker*	159 Prairie Warbler
22 Green-winged Teal	91 Red-bellied Woodpecker*	160 Western Palm Warbler
23 Redhead	92 Downy Woodpecker*	161 Pine Warbler
24 Greater Scaup	93 Hairy woodpecker	162 Bay-breasted Warbler
25 Lesser Scaup	94 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	163 Blackpoll Warbler
26 Ring-necked duck	95 Yellow-shafted Flicker*	164 Yellow-throated warbler
27 White-winged Scoter	96 Olive-sided Flycatcher	165 Black-and-white Warbler
28 Black Scoter	97 Eastern Wood-Pewee*	166 American Redstart*
29 Bufflehead	98 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	167 Ovenbird
30 Common Goldeneye	99 Acadian flycatcher	168 Northern Waterthrush
31 Hooded Merganser	100 Alder Flycatcher	169 Connecticut Warbler
32 Common Merganser	101 "Traill's" Flycatcher	170 Mourning Warbler
33 Red-breasted Merganser	102 Least Flycatcher	171 Prothonotary warbler*
34 Ruddy duck	103 Eastern Phoebe*	172 Common Yellowthroat*
35 Osprey	104 Great Crested Flycatcher*	173 Wilson's Warbler
36 Mississippi kite	105 Eastern Kingbird*	174 Canada Warbler
37 Golden eagle	106 Red-eyed Vireo*	175 Hooded warbler
38 Bald Eagle*	107 Warbling Vireo*	176 Yellow-breasted Chat*
39 Northern Harrier	108 Philadelphia Vireo	177 Summer Tanager
40 Red-shouldered hawk	109 White-eyed Vireo	178 Scarlet Tanager*
41 Sharp-shinned Hawk	110 Yellow-throated Vireo	179 Northern Cardinal*
42 Cooper's Hawk	111 Blue-headed Vireo	180 Rose-breasted Grosbeak*
43 Broad-winged Hawk	112 Blue Jay*	181 Indigo Bunting*
44 Red-tailed Hawk	113 American Crow*	182 Eastern Towhee*
45 American Kestrel	114 Fish crow	183 American Tree Sparrow
46 Merlin	115 Horned Lark*	184 Field Sparrow*
47 Peregrine Falcon	116 Purple Martin*	185 Grasshopper sparrow
48 Ring-necked Pheasant*	117 N. Rough-winged Swallow	186 Chipping Sparrow*
49 Wild Turkey*	118 Bank Swallow*	187 Savannah Sparrow
50 Virginia Rail*	119 Tree Swallow*	188 White-throated Sparrow
51 Sora	120 Cliff Swallow*	189 White-crowned Sparrow
52 Sandhill Crane	121 Barn Swallow*	190 Fox Sparrow
53 Black-bellied Plover	122 Black-capped Chickadee*	191 Song Sparrow*
54 Semipalmated Plover	123 Red-breasted Nuthatch	192 Lincoln's Sparrow
55 Killdeer	124 White-breasted Nuthatch*	193 Swamp Sparrow
56 Greater Yellowlegs	125 Brown Creeper	194 Dark-eyed Junco
57 Lesser Yellowlegs	126 Carolina Wren*	195 Lapland Longspur
58 Solitary Sandpiper	127 House Wren*	196 Eastern Meadowlark*
59 Spotted Sandpiper*	128 Winter Wren	197 Brown-headed Cowbird*
60 Willet	129 Marsh Wren*	198 Red-winged Blackbird*
61 Marbled godwit	130 Golden-crowned Kinglet	199 Rusty Blackbird
62 Ruddy Turnstone	131 Ruby-crowned Kinglet	200 Common Grackle*
63 Sanderling	132 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*	201 Baltimore Oriole*
64 Red knot	133 Eastern Bluebird*	202 Orchard Oriole*
65 Dunlin	134 American Robin*	203 Purple Finch
66 Pectoral sandpiper	135 Wood Thrush*	204 House Finch*
67 Baird's Sandpiper	136 Veery	205 Pine Siskin
68 Semipalmated Sandpiper	137 Swainson's Thrush	206 American Goldfinch*
69 Least Sandpiper	138 Gray-cheeked Thrush	207 House Sparrow*

Total: 207 Species and forms

Notes: The highlighted 12 species is recorded as non-standard observation and the 72 species with the asterisk shows some breeding evidence / possible breeding evidence.

Comparison of Catch-rate during Migration Monitoring at Fish Point									
Year	Catch-rate		# Banded (Captured)		Net-hour		Total Catch-rate	Total Net-hour	Days nets open
	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall			
2023	0.41	0.81	650(15)	2123(34)	1639	2637	0.66	4276	109
2022	0.54	1.02	838(45)	1730(32)	1646	1721	0.80	3322	113
2021	0.26	1.29	394(35)	2523(57)	1667	2003	0.82	3670	114
2020	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2019	0.73	0.57	803(57)	1558(44)	1176	2829	0.61	4005	115
2018	0.62	0.73	798(60)	1913(49)	1275	2686	0.71	3961	110
2017	0.45	0.91	560(34)	2635(37)	1327	2921	0.77	4248	118
2016	0.51	0.66	735(42)	1671(31)	1533	2598	0.60	4131	113
2015	0.47	0.75	391(33)	2022(37)	907	2745	0.68	3652	111
2014	0.52	0.55	736(34)	1633(45)	1469	3028	0.54	4497	133
2013	0.40	0.69	495(36)	1935(19)	1321	2838	0.60	4159	120
2012	0.58	1.01	838(25)	2702(149)	1484	2816	0.86	4300	125
2011	0.69	0.72	730(37)	1582(59)	1106	2269	0.71	3375	115
2010	0.50	0.97	672(43)	2683(84)	1442	2841	0.81	4283	132
2009	0.44	0.84	739(N/A)	2424(N/A)	1645	2888	0.71	4533	134
2008	0.44	0.88	794(50)	2711(50)	1927	3149	0.71	5075	147
2007	0.47	0.59	604(39)	1937(39)	1376	3325	0.56	4701	140
2006	0.72	1.33	985(N/A)	3269(N/A)	1350	2446	1.12	3797	118

Note: The highlighted catch-rate with red colour was calculated from the number of banded without the number of captured.



Field Staff and Effort

In spring 2023, three staff members were stationed to support the field supervisor. A young biologist from BC, Danielle Lacasse, was hired as assistant bander from mid-April to early July, and David Aitken from England (warden for Bempton Cliffs Nature Reserve, Yorkshire, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) stayed as a volunteer for May. In addition to them, Patricia Rokitnicki, a graduate student from Western University, joined us in studying avian behavior during the migration using the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. The staff dedicated 732 hours to PIBO's spring Migration Monitoring. David also created an online presentation about his experience working with seabird research in the UK for the Urban Birding Challenge. From June to the beginning of July, Danielle and the field supervisor spent 102 hours working for Purple Martin Colony Annual Survey, Marsh Monitoring Program, Species at Risk Observation, and Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (OBBA). Danielle, who has a lot of energy and experience as a kayaking guide, also actively participated in various PIBO events such as the Botham Bird Race.

