

**September 2023**  
**Summary Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO)**  
**By Martha Beatriz Ramírez Cruz**



Black-throated blue warbler, male. Photo by Martha Cruz.

### **Experience on the Island**

It all started in San Miguel de Allende, México. This place allowed me to meet Marilyn Simonds and Wayne Grady. In February of this year, they told me about PIBO and the Prismáticos Project where they distribute binoculars to schools or conservation groups in the state of Guanajuato and this integrate society into birding, as many of Ontario's birds spend the winter in Mexico (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. North America map, the red spot indicate to Pelee Island, Ontario, Canada and San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. By: Google images.

In May 2 was the interview, there where questions about the birds species and the bird banding and lastly, they commented on specifics about the island in order to arrive in August.

On August 19 I arrived in Toronto, Canada and in the afternoon I arrived on Pelee Island. August 21, work began at the banding station and the census.

## Banding station

The first week I started field work with Sumiko, field supervisor and bander in charge, in addition two student volunteers, Avery and Ashley. It was a week with many birds observed, captured and banded, of course. The last two weeks of August and the first week of September the bird activity has increased, especially migratory birds. We banded 158 individuals in one day; in general the most representative species during these days were: Swainson's thrush, Grey-cheeked thrush, Veery, Wood thrush, Ovenbird, Magnolia warbler, Black-throated blue warbler, Black-and-white warbler, American redstart, to mention a few (Fig. 2).

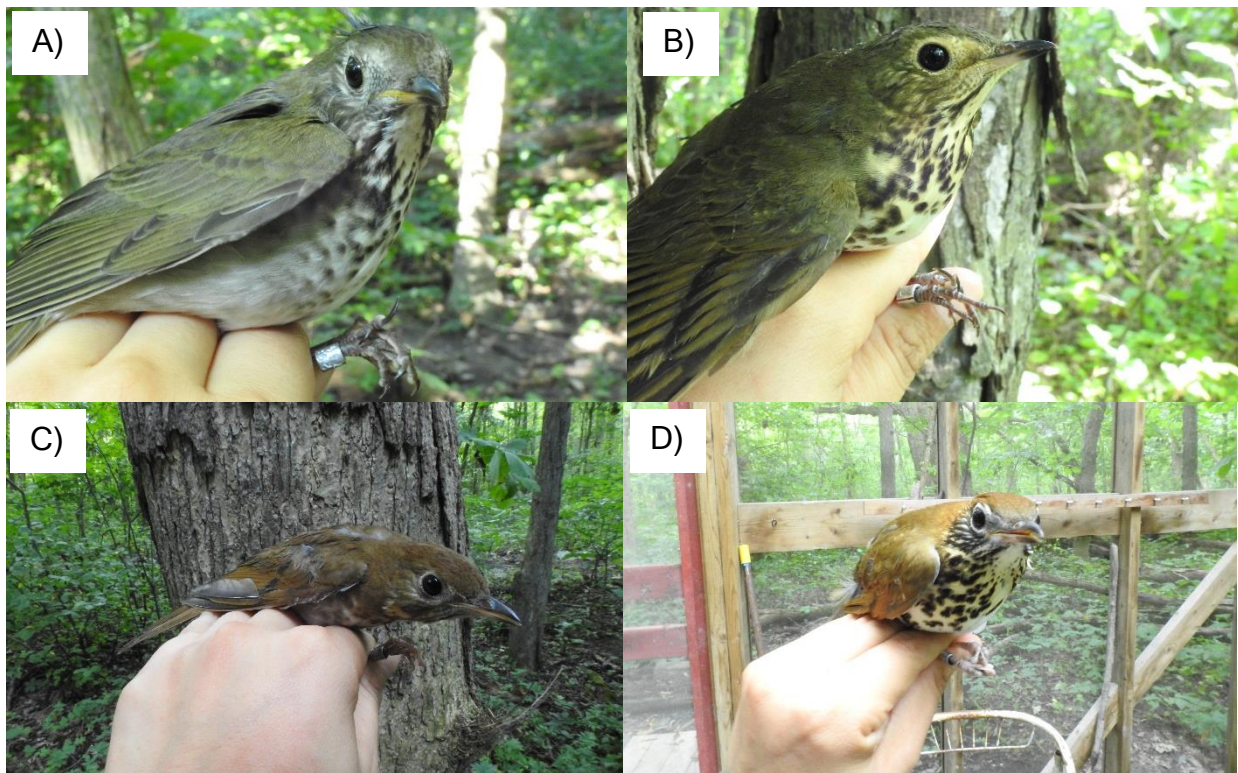


Fig. 2. Some species of banded Thrushes. A) Grey-cheeked thrush. B) Swainson's thrush. C) Veery. D) Wood thrush. Photos by: Martha Cruz.

