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Spring 2008

IPBO Newsletter

Innis Point Bird Observatory

News and Announcements

Upcoming Training Sessions

Training sessions for all interested volunteers will be held this spring. All volunteers who have never participated in SMMP are strongly encouraged to participate in at least one day of training. Training will focus on SMMP protocol and methods for newcomers, as well as extraction and identification, and scribing. Sessions will be held in April: Saturday 14th, Sunday 15th, Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd. Please note that training will begin at 8am. To sign up



Photo: Kerry McGuire

2008 IPBO Baillie Birdathon

This year the Innis Point Birdathon is our fourth year holding this fundraising event. It follows on a very successful Birdathon last year, in which we had record numbers of participants and a record total dollars raised. How about a day of birding to help make this year even better? Support the next ten years of Spring Migration Monitoring! This year we are proud to announce Tony Beck, renowned birder and photographer, as our Featured Birdathoner!

(See page 3 for more details)

please contact Celia Bodnar at bodnarm@magma.ca.

Spring Migration Monitoring Program

The program will be running daily from April 24th to June 7th. This intensive program involves not only banding, but also a daily one-hour census, general observations and counts. Ideally, we need 4-5 volunteers daily. We have an excited and experienced BIC this spring coming all the way from Britain. Please contact Celia Bodnar at bodnarm@magma.ca to schedule your days to help out at Innis Point this spring.

2008 Baillie Birdathon

The Innis Point Baillie Birdathon will be running for its third year this spring. Last year the IPBO Baillie Birdathon participants raised over \$3000 for its operations!



Photo: Suzanne Deschenes

Some of you may be wondering, just how exactly does this Birdathon thing work? The basic premise is that the participants gather sponsors, who pledge a certain amount per bird species seen during a single day (technically, any contiguous 24-hour period). The "Birdathoner" then goes out into the field on the chosen day (any

time in May) and counts birds. The participant then reports back to the sponsors the number of species, collects his or her pledges, and then forwards the proceeds to BSC. The Baillie Birdathon coordinator then takes care of the distribution of charitable receipts to the sponsors.

Different Ways to Support IPBO through the Baillie Birdathon

There are two ways that you can participate in the Baillie Birdathon to help support IPBO:

Sponsor our Celebrity Birder:

This year we are very lucky to have well-known naturalist and photographer, Tony Beck, as our celebrity birder to help raise funds for IPBO. Tony will be undertaking his Birdathon in late May, at a time when most breeding birds are back on their territories but while some migrants are still moving through. Even if you're not able to do your own Birdathon, we strongly encourage you to support IPBO by sponsoring Tony's Birdathon.

Do your own Birdathon to Support IPBO:

We love to have you do your

own Birdathon. The only restrictions are that it has to take place within a 24 hour period in the month of May, but it can be anywhere in the world. You can be a novice birder, or an expert or anywhere in between; the number of birds you count doesn't really matter, it's the fun you have and the support you garner for Innis Point.



Photo: Courtesy of Tony Beck

How Can I Participate in the IPBO Baillie Birdathon?

Information and registration packages explaining how to participate in the IPBO Baillie Birdathon have been sent out in the mail to all recent IPBO members. Packages are also available at the banding station at Innis Point. If you would like to receive a package, or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact David Britton at brittondavid@hotmail.com.

2007 MAPS Program: A summary

by Martha Caskey

In August 2007, IPBO completed its sixteenth annual season of participation in the MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) program. This program is coordinated by the Institute for Bird Populations based in Point Reyes, California. It started in 1989 and now includes about 500 stations across North America. Innis Point was one of the very first stations.

At Innis Point's latitude, the MAPS season is divided into 7 10-day periods starting in early June. There is one banding day in each of the 10-day periods, for a total of 7 banding days until the end of the breeding season in early August. Banding sessions are normally scheduled on Sundays and each banding session lasts 6 hours, from 5:50am to noon.

The MAPS plot is situated about halfway between the gate and the point at Innis Point. It consists of 10 nets located in the woods and meadows and includes a large segment of Egret Pond, a large marsh containing an active Osprey platform and lots of Wood Duck

boxes.

This year, we had 134 captures of 33 species. This was the highest number of both individuals and species since I became MAPS project leader in 2002. The higher number of individuals largely stemmed from the relocation of one of the nets this year from an almost completely unproductive

location in deep woods to a very productive location in a more open meadow. The large number of species is probably luck as many species that are captured infrequently were captured this year. We had the first Magnolia Warbler since 1997, the first Chipping Sparrow since 2000 and the first Veery since 2002. The table below shows the species and

numbers of birds captured this year and in 2006 for comparison. We had some suggestions from banding that some species might be breeding at Innis Point but not enough evidence to be conclusive. Next year if crew size permits, I would like to put more emphasis on observations which may

permit us to confirm more breeding birds. For 2008, I would like to designate 5 species of special interest: Veery, Hermit Thrush, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and American Redstart. This year we had suggestions, but not conclusions, that these species breed at Innis Point.