In August, we had Avery Hewson -Dunbar in the summer student position and another student short-term volunteer, Ashley Wilkes. They spent 102 hours on the netting operation under the harsh summer heat. Avery also helped the Pelee Island Butterfly Sanctuary and Teaching Garden as part of PIBO's community outreach. Her past work experience at a butterfly conservancy was a great help to Cherie and her team. Toward the end of August, Martha Cruz arrived from Mexico and started a six-week internship. Gill Holmes, fall assistant bander, and the field supervisor were pleased to see Martha's significant progress with banding skills at the end of September. Their continuous effort during the peak migration tallied 862 hours by the end of the fall season.

We also thank Rob Tymstra, who was a part-time census conductor; a volunteer, Hannah Mittelstaedt, who helped us during a very busy banding morning; and John and Hanne Hettinga, who supported us during our public owling night as volunteers.



David Atiken, volunteer, and Sumiko Onishi, Field Supervisor, at the banding station



Danielle Lacasse, Assistant Bander, and Sumiko Onishi, Field Supervisor, on a trip to Middle Island



Gill Holmes, Fall Assistant Bander; Sumiko Onishi, Field Supervisor; and Martha Cruz, international intern





Patricia Rokitnicki, graduate student, David Aitken UK volunteer, and Danielle Lacasse, Spring Assistant Bander



Avery Hewson-Dunbar Summer Student and Ashely Wilkes Volunteer

Special programs

Migratory Monarch Butterfly Count

Introduction

During the 90-minute census count, the number of monarch butterflies and dragonflies was recorded along the Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve census route. This monarch count became one of PIBO's variable records as the longest consistent monarch butterfly counts on their migration through Essex County. Based on our standardized monarch count from 2004 to 2022, the peak season of monarch migration on the Island occurs in the first two weeks of September. The data (since 2003) is shared with researchers and the public on the NatureCounts (Birds Canada) website through the Trinational Monarch Knowledge Network (birdscanada.org); this extensive database shares the collected observations and counts of monarchs and milkweed across Canada, Mexico, and the United States, in which Birds Canada takes part.

Results

From August 1 to October 31, 2023, 213 monarchs were recorded, a 55% decrease from the previous season. The highest counts were observed on September 26, although only 32 monarchs were recorded. The number recorded in September dropped 71% from September 2022.

There may be two reasons for the decrease. First, the temperature stayed warm during their breeding season, slowing their migration. Second, the excess precipitation in the area in late August damaged many plants, including nectar-producing flowers. Cherie Dillen, who has observed monarchs for forty eight years and currently runs Pelee Island Butterfly Sanctuary and Teaching Garden, suggested that the timing of the inclement weather event affected the number of monarchs on migration.

According to the isotope study (Flockhart, Brower, Ramirez, et al.), the monarch population wintering in Mexico migrated from six different breeding ranges in North America, and the ratio of the number from each different region fluctuated over the long period due to the regional climate change. In early August, Chip Tayler (the founder of Monarch Watch) estimated the volume of migrating monarchs based on the timing of their arrival at the spring and summer breeding grounds. He suggested the volume of monarchs migrating for this season would be like the previous season in the Midwest region but lower in the North-central region because the stages of the monarch's life cycle were sensitive to excess climate change and host/nectar plant availability. The dry summer followed by the flooding we experienced at the end of August would influence the decline of the monarch number we observed. We hope our count will contribute to further studies to protect them.

References

[Monarch Watch » Blog Archive Monarchs: Reaching 50N and beyond - Monarch Watch.](#)

[Monarch Watch » Blog Archive Monarch Watch Update August 2023 - Monarch Watch](#)

Flockhart, DTT, Brower, LP, Ramirez, MI, Hobson, KA, Wassenaar, LI, Altizer, S & Norris, DR 2017.

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Monarch Butterflies by Sumiko Onishi

Purple Martin Annual Survey

June to August 2023

Introduction

Traditionally tree cavity nesters, the Purple Martin (*Progne subis*), have readily transitioned to apartment-style bird boxes for nesting. The Purple Martin (PUMA) colony located on the south end of Pelee Island at the Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) property is in its fifth year of data collection. Monitoring encompassed the arrival of PUMA to the nest site, age and sex of parent birds, nest building, eggs laid, number of hatchlings, and when fledging occurs. Initially started in 2019, in partnership with Nature Canada, the colony comprises two box types, gourd and T-14 (figure 1).



Figure 1. Purple martin nest colony boxes. The gourd-type box is in the back, and the T-14 is in front. Photo: Danielle Lacasse.

Each unit is raised 12 feet off the ground and has a predator guard installed six feet up the pole to prevent snakes and squirrels from accessing the colony. The gourds can provide up to 18 artificial nest sites and the T-14 boxes 14 at full capacity. Combined, the two boxes contain 32 nest sites. The gourd-style boxes are opened on the topside by a screw cap. The T-unit has boxes on four sides of the structure with three or four units per side. The front panel is on hinges and swings open to access the box's interior. A small hook on the side secures it. Both units have a small entrance on the front that birds use as access points.

Methods

Nest boxes were checked every five to seven days during fair weather, low wind, and no rain (table 1). The colony was monitored from June 3 to August 15. Observers lowered the nest units to six feet above ground and sequentially checked each nest cavity. The number of eggs was noted; if young were present, they were aged to estimate the approximate hatch date (figure 2). At approximately 21 days of age or when body mass and feather growth indicated the hatchling was close to fledging, nestlings were



banded with a unique 9 digit aluminum band issued by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) bird banding lab.



Figure 2. PUMA at various developmental stages. **(A)** egg stage **(B)** 1-2 day old hatchlings **(C)** 7-8 day old hatchlings **(D)** 15 day old hatchlings **(E)** 21 day old hatchling with band. Photo: Danielle Lacasse.

Birds were gently extracted from the nest cavity and placed in a cotton bag with a drawstring at the top to prevent escape. No more than four birds were placed in a bag. While the birds were being processed, the nest box units were raised up the pole so that adult birds could continue feeding young. After each bird was banded, they were weighed and placed back into a bag until all other hatchlings from the same nest cavity were banded. The hatchlings were then put back into the original nest cavity. Data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet and uploaded to the USGS database for future reference and research.

Table 1. PUMA colony survey effort for 2023.

Observers

Sumiko Onishi, Danielle Lacasse, Avery Hewson -Dunbar, Ashley Wilkes

of nest box checks

13 (June 3, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30; July 6, 13, 19, 25, 31; August 9, 15)

Total Hours: 14.25

Results

Twenty-eight of the 32 nest boxes were occupied by Purple Martins and showed signs of nest building (Table 2). One nest cavity successfully fledged a clutch of European Starlings (*Sturnis vulgaris*) early in June and remained occupied throughout the season despite constant efforts to remove nesting material.



Table 2. Results of nest box monitoring of Purple Martin colony during 2023. WH= Wooden House (T-14), AG= Artificial Gourd.

