

IPBO

NEWSLETTER

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Ottawa Banding Group Becomes Innis Point Bird Observatory

As the letterhead indicates, the Ottawa Banding Group has changed its name to the Innis Point Bird Observatory. After 15 years as the OBG, we think that the new name better reflects the focus of our work. When the OBG was founded in 1982, it brought together a group of banders in the National Capital Area who were involved in a range of banding projects at a number of different sites. Establishing the bird observatory at Innis Point was one of the OBG's first initiatives. Over the past decade, an increasing majority of the group's time and resources has been directed to Innis Point. Furthermore, work at Innis Point has always involved bird censusing as well as banding. Forest Bird Monitoring, MAPS censusing and Estimated Daily Totals have been added to the Breeding Bird Census which has been run from year one. We look forward to many years of future bird banding and censusing at Innis Point as IPBO.

Janette Dean

This is our first newsletter on Innis Point activities since the passing of Janette Dean. Janette was a key figure in setting up the bird observatory at Innis Point, and, as the primary permit holder for the Ottawa Banding Group, was heavily involved in building up and promoting the organization from the very beginning. She was the first point of contact for scores of visitors to Innis Point, as

well as our main spokesperson and liaison with bird banders elsewhere. A teacher by profession, she was a natural at training banders, and was mainly responsible for encouraging the development of the majority of banders who have learned the trade at Innis Point over the years.



As well as a very active bander, Janette was deeply interested in other aspects of natural history, especially geology, in Canada and elsewhere. Her daughters, Joanne (Dewey) of Picton, Ontario and Tracey of St. Andrews, New Brunswick, are also experienced naturalists who have made important contributions to the study of birds at Innis Point. Together, they established and led a study (1989-1994) which monitored wintering neotropical migrants on Andros Island in the Bahamas.

Janette Dean died on May 6, 1993, after a brief illness, at age 60. We still miss Janette's enthusiasm and experience, but

the project she helped launch 15 years ago continues to thrive today.

IPBO Plans Spring Migration Monitoring Program in 1997

The Innis Point Bird Observatory is actively planning to run a migration monitoring program in the spring of 1997. Work is currently underway to field-test proposed procedures, and to line up persons who might be interested in helping out with this initiative. This monitoring program, which would collect data by following highly standardized banding and censusing procedures, would be run on a daily basis over a period of about 30 days starting in late April or early May. To produce useful data, we would plan to run the program for a minimum of five years, but probably indefinitely.

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The purpose of the migration monitoring program would be to obtain data on birds, particularly neotropical migrant species, in a way that would more effectively contribute to continent-wide efforts to monitor populations of these species. Improved knowledge of population trends will help channel conservation efforts to the areas where they are most needed. Last year, over a dozen "intensive" migration monitoring stations operated in Canada (see Table 1) on either a permanent or pilot project basis. We propose to join this network for 1997.

To ensure that our procedures are sound, so that valid population trends can eventually be derived from our work, we will have them reviewed and approved by experts in migration monitoring before

the Innis Point program is launched. As with other cooperative programs in which we participate such as "MAPS", the subsequent data analysis will also be carried out by experts.

Among the priority species we particularly want to monitor are Magnolia, Tennessee, Bay-breasted, Wilson's, Palm and Cape May Warblers, Northern Waterthrush, Philadelphia Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, White-throated Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Least, Yellow-bellied and "Traill's" Flycatcher. However, we will be collecting data on all species detected by the program.

Here are several of the key features of the program, based on current plans. It would run each morning for about 30 days starting around May 1. There would

TABLE 1. Stations Actively Participating in the Development of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, 1995^a