At the banding station, data were collected for each bird captured (Fig. 3.); such as: fat, wing size, skull ossification, shape and coloration of wing and tail feathers, the last two data determining if it was a juvenile or an adult (Fig. 4); in addition to reviewing Peter Pyle literatura in order to confirm.



Fig. 3. Into the forest: banding station and tools to take measurements of the birds. Photos by: Martha Cruz.

The mist-nets are usually opened at 6:30 am and closed at 12:30 pm. During this time, they are checked every 30 minutes and it's verified if there or not there are birds. There are 10 nets in total, the first five are closet of the banding station and the other five are around 50 meters.



Fig. 4. Left: Sumiko checking the skull of a bird. Right: checking the Yellow-shafted northern flicker wing, juvenile male. Photos by: Martha Cruz.

The place is full of mud, poison ivy, trees of different species, of course maple tree, flowers and mosquitoes everywhere. And I think about the biological importance of the place for birds, they have a lot of food and shelter, in addition to being a geographically important point for migration: the Mississippi flyway and the Atlantic flyway.

## Census

Every morning the birdwatching begins at the Fish Point Nature Reserve a few minutes after sunrise, around 7:50 am. It has a duration of 90 minutes, making stops approximately every 30 minutes at the three different spots: marsh, forest and shore (Fig. 5).

Birds seen and heard are recorded, as well as weather data (temperature, visibility, wind direction and cloud cover). Monarch butterflies and dragonflies are also logged in the census, these insects are also migratory species (Fig. 6).



Fig. 5. Sumiko and Ashley, birdwatching. Photo by: Martha Cruz.



Fig. 6. On the shore a monarch butterfly landed on Gill's shoulder. Photo by: Martha Cruz.

Beginning the hike, the first songs are usually Eastern Wood-pewee, Northern flicker, Northern cardinal, Black-capped chickadee or American crow, to mention a few. On the marsh often saw a Green heron, Great blue heron, Great egret, Wood duck, Belted kingfisher, Mallard, Common Grackles or Sharp-shinned hawk. At the forest the *chip-chip-chip-chip* sound of the Warblers can be heard: Cape may warbler, Magnolia warbler, Black and-white warbler, Yellow-rumped warbler, Bay-breasted warbler or Wilson's warbler, in addition Baltimore oriole, Thrushes, Cedar waxwing, Woodpeckers, etc. And on the shore,

specifically on the spit there are many Gulls: Ring-billed gull, Herring gull, Great black-backed gull or Bonaparte's gull, American white pelican, Canada goose, Double-crested cormorant and Shorebirds can be observed too. It was amazing to see close a Bald eagle soaring, I always wanted to be able observe it in the wild (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Some birds from the Census. A) Great egret. B) Green heron. C) Sharp-shinned hawk. D) Bay-breasted warbler. E) Baltimore oriole. F) Red-headed woodpecker. G) Bonaparte's gull. H) Bald eagle. Photos by: Martha Cruz.

## Species in the Island and species between Canada and Mexico

In general, a list of birds between Mexico and Canada is added. The birds observed among in the census, the banding station as well, as in different sites on the Pelee Island were taken into account.

In total, 107 species of birds are observed (Below: Appendix A), of which 97 species are related to Mexico, since they spend the winter in Mexico usually. The most representative species are the Warblers with 23 species, followed of the Thrushes with four species.

Only 10 species live in North America, of course, Canada East (Below: Appendix A). In the case of Woodpeckers, of the six species that exist, five inhabit North America (Fig. 8).

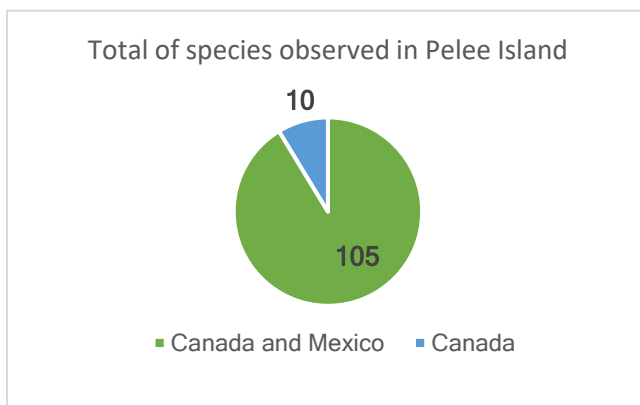


Fig. 8. Graph with the total number of species among both countries.