Cavity Number	Housing type	Number of Eggs	Number Fledged	Individuals Banded
A1	WH	7	6	6
A2	WH	6	5	5
A3	WH	4	3	3
B1	WH	4	4	4
B2	WH	4	4	4
B3	WH	5	5	5
B4	WH	4	4	4
C1	WH	0	0	0
C2	WH	0	0	0
C3	WH	5	4	4
D1	WH	7	5	5
D2	WH	9	0	0
D3	WH	0	0	0
D4	WH	6	3	3
E1	AG	6	6	6
E2	AG	4	2	2
E3	AG	6	5	4
F1	AG	6	6	0
F2	AG	5	4	4
F3	AG	5	4	4
G1	AG	4	0	0
G2	AG	4	4	4
G3	AG	5	5	5
H1	AG	7	7	7
H2	AG	6	6	6
H3	AG	5	4	4
I1	AG	0	0	0
I2	AG	6	5	6
I3	AG	5	5	4
J1	AG	6	6	6
J2	AG	5	5	5
J3	AG	5	5	5
Total		151	122	115

Table 3. Summary of Purple Martin nesting productivity at Pelee Island Bird Observatory nest box colony during 2019-2023. The date first laid is calculated by the average date most birds laid their first egg. The success rate is the estimated success rate of fledging (number of fledglings/ number of eggs).

Parameter	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Arrival Date	Apr 12th	N/A	Apr 11th	Apr 12th	N/A
Male & Female ages (AM/AF/SM/SF/U)	21 / 7 / 5 / 14 / 7	18 / 10 / 7 / 14 / 15	30 / 13 / 0 / 8 / 9	20 / 14 / 10 / 10 / 2	9 / 3 / 8 / 7
Date 1st egg laid	May 31st	Jun 7th	May 27th	May 28th	Jun 6th
Number of active nests (% of boxes with eggs)	32 (100%)	31 (97%)	30 (94%)	28 (88%)	28 (88%)
Number of eggs laid	133	171	161	151	151
Number of eggs hatched	116	135	141	132	130
Number fledged (% hatchlings fledged)	104 (90%)	128 (95%)	136 (96%)	133 (100%)	122 (94%)
Date young fledged	N/A	Jul 23rd	Jul 16th	Jul 19th	Jul 19th
success rate	0.78	0.74	0.84	0.88	0.86

Poor weather conditions, such as wind, rain, and cold temperatures in April and early May, resulted in the PUMA's late arrival and egg-laying (Table 3). The arrival date is the first date birds were observed at the box. Short periods of cold temperatures resulted in adult and hatchling mortality. Interestingly, the mean temperature in May follows the expected trend based on historical data for the past five years; however, precipitation is lower than average. (May 2023; 13°C and 1mm. May 2019-2022; 12-15°C and 2-6mm) (Canada, 2023). Overall, 88% of nest boxes were active, a lower amount occupied than in previous years. Clutch size ranged from 4-9 eggs laid, with an average of five eggs. Out of 151 eggs laid,



130 hatched, and 122 successfully fledged. An 86% success rate, the number of fledglings divided by the number of eggs, was observed. The first clutch of hatch year birds was banded on July 6 and the last set on August 15. A high abundance of red admiral butterflies (*Vanessa atalanta*) and dragonfly species, an important food source, present during key developmental periods may have contributed to fledgling success (figure 3).

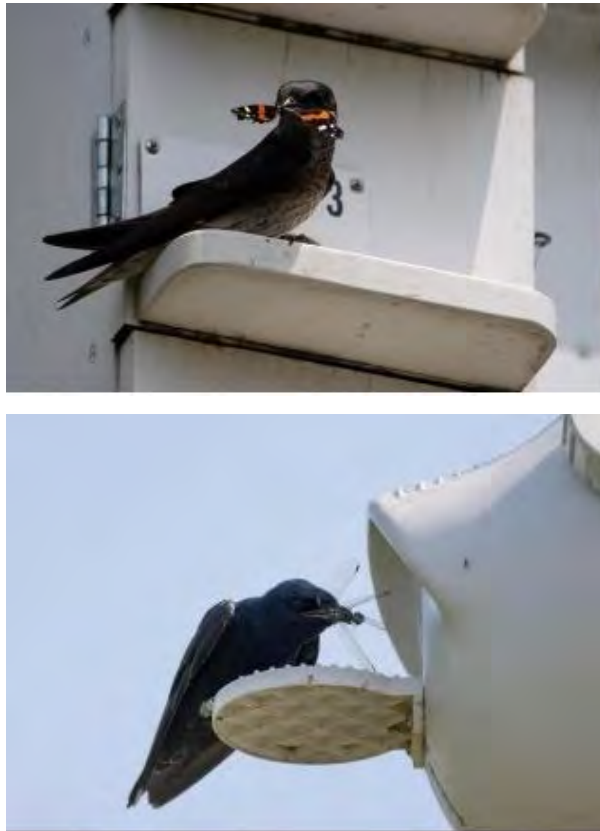


Figure 3. (A) Female PUMA bringing a red admiral butterfly and **(B)** Male PUMA returning with dragonfly spp. to feed young. Photo: Danielle Lacasse

A tick was observed on a hatchling for the first time at this location. The arachnid was most likely brought in by a parent bird or on nesting material and then attached to the hatchling. Personal observation noted that nest mites appeared to be higher than usual.

References

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Movement ecology of migratory songbirds in southwestern Ontario

By Patricia Rokitnicki, Dr Yolanda Morbey and Dr Chris Guglielmo Western University

During the Spring 2023 migration, I (Patricia Rokitnicki) worked as a field biologist on a collaborative, project with Dr. Morbey and Dr. Guglielmo from Western University. I partnered with the Pelee Bird Observatory on Pelee Island. Our primary focus was to study the movement ecology of migratory songbirds, specifically Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*), American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) and Black-throated Blue Warblers (*Setophaga caerulea*). We chose to focus on Black -throated Blue Warblers due to existing knowledge from prior studies, American Redstarts with the hope of tracking them to their breeding grounds on the Bruce Peninsula, and Swainson's Thrushes as an ideal species for long-distance tracking, providing both fall and spring data.

We aimed to use automated radiotelemetry to assess songbirds' stopover duration and post-departure migration routes as they traveled north through southwestern Ontario. Much of what we know about stopover duration and post -departure movements in southern Ontario comes from birds captured and tagged at Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO). There is a gap in knowledge concerning the movement ecology and habitat use of birds migrating along a more western route.

We had four main objectives for this project:

1. Capture and attach radio transmitters to songbirds.
2. Manual telemetry on Pelee Island will be conducted to quantify habitat use.
3. Track birds as they move off the island and northwards using the Motus Wildlife Telemetry System.
4. Analyze Motus data to provide insight into stopover duration, post-departure flight speeds, migration routes, and factors influencing movement metrics (e.g., wind, temperature, and landscape features).

During spring migration, radio tracking was conducted on foot. Once the birds left Pelee Island, larger scale movements toward their breeding grounds were tracked using the Motus Wildlife Tracking System, a network of monitoring towers spanning North America. By following songbirds throughout their migration at an increased spatial and temporal scale, we aim to enhance our understanding of migration speed and migratory movement.