<i>Province</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Number of Years</i>
British Columbia	Triangle Island	2nd, pilot project
	Rocky Point	2nd, pilot project
	Sea Island	1st, pilot project
	Mackenzie	2nd, pilot project
	Vaseux Lake	2nd, pilot project
Alberta	Lesser Slave Lake	2nd
	Beaverhill Lake	10+
	Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary	1st, pilot project
Saskatchewan	Last Mountain Lake	6th
Manitoba	Delta	4th
Michigan, USA	Whitefish Point	5th
	Vermilion	3rd
Ontario	Thunder Cape	5th
	Long Point	35th
	Prince Edward Point	1st, pilot project
Quebec	Tadoussac	1st, pilot project
New Brunswick	Kent Island	1st, pilot project
Nova Scotia	Bon Portage Island	1st, pilot project
	Seal Island	1st, pilot project
	Brier Island	1st, pilot project

a. Adapted from "Towards a Migration Monitoring Network" in Birdwatch Canada, Summer 1996, published by Bird Studies Canada.

be about 6 hours of banding, starting around dawn, at a standard group of net lines. At present, we are planning to use the Point-Waterthrush-Shore-Road-South-Middle-Swamp and Swamp East net lines. A census route would be surveyed for one hour to provide additional information on birds moving through the study area. Finally, all observations of birds during the six-hour period would be assessed to arrive at an estimated Innis Point total for the day.

Several options for staffing this program are being considered to ensure that we have daily weekday coverage without over-stretching either our volunteer or our meagre financial resources. We are designing the "protocol" so that, when necessary, it can be run by 3 persons, one of whom would be a licensed bander. In future years, we hope to be able to train sufficient licensed volunteer banders to cover the whole period. For 1997, it will likely be necessary to provide some compensation to a licensed bander for those weekdays when a volunteer bander-in-charge is not available.

We are currently analyzing data from our 15 years of banding experience at Innis Point to fine-tune our choice of the best net locations and the best range of dates for monitoring the maximum numbers and variety of neotropical migrants. This will help us to ensure that we obtain sufficient data on target species in the most efficient manner possible.

IPBO directors gave preliminary approval to the migration monitoring initiative in August. Final approval for running the program next spring is dependent on a satisfactory field test of procedures this fall, and on lining up sufficient volunteer resources to make the day-to-day operation of the project feasible. Because the majority of our members are working elsewhere from Monday to Friday, we particularly need additional assistance during weekdays in May. Individuals with banding experience, or who are birders of average competence or better, are invited to help out with this project.

Over the winter, we will be further analyzing existing data, reviewing what we've learned from this fall's field test, and preparing a detailed written protocol to guide our staff. Directors will evaluate progress on all fronts before next March when a final decision on whether to proceed will be taken.

If you think you might be interested in helping with this project, or for further information, contact Bill Murphy at (613) 996-6783 or (613) 233-6527, or Bill Petrie at (613) 820-8434. A more detailed description of the project proposal is available by calling the phone numbers above, or by writing to the IPBO address on page 2 of this newsletter.

Recent Foreign Recoveries

A number of the interesting foreign recoveries reported to us since our last newsletter are shown in Table 2.

The Cedar Waxwing recovered in Georgia is our most distant of the five re-encounters we have for this species. Although this species is the 8th most often banded species at Innis Point, fewer than one per cent of our waxwings are captured as late as October. But this individual, found at the experimental N2 net line on October 9, had not been long out of the nest as it was noted as in "very fresh" juvenal plumage. Our other waxwing recoveries help to illustrate how much this species wanders between breeding seasons. One hatch-year waxwing banded at Innis Point on August 28, 1982 was presumably breeding in Ohio when found there next July 31. An adult banded at Intersect on June 2, 1985 was at another Ohio location on Sept. 10 of the following year. And a hatch-year waxwing banded at Ottumwa, Iowa on October 2, 1986 reversed that pattern and came northeast to be found at Intersect on June 13, 1987.

Tree Swallows have a relatively high rate of recovery mainly because they commonly nest around human habitations or in nest boxes provided for them. Five of the eight recoveries reported here were



Cedar Waxwing

birds banded as nestlings. Two of the nestlings, plus another hatch-year bird which had already fledged when banded, were recovered the next spring at Ottawa Duck Club nest boxes, only 3 or 4 kilometers from Innis Point. These individuals completed one migration successfully but succumbed, as Tree Swallows frequently do, to cold or wet conditions in early spring.