An interesting observation was to see the coloration changes of the wings and tail between the subspecies of Northern flicker yellow-shaften (found in Eastern and northern North America) and Northern flicker red-shaften of the wings and tail (found in western North America as south Oaxaca, Mexico) (Fig. 9).

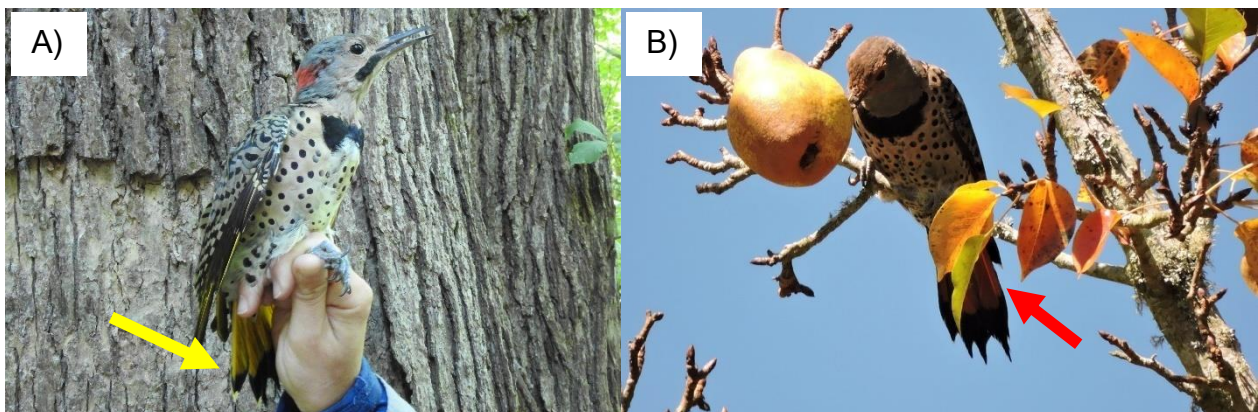


Fig 9. Subspecies of Northern flicker. A) Northern flicker yellow-shaften at the banding station in Pelee Island, Ontario, Canada. B) Northern flicker red-shaften eating pear at the forest in Puebla, Mexico. Photos by Martha Cruz.

## By way of narrative:

Spent time at the banding station it was important to reinforce knowledge about bird banding. Sumiko Onishi is a great instructor. It's impressive the skills and she sure to make extraction and data collection efficient. In addition, the assistant field biologist, Gill Holmes, and volunteers: Avery Hewson-Dunbar, Ashley Wilkes and Alexander Campbell, it have been a fundamental part of learning from them and together (Fig. 10).

We had the opportunity to meet a Graeme and Rob, there are involved in the care, research and counting birds. Moreover, we were able to attend a series of talks about the Island biodiversity; Sumiko and Graeme talked about Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO), the migration and the banding station.



Fig.10. Working at the banding station. A) Leg measurement. B) Bird manipulation. C) Checking the skull ossification. Photo by: Martha Cruz (A-B) and Sumiko Onishi (C).

In a personal way, I have learned a lot about banding and Island species. Among the nerves and the excitement of being in another country, as a biologist, I couldn't believe it. These six weeks I'm grateful to have been in Pelee Island (Fig. 11) and to witness only a small part of two great migratory routes: the Mississippi flyway and the Atlantic flyway. It's exciting to see some of birds that spent to Winter in Mexico. For now, I would like to continue learning and sharing about birds in Mexico or wherever life leads me.

Thank you PIBO and to all your staff.

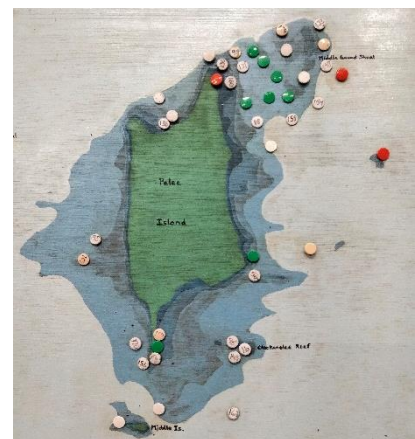


Fig. 11. Pelee Island drawing. Photo by: Martha Cruz.