Radio tagged Black throated blue warbler



Radio tagged American redstart



Patricia Rotkitnicki

Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas 3 – ‘General atlassing’ and Marshbird Survey

June to July 2023

Introduction

Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (Atlas -3), started in 2021, is a five-year project documenting all breeding species across the province. To complete the project, many birders from different skill levels participated as volunteers, along with the partnership between several governmental and non-profit organizations. The data collected by the participants is summarized on a map of each species' distribution and relative abundance, contributing to various scientific studies. For the previous breeding seasons, PIBO field staff already conducted point counts in 2021, 'general atlassing' to observe firm breeding evidence, and the Eastern Screech-Owl Survey in 2022. As a result, the breeding status of 22 species was upgraded, and 51 species were confirmed as local breeders during the last season. This third season became more challenging as we looked for breeding evidence of species whose breeding site is well hidden. We also conducted an Atlas Marshbird Survey to detect primarily breeding species in the wetland habitat. The surveys were conducted at two stations in the Florian Diamonte Nature Reserve (FDNR) on Atlas Square 17TLG62 and six stations at Lake Henry in the Lighthouse Point Nature Reserve on 17TLG63.



Prothonotary warbler hatchling with adult by Sumiko Onishi



Table 1. 'general atlassing' and Atlas Marsh Bird Survey effort for 2023.

Observers

Sumiko Onishi, Danielle Lacasse

Date of the survey conducted.

June 2, 6, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28; July 3, 4, 8, 9, 14, 20

Total Hours: 33



Prothonotary warbler hatchlings by Danielle Lacasse

Methods

Marsh Bird Survey

The survey was conducted on June 9 and 24, 2023, by taking a canoe at Lake Henry and on foot at the FDNR. It started approximately four hours before sunset and finished thirty minutes after sunset. In addition to the bird survey, on June 24, a habitat assessment was done for each station, which described the type of wetland, the aerial coverage, and the percentage of the emergent non-woody plant component at each station. During the bird survey, a ten-minute broadcast – playing calls of five focal marsh bird species such as Least bittern, Sora, Virginia rail, American coot mixed with Common gallinule, and Pied-billed grebe – was performed at each station to stimulate those species to call back. All species heard or observed during the ten-minute broadcast were recorded on the survey sheet.

General atlassing

The term 'general atlassing' means simply observing the breeding birds in various habitats during the breeding season, identifying species, and documenting evidence of breeding. The survey contributes to finding as many different species of breeding birds as possible and recording the breeding evidence such as adult agitated behavior, carrying food, feeding young, etc. The breeding status - 'possible breeding,' 'probable breeding,' or 'confirmed breeding' – is determined from the breeding evidence leveled from highest to lowest.

Results

Five marsh bird species were detected at Florian Diamante Nature Reserve during the marsh survey. Marsh wrens and Least bitterns were frequently seen going and coming at the nesting site in the dense cattails. Occasionally, Virginia rails were heard during the survey, but they became quiet as the breeding started, and their call was difficult to detect during the short visit. Based on the observation, they are determined to be a 'probable breeding' species. On June 20, PIBO staff saw fledged Pied-billed grebe and American coot, which confirmed their breeding. They were regularly seen during July and the beginning of August.



TABLE # - Marsh birds observed during Atlas Marshbird Survey and 'general atlassing' 2023.

Site name: Florian Diamante Nature Reserve (Atlas square 17TLG62)

	9-Jun	14-Jun	20-Jun	24-Jun	Breeding evidence	Note
Marsh wren	X			X	Confirmed	
Least bittern	X			X	Confirmed	
Pied-billed grebe	X		X	X	Confirmed	
Virginia rail		X		X	Probable	
American coot			X		Confirmed	
American bittern						Heard singing only once during 2022 Atlas survey
Sora						One singing on territory observed during 2022 Atlas
Common gallinule						One pair on territory observed during 2022 Atlas survey

The other species we confirmed the breeding status of was **the Eastern meadowlark**. On July 8, a photo of the fledged young was sent to us from an owner of a property on the island. We were excited that we found the breeding evidence by chance since only a few are on Pelee Island. We observed many other species for which we could not confirm a higher level of breeding evidence during 'general atlassing.'

The following four species are quite common on the Island during the summer, but their nest site was well hidden, and we still need to confirm the higher level of breeding evidence this season.

- **Blue jay**
- **Eastern towhee**
- **Rose-breasted grosbeak**
- **Scarlet tanager**

The following two aerial insectivore species were seen throughout the breeding season, but their nest sites were unknown. Old chimneys and barns could be nesting sites for Chimney swifts, and the sand bank with some shrubs growing at the north shore could be a nesting site for the Bank swallow.

- **Chimney swift**
- **Bank swallows**

Another two aerial insectivores, goatsuckers, were observed occasionally only during May.

- **Common Nighthawk**
- **Eastern Whip-poor-will**

Species we think possibly breed on the Island

- **Acadian flycatcher**
- **Hooded warbler**

Table #. Name of the marsh breeding bird and the date observed at Florian Diamonte Nature Reserve in 2023 during the survey for Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas 3.

- **Sora**
- **Virginia rail**
- **Common gallinule**
- **American bittern**

Northern Saw-whet Owl Monitoring

Introduction

Since 2004, the observatory has banded 400 Northern Saw-whet owls and captured more than 20 owls that were banded at other locations, ranging from Northern Ontario to Minnesota. In 2012, we banded 55 Saw-whet owls (0.18 birds/net-hour) and recaptured six Saw-whet owls banded in previous years or at other banding stations. Our busiest night was November 13, 2012, when we banded 25 Saw-whet owls (0.51 birds/net-hour). Our previous data showed that the total catch-rate is similar each year, regardless of the varied total net hours (average 0.107).

Methods

Five nets – larger mesh size than the songbird net – were set in a pentagonal shape. The netting area was made up of sparse black walnut trees, a small mix of deciduous forest on the north side, and a cropped farm field behind the forest. The nets were opened half an hour after sunset by playing a callback CD in the middle of the pentagonal shape and checked every 30 to 40 minutes until it closed. Owls captured in the net were banded, aged, and sexed, and the wing length, crop size, and body mass were measured in red.



Table 1. Northern Saw-whet owl monitoring effort for 2023.

<p>Observers</p> <p>Sumiko Onishi, Gill Holmes</p> <p>Date of the survey conducted.</p> <p>Oct.17, 18, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30; Nov.1, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25</p> <p>Total Hours:</p>

Results

The netting was operated 18 evenings (230 hours) from October 17 to November 25, as much as the weather permitted. We banded 24 Northern Saw-whet owls and recaptured three, and the average catch-rate was 0.12 bird/net-hour. It was a quiet season for the owling compared to the last season, even though the effort was 31 hours greater. Only a few nights of the eighteen evenings were busy capturing one or two owls every net-round. November 11 to 24 were good weather conditions to see owls, but we closed the nets early because a couple of Great Horned owls got closer during the netting on both dates. Two of the three recaptured owls were foreign encountered (recaptured). The original banding record wasn't submitted; it will likely be banded this fall. Since migrant owls moved between Pelee Island and other American islands, two we banded in November were recaptured at Kelley's Island a few days later.