The four Tree Swallow nestlings banded at the Duck Club which we have recovered at Innis Point were more fortunate: all were thriving the next spring. One, a male, was twice captured at Intersect in May in its first spring. The other three are unusual in that they were part of the same brood of five nestlings. These three, which P.J. (Mickey) Narraway banded on June 20, 1992, were each recovered at different Innis Point locations the following year. A male was at Budgie on May 2, 1993; a second male was at nest box A6 on the "Tree Swallow Plot" on June 6, and the third, of unknown sex, was at Point on July 3. This is the more remarkable when we note that, of the 982 nestlings of this species banded at Innis Point over the past decade, we have only one instance where even two from the same brood were encountered in a subsequent year. Of the five nestlings banded at Box G10 on June 13, 1992, one was at Shore on May 1, 1993 and another was found dead at Box J6 on June 6 of that year.

The 4-year old Purple Martin killed at Woodlawn by flying into an unspecified stationary object was only a few kilometers from its birthplace. This nestling was banded after dark on July 1, 1989, as part of an experiment to increase the capture rate of adults with minimal disturbance to the colony. Adults captured at net lines near the Purple Martin colony suggest a fairly high rate of site fidelity between



White-throated Sparrow

years, but only a minority of adults are ever captured in a year. However, nocturnal banding has not significantly increased the rate of capture.

The White-throated Sparrow recaptured and released at Long Point on Lake Erie 10 weeks after banding at Innis Point is our first record of a bird moving between these stations. Our only other distant recovery for White-throats is of an individual at Jefferson, Pennsylvania in October 1984 found at Road South, as a male in breeding condition, in June 1987.

The Eastern Bluebird recovery, our second and most distant one for this species, shows a remarkable consistency in its choice of summer and winter residence: it was banded on Department of National Defence lands at Innis Point and recovered in North Carolina a year later by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers!



Eastern Bluebird

TABLE 2. Recent Foreign Recoveries

Species	Band Number	Age-Sex ^a	Banding Date	Innis Point Location	Bander	Recovery Date	Recovery Location	Direction	Distance (km)	Time (days)
Purple Martin	8001-76026	L-U	1-Jul-89	House 1 #12	Bill Petrie	1-May-93	Woodlawn, Ontario	W	13	1,400
Tree Swallow	2051-94787	L-U	25-Jun-88	Box 24	Janette Dean	18-May-93	Luskville, Quebec	NW	23	1,788
Tree Swallow	2011-86375	L-U	16-Jun-90	Box 21A	Bill Petrie	7-Aug-93	Kemptville, Ontario	SE	45	1,148
Tree Swallow	2011-86389	L-U	30-Jun-90	Box 28	Bill Petrie	30-Apr-94	Gatineau, Quebec	E	26	1,400
Tree Swallow	2031-52266	HY-U	6-Aug-92	Shore	Margo St.-Louis	17-Oct-95	near Budd Lake, New Jersey	SSE	509	1,167
Tree Swallow	2031-52606	HY-U	17-Jul-93	Martin	Bill Murphy	17-May-94	Ottawa Duck Club	SW	3	304
Tree Swallow	2031-52612	HY-U	17-Jul-93	Shore	Bill Murphy	15-May-94	Kanata, Ontario	S	19	302
Tree Swallow	2131-44026	L-U	19-Jun-94	Box 16A	Bill Petrie	25-Apr-95	Ottawa Duck Club	SE	4	310
Tree Swallow	2131-44099	L-U	19-Jun-94	Box 38	Bill Petrie	1-May-95	Ottawa Duck Club	SE	4	316
Blue Jay	922-95314	SY-U	16-May-89	Point	Janette Dean	1-Jun-92	Constance Bay, Ontario	W	13	1,112
Blue Jay	922-95802	HY-U	5-Aug-91	Garden	Bill Murphy	3-Mar-94	Otter Lake, Quebec	NW	68	941
Eastern Bluebird	1501-51831	HY-M	4-Oct-92	Radar	Bill Murphy	14-Dec-93	Falls Lake, North Carolina	SSW	1,065	436
Cedar Waxwing	1461-59915	HY-U	9-Oct-94	N2	Bill Murphy	8-Apr-96	near Baldwin, Georgia	SSW	1,386	547
Yellow Warbler	1850-65436	ASY-M	26-May-90	Intersect	Peter Croal	1-Jun-93	Hawkesbury, Ontario	E	106	1,102
Myrtle Warbler	1950-46895	HY-F	25-Sep-93	Shore	Bill Murphy	7-Jul-94	SW of Montpellier, Que.	NE	64	285
White-thr. Sparrow	1501-51550	HY-U	1-Aug-92	OB	Bill Murphy	12-Oct-92	Long Point Bird Obs., Lake Erie	SW	459	72
Common Grackle	1383-63892	AHY-M	16-May-88	Shore Trap	Chris Ellingwood	9-Sep-93	Kanata, Ontario	S	19	1,942
Baltimore Oriole	8001-76957	SY-M	14-Aug-93	Road South	Martha Caskey	23-May-94	Aylmer, Quebec	N	6	282

