

Volume 17, No. 1

Spring 2007



IPBO Newsletter

Innis Point Bird Observatory

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Photo: Mike Boyd

2007 IPBO Baillie Birdathon

This year we will be having the biggest and best Birdathon Day ever to mark our third year holding this event. How about a day of birding to help support the next ten years of Spring Migration Monitoring! Join us for Baillie Birdathon. This year we are proud to announce Michael Runtz, Canada's renowned naturalist, nature author and photographer as our Featured Birdathoner!

(See page 3 for more details)

News and Upcoming Events

Volunteer Training

It's spring and we will hold training sessions for volunteers once again. 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 this year training will begin at 8am. To sign up please contact Celia Bodnar at bodnarm@magma.ca.

Spring Migration Monitoring Program

As always, 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 approximately

4-5 volunteers daily. Please contact Celia Bodnar at bodnarm@magma.ca to schedule your days at Innis Point this spring.

Get ready for some sunshine!

Need a new hat? Looking for a great gift for a friend? Innis Point Bird Observatory's new cap, featuring the new logo, is on sale now! It's only \$20. Visit the station and try one on today.

2007 IPBO Baillie Birdathon, 12 May 2007

by David Britton

What is the Baillie Birdathon?

The Baillie Birdathon is an annual fund raising event, with a history going back to 1976. It was in that year that a group of people from the Long Point Bird Observatory (the organization which would later give rise to Bird Studies Canada, BSC) founded the James L. Baillie Fund as a means of granting money for ornithological research across Canada. Somehow they came up with the idea of having people going out bird watching for money as a way of populating the fund, and thus was born the Baillie Birdathon.

The Baillie Birdathon allows participants to direct their funds to help support a conservation group of their choice. Through this arrangement, the Innis Point Bird Observatory (IPBO) uses the Baillie Birdathon to raise funds for its operations. Last year IPBO Baillie Birdathon participants raised over \$2000!

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



Photo: Mike Boyd

(technically, any contiguous 24 hour period). The "Birdathoner" then goes out into the field on the chosen day (any time in May) and birds like mad. 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.

Three Ways to Support IPBO through the Baillie Birdathon

There are three 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 educator, Michael Runtz, as our celebrity birder to help raise funds for IPBO. Michael 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. His route will include a visit to Innis Point. Even if you're not able to do your own Birdathon, we strongly encourage you to support IPBO by sponsoring Michael's Birdathon.

Participate in the IPBO Baillie Birdathon Day:

On May 12th, David Britton will be leading the third annual IPBO Baillie Birdathon Day. Starting at Innis Point, David will lead a group of intrepid birdathoners on a daylong guided tour of Ottawa's best birding spots including Britannia, the Airport area and Gatineau Park. This is an exciting time of year to be birding, when almost anything is possible and previous year's Birdathon Days have tallied over 100 species for participants! This is a beginner friendly event: the focus is on having fun and there is plenty of opportunity to learn

more about field identification of birds by sight and song while completing your Birdathon. Feel free to participate for the whole day, or for just a few hours, it's up to you. Don't worry if you don't have a car – car pooling will be organized.

Do your own Birdathon to Support IPBO:

If you can't participate in the IPBO Baillie Birdathon Day on May 12th or would like the fun and challenge of planning and executing your own day, you should consider doing 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.

How Can I Participate in the IPBO Baillie Birdathon?

Information and registration packages explaining each of these three ways 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 about the events, please don't hesitate to contact David Britton at brittondavid@hotmail.com.



Photo: Mike Boyd

2006 MAPS Program: A summary

by Martha Caskey

In August 2006, IPBO completed its fifteenth 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. MAPS 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 – a total of 7 banding days until the end of the breeding season in early August. Each session lasts 6 hours, from about 6 AM 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 with two Osprey platforms and lots of Wood Duck boxes.

All the 2006 MAPS sessions took place on Sundays in June and July. Fortunately, the weather was very cooperative and none of the pre-scheduled dates had to change. As in 2005, MAPS was

greatly assisted by a small group of dedicated volunteers. We had 110 captures of 28 species. Although the actual number of birds captured was down slightly, the species variety increased to an above average number. Table 1 shows 2006 captures by species along with 2005 for comparison. As usual, we had more Black-capped Chickadees than any other bird, although the numbers were less than the previous year. There were also fewer Black-and-white Warblers captured, though we

certainly saw and heard plenty. That decrease was offset by an increase in Blue Jays, American Robins and White-throated Sparrows. The two most noteworthy species captured were Sharp-shinned Hawk and Hermit Thrush. This marked only the second capture of a hawk during MAPS and the first time since 1992. The Hermit Thrush captures of juveniles along with the sighting of singing adults marks the first breeding evidence of Hermit Thrush on the MAPS plot since 1998.



Table 1. Summary of Innis Point MAPS captures for 2005 and 2006.