Northern saw-whet Owl by Sumiko Onishi

Public Owling Night

October 28, 29, and 30.

PIBO welcomed visitors and the community to watch our owl banding for three nights at the end of October. To avoid crowds around the netting area, we set up a tent at the roadside to show owls and hold a banding demonstration. Some drinks and snacks were prepared for the visitors waiting outside. The nets were opened half an hour after sunset and checked every forty minutes. The netting ran for four hours each evening except October 29, when the owling was canceled due to steady rain. Twelve visitors showed up, and friendly voices warmed the chilly night sky. Although the catch-rate had been low for the season, we captured only one Northern Saw-whet owl to show the visitors for the night. We appreciated John and Hanne Hettinga, who set up the tent and prepared the treats to welcome the visitors.





Volunteers at PIBO owl nights

Species at Risk (SAR) Monitoring

May to August

Introduction

In Ontario, under the Species at Risk Act (2023), twenty -six species of birds were classified as 'Endangered' or 'Threatened,' and seventeen species were classified as 'Special Concern,' which could become 'Endangered' or 'Threatened' if no recovery or protective means are taken. The determination of the classification of a species is the responsibility of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), a group of experts that assesses and identifies Species at Risk.

Documenting our sightings of the Species at Risk on Pelee Island will be essential data for the COSEWIC and other studies of those species.

Table #. Species at Risk Monitoring effort for 2023.

Observers

Sumiko Onishi, Danielle Lacasse

Date of the survey conducted.

May 19, 22; June 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 26, 28, 30; July 14, 19

Total Hours: 13.25

Methods

This monitoring was done during standardized migration monitoring and non-standardized observations during migration and the breeding season. PIBO staff visited the site where we observed the Species at Risk on Pelee Island and documented the location and the date, describing behavior if it was considered breeding evidence.

Results

A total of 24 provincial species at risk, including ‘special concern,’ were observed on Pelee Island in 2023 (Table#). Of the nine species that were considered migrants, seven species were confirmed the local breeding evidence, and the eight species were considered as ‘possible’ or ‘probable’ breeding species.

TABLE			
Species	Provincial	National	Breeding Evidence
Golden Eagle	Endangered	N/A	Migrant
Red-headed Woodpecker	Endangered	Endangered	Confirmed
Acadian Flycatcher	Endangered	Endangered	Possible
Prothonotary Warbler	Endangered	Endangered	Confirmed
Yellow-breasted Chat	Endangered	Endangered	Possible
American White Pelican	Threatened	N/A	Confirmed*
Least Bittern	Threatened	Threatened	Probable
Lesser Yellowlegs	Threatened	Not listed	Migrant
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Threatened	Threatened	Possible
Chimney Swift	Threatened	Threatened	Possible
Bank Swallow	Threatened	Threatened	Possible
Cerulean Warbler	Threatened	Endangered	Migrant
Eastern Meadowlark	Threatened	Threatened	Confirmed
Horned Grebe	Special Concern	N/A	Migrant
Bald Eagle	Special Concern	N/A	Confirmed
Peregrine Falcon	Special Concern	N/A	Migrant
Common Nighthawk	Special Concern	Special Concern	Possible
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Special Concern	N/A	Migrant
Eastern Wood-pewee	Special Concern	Special Concern	Confirmed
Barn Swallow	Special Concern	Threatened	Confirmed
Wood Thrush	Special Concern	Threatened	Confirmed
Canada Warbler	Special Concern	Threatened	Migrant
Grasshopper Sparrow	Special Concern	Not listed	Migrant
Rusty Blackbird	Special Concern	Special Concern	Migrant

Note: * species breed on Big Chicken Island about 13 km west from Pelee Island



Prothonotary warbler

A total of four territories were observed this season. Three territories were in the Maple Swamp at Fish Point, and another was at Lighthouse Point. Two pairs nested at the old nest boxes, and another two pairs nested at natural tree cavities. Toward the end of May, three singing males were frequently seen at Fish Point. The male and female flying in and out of the nest site was seen during June's first few weeks. On June 20, we observed one of the pairs feeding the newly fledged young near the nest site and another feeding five nestlings at their nest. Meanwhile, the third pair had two eggs and had been seen around the nest for the next couple of weeks, but the result wasn't confirmed.

Yellow-breasted chat

For many years, at least two locations in the Alvar have been considered their territory; however, we could not detect their distinct song this season for the first time in many years.

Red-headed woodpecker

Their preferred nest site on Pelee is scattered live trees around the pond and mature forest. Every year, at least two or three pairs were observed near the pond at Fish Point and Lake Henry at Lighthouse Point. The nest cavity is made on a tall dead tree, which often creates competition with European starlings. The nest site wasn't detected this season, but the fledged young with the adult bird was frequently observed at the beginning of August.

American White Pelican

On August 1, 2014, two pelicans were sighted as the first record during PIBO's census at Fish Point. Researchers confirmed the nesting colony in 2016 at Big Chicken Island, about 13 km west of Pelee Island. Since then, a group of pelicans has been seen at Fish Point before and after every breeding season. On July 11, 2023, we had a chance to visit the offshore of the Big Chicken Island for the first time and expected to see the breeding evidence. It was difficult to observe from a distance during the short visit. However, we recognized the structure looked like a nest in a photo we took on the trip.

The following species were described in the **Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas 3**

Eastern meadowlark

Bank swallows

Chimney swift

Eastern whip-poor-will

Common nighthawk

Least bittern

Reference

Journal Of The Ontario Field Ornithologists, Ontario Birds Volume 38 Number 1 April 2020

International intern

PIBO welcomed Martha Ramirez Cruz from Hidalgo, Mexico, for six weeks as the first international intern. Martha's educational background in Biology and Environmental Education, as well as her experience conducting point counts and training community guides in bird identification, made her an ideal candidate. While on Pelee Island, Martha assisted with the banding operations and wrote a short report on her experience as a Mexican biologist comparing the birds in her home region with the ones she saw on Pelee Island. Of the 107 bird species observed, 97 are also linked to Mexico! Martha received invaluable time practicing her bird banding skills, and PIBO staff gained new insights on the birds that we only know as "Canadian" but are truly international species!

Data Usage/Collaborative Research 2023

Forty-three data access requests were made through NatureCounts, a platform that allows users to collect, archive, and interpret wildlife data to advance understanding of bird populations across the Western Hemisphere. The list below represents a few requests from those who responded to our request for more information.



- Pleasants, J., Thogmartin, W.E., Oberhauser, K.S., Taylor, O.R. & Stenoien, C. (2023) A comparison of summer, fall and winter estimates of monarch population size before and after milkweed eradication from crop fields in North America. *Insect Conservation and Diversity*, 17(1) 51-64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/icad.12687>
- Dr Stefanie LaZerte (Nature Counts) and Danielle Ethier (Birds Canada) worked on a project to create a workflow using NatureCounts observations to inform COSEWIC rankings for birds nationally. PIBO's data was used as part of this process.
- Mercy Harris accessed PIBO's data as part of her work as a Key Biodiversity Area technician for Birds Canada. This data helped to reassess Pelee Island, an existing Important Bird Area, and identify whether it qualifies as a KBA. The data from PIBO in NatureCounts helped support the nomination of Pelee Island, as did information from Sumiko Onishi, PIBO's field supervisor. Pelee Island will soon be approved as a KBA.
- Max Buchanan used PIBO's data for an undergraduate ecology presentation at MacEwan University in Alberta.
- Michael Girodat accessed PIBO data to teach an ecology unit at the Brisbane School of Distance Education in Brisbane, Australia.