a. Age-Sex Codes: L = a nestling; HY = hatch-year; AHY = after hatch-year; SY = second year; ASY = after second year; M = male; F = female; U = unknown

Review of 1995

The 1995 Innis Point banding results reflect a year of further experimentation but reduced overall coverage. The total of 2,195 birds of 89 species banded was the second-lowest since work began at the site in 1982. The 75 days of coverage was down from an average of 100 over the past five years, and was the main factor in a banding total that was 42 per cent below the average of the previous five years, and only 50 per cent of the ten-year average. Nevertheless, the 14-year cumulative banding total rose to 63,299 birds of 137 species.

As usual, Black-capped Chickadees topped the list of birds banded in 1995, with 260, followed by Tree Swallows at 230 (see Table 3). As Table 4 indicates, after 14 years Black-capped Chickadees, with 7,710, are almost twice as often banded as the second most common species, Yellow Warblers. There were no new species recorded in 1995, and for the first time, no species was recorded in record high numbers.

Among the 258 returns recorded in 1995, neotropical migrants included 17 Yellow Warblers, 5 Nashville Warblers, 3 American Redstarts, 3 Ovenbirds, 3 Common Yellowthroats, 3 Northern Orioles, and one each of Black-and-white Warbler, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-eyed Vireo and Veery. Despite relatively low numbers of Snow Buntings captured, there were 8 returns of this species.

In part, the decline in unstandardized coverage in 1995 reflected the priority given to ensuring that standardized programs were maintained, and that the groundwork was laid for additional standardized programs in the future. Thus, the Breeding Bird Census was completed for its 14th year, the Forest Bird Monitoring Program for its 9th year, and the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program for its 4th year. The banding group also devoted increased effort to modifying banding practices in ways which would facilitate some form of migration monitoring in the future. Procedures for estimating

