

Migration Monitoring on Pelee Island in 2008

**A Summary of the Spring and Fall Migrations at Fish Point
Provincial Nature Reserve & Other Developments
at the Pelee Island Bird Observatory in 2008**



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for

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The Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) was established in 2003 and incorporated as a non-profit charitable organisation in 2006. PIBO's research and education mandate includes a commitment to long-term migration monitoring research on Pelee Island; long-term studies of Pelee's breeding bird communities, including endangered, threatened and species of concern; serving as an educational centre for the public, school groups and the local community; and promoting the importance of Pelee Island's unique natural heritage.

PIBO Board – Graeme Gibson, the Elder (Chair), Ramsay Cook (Treasurer), Elizabeth Agnew, Wayne Grady, David Kraus, Robert Tymstra.

Advisory Board – Margaret Atwood, Matthew Mann Gibson, Dr. David Hussell, Penny Kavanagh, Dr. Bridget Stutchbury.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) enjoyed an exciting and productive year of growth in 2008 and successfully advanced its research and education mandate. Thanks to the generosity of many friends and supporters, PIBO was able to carry out a wide range of activities and further its conservation mission both locally and internationally. The organisation continued to build a strong foundation in this, our sixth year of operation. This progress was bolstered considerably in 2008 when PIBO received a two-year grant from The Ontario Trillium Foundation, as well as important financial support from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund.

During an intensive eight-month field season, staff and volunteers kept busy with the observatory's core programs – long-term migration monitoring and breeding bird studies – along with a host of new educational projects, conservation initiatives, and research studies. Whether planting trees and putting up nest boxes in May, conducting transect surveys for Species at Risk during the summer months, or tracking the migration movements of Northern Saw-whet Owls in the autumn, a group of eleven staff, interns and volunteers contributed more than 3200 field-hours to PIBO's research studies in 2008.

The spring migration program operated from April 3rd to June 14th and the fall season ran from August 1st to November 15th, for a total of 180 consecutive coverage days, excluding the summer break. In all, 194 species were documented in the official count area at Fish Point by PIBO staff and volunteers and 3505 birds of eighty-two species were banded in 6767 net-hours. Although migration activity this Fall was up noticeably from last year, it was generally quiet this Spring and considerably fewer migrants were recorded in 2008 compared to the six-year station average.

Comprehensive breeding bird studies were carried out on Pelee during the summer in partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Township of Pelee Island. PIBO staff and volunteers conducted more than 200 point-count surveys at one-hundred-and-six sites on the island in 2008 and documented evidence for eighty 'possible' nesting species. A final report on this summer's activities entitled "Breeding Bird Surveys on Pelee Island – Results from 2008 point count surveys, a status report on Species at Risk, and recommendations for future conservation efforts" was completed in December 2008.

The observatory's education and outreach programs developed in leaps-and-bounds this year. PIBO staff worked on a variety of projects highlighting the importance of habitat conservation for both migrating and nesting birds while, at the same time, encouraging the preservation of natural spaces for all wildlife. Activities included school visits to PIBO's migration station at Fish Point, classroom presentations at local secondary schools and naturalist clubs, the design and distribution of an educational brochure about Species at Risk, involvement with local municipal agencies and non-profit organisations in promoting eco-tourism in the region, PIBO's quarterly newsletter and bi-monthly column in the community Grape Vine, and many other projects both large and small.

With these positive developments, and with the support of organisations like the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ontario Parks, the Township of Pelee Island, and our friends and patrons, PIBO was able to fulfill almost all of its objectives in 2008, and the observatory looks in good shape for the coming year.

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SECTION ONE - RESEARCH

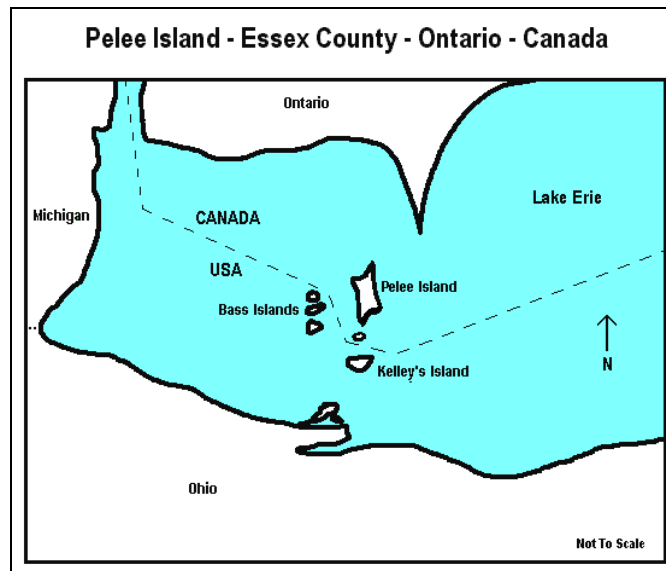
Migration Monitoring

Objectives

Migration monitoring research is an effective method for tracking changes in bird populations through the counting and capture of migrants. The data collected at migration stations is used to detect population trends of small landbirds that migrate to and from their breeding and wintering grounds each year. Many songbirds summer in remote northern regions and winter in equally isolated areas, which makes it difficult to survey these species using other monitoring methods.

The Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) is the national body that oversees migration studies in Canada. The network is made up of more than twenty permanent sites established across the country that generate daily migration counts for a wide range of species. Monitoring stations are committed to collecting data that contributes to our collective understanding of the changes taking place in populations of migratory birds, as well as to document migration at the station itself, and many other bird-related studies.

PIBO completed its 6th year of Spring and Fall field operations at Fish Point in 2008. Work was conducted on seventy-three days in the Spring (April 3rd – June 14th) and one-hundred-and-seven consecutive days in the Fall (August 1st - November 15th). During this time, eleven staff and volunteers counted and recorded the number of migrants seen, heard and captured at Fish Point (within a specified 'count' area) on a daily basis. Data was collected through a combination of visual observations and standardized mist netting and bird banding.



Location

Pelee Island, Essex County, Ontario is the most southerly-inhabited land mass in Canada. Situated in the western third of Lake Erie (Lat - Long: 41° 45'00" N – 82° 41'00" W), the

island is approximately fifteen kilometres long, five kilometers wide, and lies between Leamington, Ontario on Erie's north shore and Sandusky, Ohio to the south. The island is designated as a globally Important Bird Area (IBA) by the Canadian partners of Birdlife International – the Canadian Nature Federation (CNF) and Bird Studies Canada (BSC). IBA's are described as “truly outstanding sites of significance nationally or internationally” and “sites that are exceptionally important for birds.”

PIBO's migration monitoring study is conducted at Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve – Ontario Parks/Ministry of Natural Resources (115 hectares). The point forms the distinctive southern tip of Pelee Island. The main part of Fish Point is a sand spit made up of low stabilized dune ridges covered in woodland. Common Hackberry is dominant in most vegetation associations (Kamstra, Oldham & Woodliffe 1995). The official count area and census route for the study extends from the tip of the point to approximately two hundred metres north of the nature reserve parking lot (approximately 1.2 kilometres). The area is surveyed each morning during the daily walking census along a route approximately two kilometres in length. The route covers a broad range of distinct habitats including deciduous woodlands, wetlands, dunes and open beach.

The mist-netting operation is conducted north of the parking lot in an area dominated by mature hackberry/oak forest to the west and an area of abandoned pasture to the east. Ten mist nets are established along the edge of the former field, which now consists of dense rough-leaved dogwood with an average height of 4-5 metres. Other tree species in the area include black and sugar maple, american basswood, white mulberry and red ash (Kamstra, Oldham & Woodliffe 1995). The netting area is bordered by a paved road and the lakeshore on the west side, a wet forest association of red ash-silver maple to the north, similar hackberry forest to the south, and the dogwoods to the east.

Spring Migration Summary

PIBO's 6th year of Spring migration monitoring coverage got underway at Fish Point on April 3rd under sunny skies and with light east winds. After waiting a few days for the island ferry to start operating, the station 'crew' from last year returned on the 2nd. The field site at Fish Point and the PIBO cottage were in good shape despite the usual April flooding in the netting area.

PIBO completed seventy-three consecutive days of coverage this Spring from April 3rd to June 13th. A total of 175 species was recorded by staff in the 'count' area at Fish Point and 794 birds of sixty-nine species were banded, along with 95 recaptures, during 2569 net-hours. The average catch-rate of .31 birds/net-hour was down considerably from the station's Spring average (.58 birds/net hour).

The following summaries describe migration activity documented at Fish Point Provincial Nature Reserve – Ontario Parks – by PIBO staff during our official six-hour morning count period. Interesting and unusual species recorded in 2008 by staff elsewhere on Pelee Island are also mentioned.

APRIL 3rd – 9th

April 3rd A cool but pleasant morning with just the 90-minute census completed. A variety of Spring migrants were recorded including ten waterfowl species and small numbers of **Eastern Phoebe**, **Tree Swallow**, **Golden-crowned**

Kinglet and **Song Sparrow**. Lots of blackbirds in the area including a few **Rusty Blackbirds**.

April 4th Lots of rain and just the census completed this-morning. Similar activity to the preceding day, though fewer species were recorded due to the poor weather conditions. A single **Field Sparrow** on the west beach was a treat.

April 5th Very foggy and not as active as yesterday, but a nice variety of species observed in small numbers including more phoebes, **American Robin**, **American Tree** and **Fox Sparrow**.