Photo: Eve Ticknor

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One of the most interesting things in MAPS is the recapture of birds banded in previous years. This site fidelity is a strong indication of breeding activity. This year, 14 birds returned from previous years. The oldest was a White-throated Sparrow first banded in 2002 and returning every year since. Runners-up were a Black-capped Chickadee and a

Yellow Warbler banded in 2003. Other species returning included Blue Jay and American Robin.

This year, we observed 74 species. This included our resident Osprey at Egret Pond who successfully fledged 3 chicks this year. Wild Turkey are increasingly present.

We closed the year with a net taking down session and pot

luck picnic on the shores of Egret Pond on the August 11. We also completed our trail system so we now have a trail completely around the periphery of the MAPS plot. This should help our observations next year.

So that's it until net setup next May.

Special thanks are due to Regie Alam, Peter Browne, Barbara

Campbell, June Campbell, Sarah Campbell, Barbara Chouinard, Jeanne Currie, Norbert Cyr, Marc d'Aoust, Louise Gancz, Ann Gibson, Marc Levesque, Dani MacDonald, Larry Newman, Heather Pickard, Bill Petrie, Doug Spry and Eve Ticknor for all their kind assistance and enthusiastic participation.

2007 SMMP highlights
by Celia Bodnar

It's been a long many months since SMMP 2007 wrapped up last June, but hopefully a brief description of some of the interesting highlights here will be a warm reminder that spring is just around the corner.

The season finished off as pretty average, as far as numbers go, with a few interesting rarities and first-ers to make for an exciting time. The total number of birds banded was 887. This

total is somewhat lower than expected. A lack of experienced volunteers meant some days not all nets were able to be open for the full daily 6 hours, reducing capture especially at potentially peak times such as during census hour. Also, however, an almost complete lack of Black-capped Chickadees (only 14 banded) in that total will surprise some long-time volunteers (especially any present during the boom 2002 SMMP) and helps to account for the low total. The daily high total banded was also lower than normal (57 birds), potentially for the same reasons. There just were not any particularly



Photo: Kerry McGuire

notable "fall-out" days for any of the species that tend to each year on one or more occasion (e.g. Cedar Waxwings, Ruby-crowned Kinglets). Table 1 presents the top ten species and the number of each banded this year, as well as their rank last year. There are no real surprises other than the absence of Chickadees, but it is interesting to note that there are 4 warbler species in the top ten this year.

The high total EDT day saw 65



Photo: Kerry McGuire

different species during the count period. Each day seemed to provide something interesting amongst the species banded, censused and observed. On the banding end, there were four most exciting captures: definitely first is the Blue-winged Warbler (only the second observed at IPBO and a rare bird in this part of Ontario), which was captured twice, several days apart; the Acadian Flycatcher, also a very rare bird in this part of the province and only the third record (all banding records) of this species at IPBO; the Short-billed Dowitchers (also the first banded at IBPO, and amongst a handful of previous sightings as it is a very rare migrant); and the Cooper's Hawk, another rare migrant banded only twice

previously. One other interesting bird for the spring was a Bay-breasted Warbler, a species that in many years not recorded in spring, although they are captured not uncommonly as fall migrants.

A very exciting bird that was not captured, but observed, was the American White Pelican that flew upriver in June. This was a new addition to the IPBO Checklist.

With all those exciting captures, the lower numbers were not able to dampen spirits, nor was the weather, which was generally better than average, with not too many rained out days. This coming spring, however, is promising if not to be rainy, then at least to be quite

wet underfoot. Perhaps we'll see some of our first banding records for some more interesting shorebirds and even a few waterfowl.....

Thanks again to all the great volunteers and to Kerry McGuire for serving as a most dedicated Bander-in-Charge. This spring we look forward to the arrival a long-distance migrant BIC, Yvonne Benting, who will be coming to band for us all the way from Britain. Maybe even more unusual vagrant species are in the offing for the EDT of SMMP 2008. Please contact me at bodnarm@magma.ca to schedule a day or more volunteering. See you then!



Photo: Kerry McGuire

Table 1. Top ten species banded at IPBO during 2007 SMMP.

Rank	Species	No. banded	2006 Rank
1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	75	2
2	Yellow Warbler	73	3
3	American Robin	47	6
4	American Gold finch	41	-
5	Gray Catbird	38	-
6	Cedar Waxwing	33	4
7	Red-winged Blackbird	32	7
7	American Redstart	32	9
8	Black-and-White Warbler	30	-
9	Baltimore Oriole	28	5