## Appendix A.

Total number of species observed in Pelee Island and presence in Mexico. The blue color are marked the species that are found in Canada.

#	English names	Spanish names	Scientific name	Presence in Mexico
1	Canada Goose	Ganso canadiense mayor	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	yes
2	Mallard	Pato de collar	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	yes
3	Wood Duck	Pato arcoíris	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	yes
4	Blue-winged Teal	Cerceta alas azules	<i>Spatula discors</i>	yes
5	Green-winged Teal	Cerceta alas verdes	<i>Anas crecca</i>	yes
6	Double-crested Cormorant	Cormorán orejón	<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>	yes
7	Pied-billed Grebe	Zambullidor pico grueso	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	yes
8	American White Pelican	Pelícano blanco americano	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	yes
9	Ring-billed Gull	Gaviota pico anillado	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	yes
10	Herring Gull	Gaviota plateada	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	yes
11	Great Black-backed Gull	Gaviota mayor	<i>Larus marinus</i>	no
12	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Gaviota sombría	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	yes
13	Bonaparte's Gull	Gaviota de Bonaparte	<i>Chroicocephalus philadelphia</i>	yes
14	Caspian Tern	Charrán del caspio	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	yes
15	Sanderling	Playero blanco	<i>Calidris alba</i>	yes
16	Semipalmated Plover	Chorlo semipalmado	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	yes
17	Baird's Sandpiper	Playero de Baird	<i>Calidris bairdii</i>	yes
18	Killdeer	Chorlo tildío	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	yes
19	Spotted Sandpiper	Playero alzacolita	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	yes
20	Greater Yellowlegs	Patamarilla mayor	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	yes
21	American Woodcock	Choca del Este	<i>Scolopax minor</i>	yes
22	Green Heron	Garcita verde	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	yes
23	Great Blue Heron	Garza morena	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	yes
24	Great Egret	Garza blanca	<i>Ardea alba</i>	yes
25	Wild Turkey	Guajolote norteño	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	yes
26	Mourning Dove	Huilota común	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	yes
27	Turkey Vulture	Zopilote aura	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	yes
28	Osprey	Águila pescadora	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	yes
29	Northern Harrier	Gavilán rastrero	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>	yes
30	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Gavilán pecho canela	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	yes
31	Cooper's Hawk	Gavilán de Cooper	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	yes
32	Bald Eagle	Águila cabeza blanca	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	yes
33	Merlin	Halcón esmerejón	<i>Falco columbaris</i>	yes
34	American Kestrel	Cernícalo Americano	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	yes
35	Great Horned Owl	Búho cornudo	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	yes



36	Eastern Screech-Owl	Tecolote del este	<i>Megascops asio</i>	yes
37	Common Nighthawk	Chotacabras zumbón	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>	yes
38	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Colibrí garganta rubí	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>	yes
39	Purple Martin	Golondrina azulnegra	<i>Progne subis</i>	yes
40	Bank Swallow	Golondrina ribereña	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	yes
41	Barn Swallow	Golondrina tijereta	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	yes
42	Tree Swallow	Golondrina bicolor	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	yes
43	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Cuclillo pico amarillo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	yes
44	Belted Kingfisher	Martín pescador norteño	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	yes
45	Downy Woodpecker	Carpintero albinegro menor	<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>	no
46	Hairy Woodpecker	Carpintero albinegro mayor	<i>Dryobates villosus</i>	yes
47	Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted)	Carpintero de pechera común	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	no
48	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Carpintero de Carolina	<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	no
49	Red-headed Woodpecker	Carpintero cabecirrojo	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>	no
50	Blue Jay	Chara azul	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	no
51	American Crow	Cuervo norteamericano	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	yes
52	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Papamoscas del este	<i>Contopus virens</i>	yes
53	Eastern Kingbird	Tirano dorso negro	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>	yes
54	Least Flycatcher	Papamoscas chico	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	yes
55	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Papamoscas vientre amarillo	<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>	yes
56	Eastern Phoebe	Papamoscas fibí	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	yes
57	Great Crested Flycatcher	Papamoscas viajero	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	yes
58	Gray Catbird	Mauñador gris	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	yes
59	Veery	Zorzal canelo	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>	yes
60	Swainson's Thrush	Zorzal de anteojos	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>	yes
61	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Zorzal cara gris	<i>Catharus minimus</i>	yes
62	Hermit Thrush	Zorzal cola canela	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	yes
63	Wood Thrush	Zorzal moteado americano	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	yes
64	American Robin	Mirlo primavera	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	yes
65	Cedar Waxwing	Chinito	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	yes
66	Black-capped Chickadee	Carbonero cabecinegro	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	no
67	White-breasted Nuthatch	Bajapalos pecho blanco	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	yes
68	Brown Creeper	Trepadorcito americano	<i>Certhia americana</i>	yes
69	House Wren	Saltapared común	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	yes
70	Carolina Wren	Saltapared de Carolina	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	yes
71	Winter Wren	Saltapared cholino del este	<i>Troglodytes hiemalis</i>	no
72	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Perlita gris	<i>Poliptila caerulea</i>	yes
73	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Reyezuelo matraquita	<i>Corthylio calendula</i>	yes
74	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Reyezuelo corona amarilla	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>	yes