Black-capped Chickadee

April 6th Quite a lot of activity, with 46 species recorded, but generally quiet in the netting area. Eleven waterfowl species on the lake and pond along with some **Brown Creepers**, **Golden-crowned Kinglets** and **Winter Wrens** in the woods.

April 7th More songbirds in the area this-morning including the first **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers** of the Spring.

April 8th Another Spring-like day with light south winds and lots of activity for early-April. **Golden-crowned Kinglets** (93 DT) were numerous along with small numbers of **Brown Creepers**, **Winter Wrens** and **Hermit Thrushes**. An early **Purple Martin** was observed at the PIBO cottage in the afternoon.

April 9th PIBO's first week of Spring coverage came to a close on the 9th with 41 species tallied during the morning count period along with 10 birds banded and one retrap. Light rain and brisk west winds made for a generally quiet morning. The first **Common Loon** of 2008 was recorded on census.

APRIL 10th – 16th

April 10th A cool clear morning with quite a few birds about including moderate numbers of **kinglets** and **creepers** along with ones-and-twos of **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, **Fox**, **Song** and **Swamp Sparrow**. Ten **Brown Creepers**

banded (22 DT) as well as 3 **Hermit Thrushes** (8 DT) and a **Winter Wren** (8 DT). Three **Sandhill Cranes** were observed flying over the netting area.

- April 11th** Lots of rain last night and this-morning and not much activity on census or in the netting area. A few **Yellow-rumps** and **sparrow spp** along with ten **waterfowl** species.
- April 12th** Two **American Coots** at Fox Pond and 3 **Barn Swallows** on census were both new for 2008.
- April 13th** Another rainy morning with just the census and some additional observations but no mist-netting. Forty-two species recorded on the day.
- April 14th** It was 0° C at dawn but the weather warmed up throughout the day. Still generally quiet with the exception of **Brown Creepers** (30 DT) and small numbers of **kinglets**.
- April 15th** A similar morning compared to the last few days with not much activity in the netting area or on census. A single **Tundra Swan** was one of four Spring-firsts on the day.
- April 16th** The wind was from the southwest this-morning and it was a warmer start to the day, but migrants remained fairly scarce, with just small numbers of **creepers**, **kinglets**, **Yellow-rumps** and **sparrows** observed in the count area.
- APRIL 17th – 23rd**
- April 17th** It was nice and warm at dawn but there was not much activity at the Point compared to the previous few days. A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** and a banded **House Wren** were new for 2008, but just one **kinglet**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler** and **White-throated Sparrow** were observed.
- April 18th** A similar day to the 17th with just a few migrants in the area including one **warbler** and four **sparrow** spp. Eight birds were banded and 44 species were observed during the morning coverage period.
- April 19th** A small influx of birds this morning with six Spring-firsts including **Northern Mockingbird**, **Nashville**, **Palm** and **Pine Warbler**. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were slightly more active along with increased numbers of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** and **Chipping Sparrows**.
- April 20th** A rainy day with not too much to report from the morning coverage. The skies cleared later in the day and a few Spring-firsts were observed outside the count area including **Red-shouldered Hawk**, **Black-throated Green Warbler** and **Common Yellowthroat**.
- April 21st** East winds and a balmy 10° C at dawn but very quiet in the netting area and on census. A singing **Yellow Warbler** was new for 2008.
- April 22nd** Not much of a change from the last few days with 40 species tallied in the morning and seven birds banded including a **Northern Flicker** and **Brown Thrasher**.

April 23rd A small group of **Sandhill Cranes** and the first **Red-headed Woodpeckers** of the Spring were noteworthy sightings on an otherwise quiet morning at the Point.

APRIL 24th – 30th

(not available)



Blue-headed Vireo

MAY 1st – 7th

May 1st The netting area was inactive this-morning and there was not much to report on census apart from a few new arrivals including **Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Lincoln's Sparrow** and **Baltimore Oriole**.

May 2nd Light south winds and warm dawn temperatures (17° C) made for an enjoyable morning of coverage with 63 species tallied in the count area. **Palm** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were active along with small numbers of seven other **warbler** species. Not many sparrows recorded but there were ones-and-tuos of **Eastern Kingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager**, and a few lingering **Rusty Blackbirds**.

May 3rd Lots of rain and only a few migrants observed on census or in the netting area. Two **Solitary Sandpipers** at Peregrine Pond were the only notable sightings on the day. Despite the poor weather, an inquisitive group of Canadian and American members of the Institute of Journalists and Natural Resources spent part of the morning at the field station along with Point Pelee National Park Superintendent, Marian Stranak, and an associate from the Ohio State Park system.

May 4th It was fairly active at the Point this-morning even though the majority of migrants in the netting area remained in the canopy, which made for a quiet morning of banding. New Spring arrivals included an early **Black-billed Cuckoo, Northern Parula** and **Black-throated Blue Warbler**. Fifty-eight species were noted including nine warbler spp.