TABLE 3. Total Birds Banded at Innis Point, by Species, 1995

<i>Species</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Total</i>
Northern Harrier	1	Nashville Warbler	15
Killdeer	1	Northern Parula	1
Spotted Sandpiper	8	Yellow Warbler	111
Mourning Dove	1	Chestnut-sided Warbler	2
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	Magnolia Warbler	24
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	3	Cape May Warbler	1
Belted Kingfisher	1	Black-throated Blue Warbler	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler	141
Downy Woodpecker	19	Black-throated Green Warbler	7
Hairy Woodpecker	4	Blackburnian Warbler	1
Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flicker	3	Western Palm Warbler	4
Eastern Wood-Pewee	4	Yellow Palm Warbler	1
Traill's Flycatcher	4	Bay-breasted Warbler	2
Least Flycatcher	9	Blackpoll Warbler	8
Eastern Phoebe	25	Black-and-white Warbler	25
Great Crested Flycatcher	10	American Redstart	37
Eastern Kingbird	3	Ovenbird	25
Purple Martin	101	Northern Waterthrush	8
Tree Swallow	230	Common Yellowthroat	21
Bank Swallow	8	Wilson's Warbler	6
Cliff Swallow	1	Scarlet Tanager	2
Barn Swallow	10	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	7
Blue Jay	22	Indigo Bunting	2
Black-capped Chickadee	260	American Tree Sparrow	23
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Chipping Sparrow	7
White-breasted Nuthatch	3	Field Sparrow	9
Brown Creeper	10	Savannah Sparrow	2
House Wren	6	Fox Sparrow	2
Winter Wren	1	Song Sparrow	67
Golden-crowned Kinglet	11	Lincoln's Sparrow	4
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	30	Swamp Sparrow	19
Eastern Bluebird	37	White-throated Sparrow	74
Veery	9	White-crowned Sparrow	17
Swainson's Thrush	4	Dark-eyed "Slate-colored" Junco	82
Hermit Thrush	5	Snow Bunting	71
American Robin	26	Red-winged Blackbird	92
Gray Catbird	37	Common Grackle	40
Brown Thrasher	6	Brown-headed Cowbird	5
Cedar Waxwing	61	Baltimore Oriole	29
Northern Shrike	1	Purple Finch	59
European Starling	2	House Finch	2
Solitary Vireo	3	Pine Siskin	3
Warbling Vireo	7	American Goldfinch	124
Red-eyed Vireo	16	House Sparrow	1
Tennessee Warbler	3	Total	2,195
Orange-crowned Warbler	1		

daily totals of all birds present were revised and made more rigorous. A potential daily census route was selected and tested a number of times during the fall. Finally, several net lines received reduced coverage in order that other, experimental net locations could be assessed. Some of these new nets attempted to evaluate the productivity of additional areas close to the main banding station, in order to make a standardized monitoring program easier to run with fewer staff. Specifically, "Water-thrush" was successfully introduced, while a second year of coverage confirmed the productivity of Swamp East and, in contrast, the poor results from West Point. Simultaneous operation in the fall of 1994 and the spring of 1995 of the Field net lines and the new "N" net series nearer the Ottawa River, though somewhat short-lived, suggested that the new area was no more productive, and less easily monitored, than the traditional Field study area.

Since Innis Point is monitored throughout the year, maintenance of bird feeders in winter has been critical to attracting certain species. Unfortunately, banding of winter finches and Snow Buntings has been undermined in the last few years as mammals, including racoons and deer, increasingly compete with birds for seed,

TABLE 4. Top 15 Species Banded at Innis Point, 1982-1995

1.	Black-capped Chickadee	7,710
2.	Yellow Warbler	3,926
3.	Tree Swallow	3,210
4.	Yellow-rumped Warbler	2,697
5.	Pine Siskin	2,327
6.	Song Sparrow	2,283
7.	White-throated Sparrow	2,111
8.	Cedar Waxwing	1,998
9.	Dark-eyed Junco	1,992
10.	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1,767
11.	Snow Bunting	1,652
12.	Common Redpoll	1,592
13.	American Goldfinch	1,504
14.	Red-winged Blackbird	1,346
15.	American Robin	1,275



Black-capped Chickadee

particularly at ground traps. For winter finches, a decline in numbers since 1988 may also reflect increasing competition from other bird feeders in the area as suburban housing increasingly encroaches on farmland outside the boundaries of Innis Point. Overall, the number of birds newly banded plus returns at the feeder and ground traps has fallen steadily from 2,435 in the peak year of 1988 to only 558 in 1995.

Although chickadees were the most numerous species during 1995, there was scarcely any sign of the invasions of these species such as were recorded in 1988 and 1990. A small movement on September 9, with 58 banded, was not sustained. However, a few were still passing over the station on September 23, when staff set down their banding pliers and took up hammers to re-shingle the roof of the main banding building. Incidentally, the Department of National Defence, which owns the land at Innis Point, had taken control of these buildings from the National Research Council the previous month.