75	Philadelphia Vireo	Vireo de philadelphicus	<i>Vireo philadelphicus</i>	yes
76	Warbling Vireo	Vireo gorjeador	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	yes
77	Red-eyed Vireo	Vireo ojos rojos	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	yes
78	Ovenbird	Chipe suelero	<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>	yes
79	Northern Waterthrush	Chipe charquero	<i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>	yes
80	Brewster's Warbler	Chipe alas amarillas	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera x cyanoptera</i>	yes
81	Black-and-white Warbler	Chipe trepador	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	yes
82	Tennessee Warbler	Chipe peregrino	<i>Leiothlypis peregrina</i>	yes
83	Nashville Warbler	Chipe cabeza gris	<i>Leiothlypis ruficapilla</i>	yes
84	Mourning Warbler	Chipe de percha	<i>Geothlypis philadelphia</i>	yes
85	Common Yellowthroat	Mascarita común	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	yes
86	Northern Parula	Chipe pecho manchado	<i>Setophaga americana</i>	yes
87	Blackpoll Warbler	Chipe cabeza negra	<i>Setophaga striata</i>	yes
88	Cape May Warbler	Chipe atigrado	<i>Setophaga tigrina</i>	yes
89	Magnolia Warbler	Chipe de magnolias	<i>Setophaga magnolia</i>	yes
90	Bay-breasted Warbler	Chipe castaño	<i>Setophaga castanea</i>	no
91	Blackburnian Warbler	Chipe garganta naranja	<i>Setophaga fusca</i>	yes
92	Yellow Warbler	Chipe amarillo	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>	yes
93	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Chipe rabadilla amarilla	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	yes
94	Hooded Warbler	Chipe encapuchado	<i>Setophaga citrina</i>	yes
95	American Redstart	Pavito migratorio	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	yes
96	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Chipe flancos castaños	<i>Setophaga pensylvanica</i>	yes
97	Black-throated Blue Warbler	Chipe azulnegro	<i>Setophaga caerulescens</i>	yes
98	Black-throated Green Warbler	Chipe dorso verde	<i>Setophaga virens</i>	yes
99	Canada Warbler	Chipe de collar	<i>Cardellina canadensis</i>	yes
100	Wilson's Warbler	Chipe corona negra	<i>Cardellina pusilla</i>	yes
101	Savannah Sparrow	Gorrión sabanero	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	yes
102	White-throated Sparrow	Gorrión garganta blanca	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	yes
103	Chipping Sparrow	Gorrión cejas blancas	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	yes
104	House Sparrow	Gorrión doméstico	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	yes
105	American Goldfinch	Jilguero canario	<i>Spinus tristis</i>	yes
106	Scarlet Tanager	Piranga escarlata	<i>Piranga olivacea</i>	yes
107	Northern Cardinal	Cardenal rojo	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	yes
108	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Picogordo degollado	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	yes
109	Indigo Bunting	Colorín azul	<i>Passerina cynea</i>	yes
110	Bobolink	Tordo arrocero	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	yes
111	Baltimore Oriole	Calandria de baltimore	<i>Icterus galbula</i>	yes
112	Red-winged Blackbird	Tordo sargento	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	yes
113	Brown-headed Cowbird	Tordo cabeza café	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	yes
114	Common Grackle	Zanate norteo	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>	no
115	European Starling	Estornino pinto	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	yes

<b>Canada and Mexico</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>10</b>