Species	2005	2006
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1
Ruby-throated Hummingbird		1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	3
Downy Woodpecker		1
Yellow-shafted Flicker	1	1
Eastern Wood-pewee	1	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		1
Least Flycatcher	3	
Great Crested Flycatcher	3	5
Red-eyed Vireo	1	
Blue Jay	2	7
Black-capped Chickadee	36	26
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	1
Brown Creeper	2	1
Hermit Thrush		2
American Robin	7	12
Gray Catbird	4	5
Brown Thrasher	1	1
Nashville Warbler	4	3
Yellow Warbler	3	1
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1	
Black-throated Green Warbler	2	
Black-and-white Warbler	10	3
Northern Waterthrush		1
Common Yellowthroat	2	1
Field Sparrow	2	
Song Sparrow	4	3
Swamp Sparrow		1
White-throated Sparrow	14	18
Northern Cardinal		1
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	7	5
Red-winged Blackbird	1	
Baltimore Oriole		2
Purple Finch	1	2
American Goldfinch		1
Grand Total	115	110
Count of Species captured	26	28
Count of Species observed	64	73

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. In 2006, 13

birds returned from previous years. The oldest was a Great Crested Flycatcher banded at the main banding station at Innis Point in 2001. The Sharp-shinned Hawk was also a return banded during SMMP in 2005. Other species returning included Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Nashville Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Song Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow.

In 2006, we observed 73 species – way above our average. The biggest factor in the increase is no doubt all the efforts of our volunteers. With their help, we also made an excellent start on a flagged trail around the circumference of the MAPS plot. The trail is about 75% complete and includes a good stretch along Egret Pond. Every MAPS session had to include a pilgrimage to the pond, where we saw the Ospreys return to their platform and successfully raise one chick. We also heard Virginia Rail and Sora frequently and one volunteer even saw the Sora – enough that we classed both rails as breeding there.

A bird that has finally made it to our observations list is the Wild Turkey – long expected but finally seen during the last MAPS session of the year. The turkey

and the volunteers encountered one another on the road and stared at one another for some time. There were no bear sightings – for which we were grateful. Instead we all noted lots of Monarch Butterflies, a much less frightening sight.

We closed the year with a net taking-down session and pot luck picnic on the shores of Egret Pond on the first Saturday in August. We enjoyed watching the three Ospreys return to the platform so that one of the parents could give junior a fish. The picnic was such a success that we have decided to make it a regular part of the season. I'll also continue with net set up sessions on Saturdays in May so we can enjoy Egret Pond at the height of the Wood Duck and Canada Goose season (and prior to the mosquito season).

Special thanks are due to Emily Burton, Barbara Campbell, Maggie Campbell, Sara Campbell, Barbara Chouinard, Marc d'Aoust, Louise Gancz, Ann Gibson, Marc Levesque, Bill Petrie, Dani Power, Langis Sirois, and Doug Spry for all their kind assistance and enthusiastic participation.

Very early preparations are under way for the 2007 MAPS season (Season 16). On the right is the proposed schedule for 2007. I would like to hear from MAPS volunteers for 2007 so I can make sure interested people are on the distribution list for updates and reports. Contact me at: Martha Caskey, phone 613-832-3862, e-mail mcaskey@can.rogers.com.

I'm looking forward to another great year – always anticipating what might turn up either in the nets or in the surrounding woods. I hope to see our Ospreys return to their platform in Egret Pond and look forward to hearing lots of Sora and Virginia Rail calls coming from the cattails. And then who knows what else? Another hawk? Some crossbills? Who can say?

2007 MAPS Program Schedule:

Saturday, May 12 - 8:00 AM - Mist net setup, site maintenance and observations
 Saturday, May 19 - 8:00 AM - Mist net setup, etc. (This date is tentative - I'll likely need someone else to lead)
 Saturday, May 26 - 8:00 AM - Mist net setup, etc.
 Sunday, June 3 - 5:50 AM - MAPS Session 1
 Sunday, June 10 - 5:50 AM - MAPS Session 2
 Sunday, June 24 - 5:50 AM - MAPS Session 3
 Sunday, July 8 - 5:50 AM - MAPS Session 4
 Sunday, July 15 - 5:50 AM - MAPS Session 5
 Sunday, July 29 - 5:50 AM - MAPS Session 6
 Sunday, Aug 5 - 5:50 AM - MAPS Session 7
 Saturday, Aug 11 - 9:00 AM - Mist net takedown, cleanup - and pot luck picnic by Egret Pond

Become a Member of Innis Point Bird Observatory!

Support volunteers working to better understand what's happening to bird populations.

Please remember to send in your 2007 membership.

Innis Point Bird Observatory

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Membership Categories

Annual Membership: \$20, Contributing: \$25, Sustaining: \$50, Life: \$300.

Donation _____