Events

Botham Cup by Danielle Lacasse

If you have spent much time on Pelee Island, you will surely have heard about the coveted Botham Cup and the bird race hosted by the Pelee Island Heritage Centre. It is an annual weekend of celebration involving books and birds. This event was started seventeen years ago as a fundraiser for the Heritage Centre with the help of Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) and Margaret Atwood. A 24-hour green "bird race" occurs, and a banquet is held afterward. The race started at noon on Friday, May 12, and ended on Saturday. It had to be done entirely under human power, either by bike or on foot. The goal was to identify, either visually or through sound, as many species as possible.

I started the day off blurry-eyed and early, with a 4:30 am wake up and a 6 km bike trip to the banding station (we open nets at 5:40 am, half an hour before sunrise, and close at 11:40 am) so I would have my bike on hand for the start of my big day birdathon in addition to the bird race. I decided to participate in Global Bird Day and combine my species count with Team VIU (Vancouver Island University) back home on Vancouver Island. We are raising funds for Birds Canada and the banding station in Nanaimo. Through my time with the VIU banding station, I gained the knowledge and skill set to achieve my current placement as an assistant biologist for Pelee Island Bird Observatory. Many of the VIU team members are currently spread across Canada for summer work, and the competition ramped

up when we decided to see who could get the most species among us. I covered 29km on my bike and observed 96 species. Out of nine competing teams, I placed 3rd in the bird race. Not bad for a West Coaster.

Some highlights for me throughout the race were finding an olive-sided flycatcher, green heron, and yellow-throated vireo, achieving excellent views of a blackpoll warbler and an American white pelican on the southernmost inhabited point of Canada. When I spotted these birds, I thought of the North Island and Gord's awesome find last week in Port Hardy. Unlike the Port Hardy, pelicans breed in the area around Pelee Island. At one point, another birder and I were playing a fun game of spotting the singing white-eyed vireo and were ecstatic to locate it in some fairly dense vegetation. The PIBO staff and I ended a bit early on Saturday to prepare for the Spring Song Banquet hosted by the Heritage Centre. I handed in my results and returned home to promptly fall asleep for a few hours. The banquet was a lovely affair filled with laughter, amazing company, and some very cool raffle prizes. The basket full of homemade tarts and pies was especially enticing. Meeting Margaret Atwood, other well-known authors, and many passionate birders was the icing on the cake for a wonderful 24 hours.

Christmas Bird Count by Graeme Gibson

Thirteen individuals and four people watching their feeders documented 53 species of birds on Pelee Island as part of the 2023 Christmas Bird count. It was an especially rainy day on December 17th, and participants did well to tally so many species under less-than-ideal circumstances.

The temperature was between 6 and 8 degrees centigrade in the morning with light but steady rain, overcast with off-and-on sprinkles in the afternoon, and a steady south wind all day. 160 km were driven in 22 hours, and 24 km were walked in 8 hours. The participants included Rob Tymstra (compiler), Lisa and Brian Kipp, Vern and Michelle Taylor, Matt and Alyssa Staples, Lauren Luxton, Mack Feltz, Sumiko Onishi, Graeme Gibson, Ron and Lynn Tiessen. Feeder watchers: Ford and Stephanie Crawford, Buck, and Karen Foster.

The Sharp-shinned Hawk was seen by Alyssa and Matt, which was very exciting for Allyssa, as it was the first one she had ever seen; the Eastern Screech Owl was observed by Lisa and Brian, which was very cool for the two of them, Rob Tymstra spotted the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker outside his home when he finished the day, and the Swamp Sparrow was Sumiko's bird of the day.

Although we haven't received their list yet, I can report that the Erie islands reported a combined total of 80 different species on the Christmas Bird count.





Sumiko Onishi and Graeme Gibson at the Christmas Bird Count

Education and Outreach Programs

1. Bird Friendly Windsor

BIPOC Education Coordinator hired for Bird Friendly Windsor

In early spring, PIBO hired their former Community Activator from 2022, Davina Sanjqlly, as the new Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) Education Coordinator for the Bird Friendly Windsor project. This project received funding from the Chawkers Foundation. It allowed PIBO to expand its Bird Friendly Windsor (BFW) program by engaging BIPOC youth and families in urban birding-related programming. For ten months, Davina brought youth and families from diverse backgrounds to many unique urban birding experiences that meet the populations where they are to create opportunities to become comfortable being outside, being in nature, and learning and appreciating our bird life.

Windsor voted for its official City Bird

PIBO partnered with Tourism Windsor - Essex Pelee Island to help choose Windsor's official bird in the winter of 2023. Nominations were accepted as part of Windsor's Best Of awards, and the finalists were the Peregrine falcon, the common nighthawk, the Northern cardinal, the Black-capped chickadee, and the Tufted titmouse. On April 12, the announcement was made with a press conference at the Ojibway

Nature Centre with PIBO's executive director and the City of Windsor's executive director of parks and facilities and declared the Tufted titmouse as Windsor's official bird.



PIBO poster about voting for the official Windsor bird

Earth Day

On Saturday, April 22, 2023, PIBO staff participated in the annual Earth Day event hosted by the City of Windsor. Over 200 people stopped by the PIBO table to learn how to help birds in their neighborhoods and about PIBO's programs.

World Migratory Bird Day/Urban Birding Challenge

Over five days, PIBO hosted its first Urban Birding Challenge to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day from May 10 to 14. Starting with a kickoff night, Ian Davidson gave a talk on how birds migrating through Pelee Island benefit from restoration projects in South America. Ian is a PIBO director and BirdLife



International's Regional Director for the Americas. On May 11 and 12, online talks by PIBO's UK volunteer on the topic of seabirds in York and local birder and native plant enthusiast presented on how to attract birds to your garden. May 13 started the 24 -hour race with categories for most species sighted, most nocturnal birds, and most shore birds. Finally, on Sunday, May 14, about 30 people gathered for the presentation of the awards and celebration of Windsor's first Urban Birding Challenge.



Participants in the Urban Birding Challenge at Ojibway Park

Sandpoint Beach Bird Walk

Local partner, Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor (WEST) has partnered with PIBO to deliver birding events to young immigrant and newcomer women for over two years. On Sunday, June 11, 2023, a dozen young women from the Empowered Diverse Group for Education and Employment group (EDGE) explored Sandpoint Beach and the Little River Trail looking for birds. Many young women were

surprised to have access to nature in the city and to see such diverse birds in an urban park. They were delighted to hear the calls of the Red-winged blackbirds and to see the pollen of the Cottonwoods blanket the ground like snow.