Trills and Chatter

Baillie Birdathon

Part of the ongoing costs of Innis Point Bird Observatory are funded by our participation in the Baillie Birdathon. In

1995, 498 birders across Canada raised over \$158,000 for the conservation of birds and their habitats. Led by long-time birdathoner Jack Romanow, who himself raised over \$500, nine of our members collected over \$1400 for the Baillie Fund by rounding up sponsors and spending the best part of 24 consecutive hours in May tallying as many different bird species as possible. When all our 1996 results are in, we hope to have surpassed our 1995 total. One-quarter of the funds we raise return directly to Innis Point, with the remainder going to help migration monitoring at other sites across Canada, as well as a host of other bird-related projects. Special thanks to our 1995 birdathoners Nathalie Bouthillette, Martha Caskey, Connie Downes, Hugh Groleau, Jill Jensen, Bill Murphy, Jackie Oblak, Jack Romanow and Diane Vezina.

Solar Observatory

Long-time members well remember the Ottawa River Solar Observatory at Innis Point, with its powerful scope trained on the heavens while we focussed ours on the ducks on the river. The dismantling of the building which housed the telescope in late 1994 has left a void which we have not yet got fully accustomed to. This summer, the last traces of the solar observatory building disappeared with the removal of the concrete pedestal on which the base of the scope rested. Under the direction of the authorities at

the Connaught Range, the pedestal was blown up with a controlled explosive charge. Fortunately, the Purple Martins nesting nearby do not appear to have been affected by the blast, as the numbers of martins fledging this year was the highest since the colony was established almost 15 years ago.

On the other hand, the dismantling of the solar observatory seems to be having an effect on the movement of birds around the Shore net line. "Shore" was situated between the observatory building and the edge of the Ottawa River in order to take advantage of the resulting corridor of vegetation which was created. The presence of the observatory building helped to funnel birds towards Shore, and the wires nearby were a favourite spot for swallows to loaf in July and August. Since the building's disappearance, the productivity of Shore has dropped off significantly, as reflected particularly in the drop in captures of Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows and Bank Swallows, as well as lower numbers of a wide range of species ordinarily recorded at Shore. Although the solar observatory was a man-made structure instead of a natural feature of the landscape, its removal indicates starkly how changes confined to a relatively small area can affect the number of birds detected in the vicinity. It reminds us that one of the challenges of running a long-term, standardized monitoring program is the need to minimize habitat change over time.

People

We also miss another towering presence which used to overshadow Shore and all the other net lines at Innis Point: John Andersen has moved to Alberta. As a regular Saturday staffer for about four years, John used to get up at even earlier hours than the rest of us to make the long, pre-dawn commute from North Lancaster (a distance of over 100 km). In addition to entertaining us with his humour and reporting on his highly productive feeder at home, he introduced us to the more dubious habit of Tim Horton donuts -- although donut shops that were inexplicably closed at 4 a.m. sometimes foiled his best-laid plans. We regret that,

even with John's enthusiasm, energy and willingness to spend hours on the road to join us at Innis Point, he will be unable to commute regularly from Alberta. But we wish John and Helen the best of luck and many new birding adventures in the west.

On a happier note, we congratulate banders Hugh Groleau and Nathalie Bouthillette on their recent marriage. A number of their banding colleagues suspended Innis Point operations a little early one Saturday in June in order to join Nathalie and Hugh for the wedding ceremony in Brinston, where they have made their nest. We wish these two newly-banded individuals the best in the future and expect to see them return to Innis Point many times over the coming years.

Upcoming Events

November to January

Evaluate fall field test of migration monitoring protocol;

Review 1982-1996 data to select program dates and net configuration

Prepare revised and expanded draft protocol

November to March

Directors meet as required (typically, every 6-8 weeks)

January 1997

Annual post-Christmas party (date and location TBA)

February

Annual General Meeting (date and location TBA)

March

Next IPBO Newsletter

March 22

Begin setting up summer operations (weather permitting)

March or April

Directors make final decisions on launch of migration monitoring project

Late April or early May

Spring migration monitoring program begins

May

Baillie Birdathon

Become a Member of Innis Point Bird Observatory!

and support volunteers working to better understand what's happening to bird populations

Send in your 1997 membership now!

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P.O. Box 72137
North Kanata RPO
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