Young women at the Sandpoint Beach bird walk

World Environment Day

On Sunday, June 4, 2023, PIBO set up a table at the World Environment Day event at Point Pelee National Park. The Caldwell First Nation hosted the event, which highlighted several local environmental groups.



On Saturday, June 24, 2023, PIBO hosted a community picnic for BIPOC youth and families at Mic Mac Park in Windsor. Parents and children enjoyed a BBQ lunch and bird games facilitated by PIBO's Education Coordinator. This event was beginner family-friendly environment.

Falcon Watch event

With local Peregrine falcon enthusiast and bird bander Bob Hall Brooks, PIBO hosted a falcon watch event on July 8, 2023, at Ambassador Park, adjacent to the Ambassador Bridge. Despite the steady rain, a group of adventurous folks joined PIBO staff under a tent to learn about Windsor's falcon population. Amazingly, two falcons appeared on cue in plain view, and everyone enjoyed watching them through Bob's powerful scope.

Chimney Swift monitoring

In 2023, PIBO hosted three Chimney Swift monitoring nights at a local roost site in the Ford City neighborhood of Windsor. This event was perfect for introducing the monitoring of an important urban species to new birders and families in the region. This site had previously gone unmonitored, so PIBO collected important data for the Ontario Swift Watch program through Birds Canada.



Chimney Swift monitors at the Alexis Rd site

Moms and Tots Bird Walk

As part of our program to introduce birding to New Canadian families, on July 20, 2023, at Jackson Park, a popular spot for families, PIBO led a bird walk for over two dozen moms and children in partnership with Women’s Enterprise Skills Training (WEST). All were new to the activity but embraced learning to use binoculars and spotting the “common” birds on a hot Midsummer Day. American robins, Northern cardinals, Blue jays, and European starlings were abundant, and these birds were exciting to see for this group. It is a good lesson that all birds, no matter how common, are new to someone and deserve attention.



Children, youth, and moms at the WEST bird walk at Jackson Park



Bird Walk at Malden Park

On August 13, PIBO led a small group of people on a bird walk through Malden Park. It was a beautiful summer day, and the birds utilizing the park's manufactured pond were fascinating to watch.

Bird Rescues

Although PIBO is not an avian rescue organization, we often receive calls about birds in trouble. On August 18, PIBO received word that a Double-crested cormorant was entangled in a fishing line, and a hook attached to a lure punctured its foot. Luckily, a caring bird lover transported this bird to Erie Wildlife Rescue, where it received the treatment it needed before being released.

Nectar Fest and Summer Prairie Day

Hosted by the Friends of the Ojibway Prairie, PIBO presented information and gave out free window collision prevention kits on Saturday, August 27, 2023, at the Ojibway Nature Centre.

Bird Walk at Black Oak Heritage Park

On Saturday, September 9, 2023, PIBO led a group through Black Oak Heritage Park for a bird walk. Despite the swarms of mosquitos, it was a great day to spot some migrating warblers!

Festival of Hawks

On Saturday, September 16, 2023, PIBO participated in the very popular local Hawks Festival hosted by Holiday Beach Migration Observatory and Essex Region Conservation Authority. A steady stream of visitors stopped by the PIBO table to discover our programs, and many took home a free window collision prevention kit to prevent birds from hitting their windows.

Social Media Posts

Birding and Mental Health

Window Collisions

Lights out to prevent collisions

Tips for wildlife photography

Feeding birds in winter

Keeping Cats inside brochure translated into Arabic

Life After 50 Be Well Expo

In a most unusual location, PIBO set up a table at the annual Be Well Expo hosted by the charitable organization Life after Fifty. The expo introduces folks 50 and older to various local activities to encourage a vibrant and healthy lifestyle. PIBO was there to promote birdwatching as an activity that is good for mental and physical health. The venue—a funeral home!

Adopt a Street Program

The Adopt a Street program encourages community groups and individuals to select a city street and commit to keeping it free of litter and waste. In late fall of 2023, PIBO adopted a portion of Chilver Rd from Niagara Street to Riverside Drive. Chilver Road is the location of the new PIBO administrative office. This section of the road abuts the Detroit River. Therefore, cleanups will help prevent plastic pollution from entering our waterways, which is one of the mandates of a bird-friendly city. In the spring of 2024, PIBO will host a series of cleanups.

Sustainability event at the University of Windsor

On November 1, 2023, PIBO's Education Coordinator, Davina Sanjqlly, joined a University of Windsor graduate student with the Sustainability Office to inform the students about bird-friendly campus initiatives.

Fall Wellness Fair

PIBO participates in various community events, even ones that are not obviously nature or environmentally themed. The Unity Wellness Fair on November 12, 2023, at the Unity Spiritual Centre of Windsor was one such event. PIBO's table was one of the most popular at the event, drawing in over 150 visitors! Many who attended were very receptive to learning how to protect birds in their neighborhoods. The spiritual focus of the event paired very well with the nature protection theme of PIBO's programs.

Owl Walk

PIBO hosted an owl walk on Wednesday, November 22, at the Ojibway Nature Center in partnership with the Ojibway Nature Center and the City of Windsor. A presentation by Barbara Lamoure, City of Windsor Environmental Sustainability Coordinator, and a special appearance by "Beaker," a rescued Eastern Screech owl - an owl ambassador with local rescue group "Wings" introduced the crowd of over 30 to the many species of owl that reside and migrate through Essex County. Although no owls were spotted, one was heard in the distance, and everyone left with a greater appreciation for our Megascops.

2. Backpacks for Birding

The Windsor Public Library continued to offer birding backpack kits to the Windsor community as part of the program began in 2022. These kits remain a very popular item in the Library's lending system.

2. The Graeme Gibson Prismaticos Project

PIBO launched this special project in 2022 to collect previously loved binoculars and birding scopes from northern bird watchers and distribute them to conservationists and schoolchildren in central Mexico, the wintering grounds for many bird species that migrate across Pelee Island. In the spring of 2023, nine pairs of donated binoculars went to environmental workers and forest rangers in Guanajuato, Mexico.



4. Campus Bird Initiative

As part of its Bird Friendly City commitment, PIBO hired University of Windsor student Rahi Ahmed as PIBO's first Campus Organizer to help make the University of Windsor a safer place for birds. Rahi was studying Computer Science, focusing on Software Engineering, and was eager to learn about birds in this region and how to help them. Grants from Nature Canada's Work to Grow Program (BIPOC focused) and the KM Hunter Foundation funded his 12 -week placement. Rahi has been working on assessing the buildings on campus for window collisions and will be presenting to the university administration on ways to mitigate those collisions.

2023 Fundraising Events

Online Auction

Springsong Bird Talk

The Non-Garden Party & Silent Auction

Ruffolo Yacht Party

Online Auction

PIBO's fourth online auction was held from October 1-17, 2023, using the online platform GalaBid. Over 60 Items were donated in categories that included great art, birding tours in Spain, Mexico, and Canada, great books, and more. The auction netted over \$ 33,000 for PIBO's operational funds.

Organized by a committee led by volunteer Cathy Cooper, this event took a community of dedicated people working year-round to create a fun event that substantially increases PIBO's operational budget. Thank you to all the volunteers, donors, and, of course, the bidders!

SpringSong Bird Talk

The second annual PIBO Bird Talk was held on the Sunday morning of Springsong weekend, featuring PIBO guest birder Ian Davidson. Sixty -seven people came to the Pelee Island Winery for Ian's presentation and some light refreshments. Ian spoke about how particular birds that migrate through Pelee Island benefit from restoration projects in South America that combine Western innovation with Indigenous leadership.

The Non-Garden Party

It was held on October 3 at the Charles Pachter Museum in Toronto and hosted by Margaret Atwood. Over 40 people attended the afternoon event, raising over \$50,000 for PIBO's operational costs.

The John Ruffolo Yacht Party

Twenty guests spent an evening on a yacht on Toronto Island with hosts Margaret Atwood and John Ruffolo and raised over \$50,000 for PIBO's new Bird Centre on Pelee Island.

2023 Fundraising Projects

Art of Nature Bird Calendar

Testaments by Margaret Atwood, Special Edition

A Birdwatchers' Banquet e-cookbook

Feather Bookmarks

PIBO t-shirts

Fundraising Campaigns

The Great Canadian Giving Challenge

Canada Helps- an umbrella charity dedicated to increasing charitable giving across Canada by centralizing giving on a user-friendly website for charities and donors - developed the Great Canadian Giving Challenge to increase charitable giving at a time of year when donations typically are lower. Canada Helps offers resources and incentives for its member charities to develop and monitor its Challenge campaign, which extends the entire month of June. Through the Great Canadian Giving Challenge, PIBO raised over \$5000.00 from a dozen donors.

Giving Tuesday

Giving Tuesday is a global movement - the world's largest generosity movement developed on the principle that "Everyone has something to give and every act of generosity counts." On November 28, 2023, Canadians raised 13 million dollars to support 9,599 charities in 24 hours!

For Giving Tuesday, PIBO raised more than \$3,000.00

New PIBO Bird Centre

In March 2023, the Pelee Island Bird Observatory purchased The Bike Shop on Pelee Island. Formerly the LCBO, then a bicycle and gear retail outlet, the building is located on West Shore Road, a quick left turn off the ferry dock. From these humble beginnings will rise the new PIBO Bird Centre, a two-million-dollar renovation project designed by Douglas Design Studio to include accommodation for PIBO research staff plus a suite for visiting researchers; a bird-book library and exhibition area; a lecture hall for talks and workshops by distinguished visitors; plus an outdoor pavilion for events, pollinator gardens and more.



Acknowledgments

The Pelee Island Bird Observatory depends on the generous support of the many organizations and individuals who all contributed to the success of PIBO's operations in 2023. This help comes in many forms, ranging from grants from major charitable foundations and government to donations from the public, sewing bird bags, and organizing events. PIBO is grateful for the collective effort of so many people, their support for our work, and the vote of confidence it provides us. Thank you to everyone who donated, volunteered, shared our posts, attended our events, liked our pages, and followed us throughout the year.

Individual Donors:

1845039 Ontario Inc	Cedar Bradley Swan	David Cole
Adrienne Offman	Charlie Foran	David Dawson
Aidan Maybank	Charlotte Gray	David Kraus
Aileen Stewart	Cherilyn Carman	David Staines
Alan Jette	Cheryle Leechman	David Trowbridge
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Kathryn Tiessen	Merilyn Simonds	Royal Canadian Geographical Society
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Travelian Bird Tours

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Vortex Canada

Wayne Grady

2023 Not-a-Garden Party

Charlie Pachter

Graeme Gibson estate

Keith Lem

Margaret Atwood

Matthew Gibson

Thank You

To conclude this year's annual report, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to every member of our incredible team. To our dedicated staff who conduct avian migration monitoring, your meticulous observations and deep expertise are vital in advancing our understanding of migratory birds and ensuring their preservation. Your work enriches our scientific knowledge and helps protect critical ecosystems.

To our team members focused on education and outreach, your efforts to engage with the community, raise awareness, and foster a deeper connection to our cause are invaluable. Your enthusiasm and creativity in delivering impactful programs and educational initiatives make a lasting difference and inspire others to join our mission.

To our board of directors, volunteers, and executive director, your collective commitment, tireless work, and innovative spirit have been the backbone of our success. Your passion and professionalism drive us forward and inspire us every day.

Research/Migration Monitoring:

Sumiko Onishi, Field Supervisor/Bander in Charge

Gill Holmes, Fall Asssistant Bander

Danielle Lacasse, Spring Assistant Bander

Rob Tymstra, Census Taker

Martha Cruz, International Intern

David Aitken, International volunteer

Patricia Rokitnicki, Graduate Student

Avery Hewson-Dunbar, Summer Student

Ashley Wilkes, Volunteer



Graeme Gibson, Volunteer

John and Hanne Hettinga, Volunteers

Education/Outreach:

Davina Sanjgly, Bird Friendly Windsor Education Coordinator

Rahi Ahmed, Campus Coordinator

The Sanjglys, Volunteers

Jeff Hasulo, Volunteer

Board of Directors:

Margaret Atwood

Matthew Gibson

Merilyn Simonds

Deborah Egan

David Young

Wayne Grady

Ian Davidson

John Gruetzner

Administration:

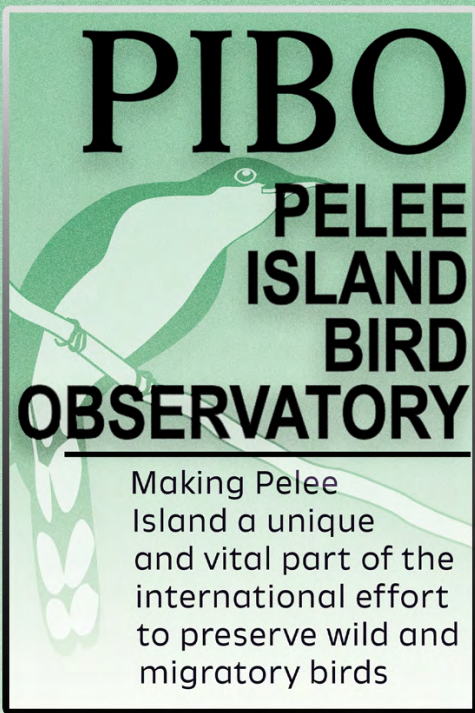
Suzanne Friemann, Executive Director

Your Role in our Success

As we reflect on the successes and milestones of this past year, we are reminded of the vital role that donations play in driving our mission forward. Your generosity allows us to continue our critical work, from advancing avian migration research to enhancing community education and outreach programs. Every contribution, whether large or small, profoundly impacts our ability to achieve our goals and make a tangible difference. Your support ensures that we can continue to innovate, educate, and protect what we cherish. Thank you for your commitment and for being integral to our journey. To donate, please visit <https://pibo.ca/en/ways-to-donate/>

To become a member in our new annual membership program launched in 2024, Birds of a Feather, please visit <https://pibo.ca/en/birds-of-a-feather/>





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