- May 5th** A similar day to the 4th with fifty-six species tallied along with five new arrivals including a banded **Yellow-breasted Chat**.
- May 6th** An enjoyable morning of activity with lots of variety on the day (67 species). Spring-firsts included **Blue-winged**, **Magnolia** and **Hooded Warbler**. A group of secondary school students from London, Ontario, visited the mist-net area mid-morning and then set-up nest boxes and worked in the vegetable garden at the PIBO cottage in the afternoon. Thanks for all your hard work!
- May 7th** **Nashville and Yellow Warblers** were quite active this-morning along with eleven other **warbler** spp. **Tennessee** and **Blackburnian Warbler** were new for 2008. Other notable migrants included small numbers of **Eastern Kingbird**, four **swallow** species, **Lincoln's Sparrow** and **Orchard Oriole**.
- MAY 8th – 14th**
- May 8th** There were a few birds in the netting area this-morning with 25 individuals captured during 60 net-hours. Mostly **White-throated Sparrows** banded along with ones-and-twos of 4 **thrush** species, 2 **Least Flycatchers** and a **Blue-winged Warbler**. There were a few **hummingbirds** noted today and a **Northern Mockingbird** was recorded on census.
- May 9th** Not many birds but lots of birders and visitors at the station today. North winds made for a generally quiet morning and few migrants were recorded on census or in the netting area. The all 'green' bird race got underway at noon and it was a tough slog for seven enthusiastic teams – including the "Finch and Chips"! A **Sedge Wren** heard singing near the PIBO cottage the previous day was still about today.
- May 10th** A similar morning to the 9th with just eight **warbler** species tallied and fifty species recorded during the count period.
- May 11th** An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was one of eight warbler spp. observed on the day along with the first **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** and **American Redstarts** of the Spring.
- May 12th** Lots of rain last night and into the morning and not much to report apart from a few **thrushes**, **swallows** and **warblers** recorded on census.
- May 13th** A nice variety of birds noted in small numbers today including the first **Yellow-throated Vireo** and **Bay-breasted Warblers** of 2008. Sixty-five species were recorded during the morning count period.
- May 14th** The winds returned to the south but steady rain set-in mid-morning and carried on throughout the day. Small numbers of **vireos**, **Wood Thrushes**, **Common Yellowthroats**, and **Indigo Buntings** were recorded on census along with an influx of **Yellow Warblers**, with 17 individuals counted on the day. A **Canada Warbler** was new for the Spring.
- MAY 15th – 21st**

- May 15th** A busy morning with lots of birds recorded on census and in the netting area. Seventy species on the day including Spring-firsts for **Great Crested Flycatcher** and **Wilson's Warbler**.
- May 16th** Small numbers of **flycatchers** and **vireos** in the area along with 5 **Wood Thrushes** and 11 **warbler** species, but not as much activity as the previous day. A **Northern Mockingbird** continues to be seen at the Tip.
- May 17th** Strong west winds this-morning made for a fairly quiet day but there was some activity in the netting area. Species captured included **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, **Gray-cheeked Thrush** and **Indigo Bunting**, among others.
- May 18th** Steady rain last night and into the morning and not much to report on census or in the netting area. Just forty-two species recorded on the day.
- May 19th** Lots of activity today including Spring-firsts for **Ruddy Turnstone** and **Whimbrel** along with moderate numbers of **flycatchers**, **vireos**, and 18 **warbler** species.
- May 20th** Another busy morning with 64 species recorded during the count period along with 41 birds banded of sixteen species. A **Sora** was new for 2008. Other sightings on the day included 120 **Black-bellied Plovers**, 3 **American Golden Plovers**, a **Peregrine Falcon** and 2 **White-eyed Vireos**.
- May 21st** Despite three days of northwest winds and cool temperatures, migrants continued to filter through the area this-morning in good numbers. Sixty-three species were tallied during the morning coverage period including the first **Mourning Warblers** of the Spring.



American Redstart

MAY 22nd – 28th

- May 22nd** An active morning on census and in the netting area with 66 birds recorded during the morning count period and 63 birds banded of twenty-one species. **Magnolia Warblers** were numerous, with 23 banded, along with 2 **Black-billed Cuckoos**, 2 **Northern Parulas**, and eleven other **warbler spp.** A **Semipalmated Plover** on census was new for the Spring.

- May 23rd** Another busy day with 75 species tallied along with 72 birds captured of twenty-four species. A good variety of migrants including 6 **flycatcher**, 5 **thrush** and 17 **warbler spp.** A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was observed by PIBO staff in the afternoon.
- May 24th** A quieter morning in the netting area but still lots of diversity, with 68 species recorded, including a **Hooded Warbler** on census.
- May 25th** Small numbers of **American Redstarts**, **Magnolia**, **Canada** and **Wilson's Warblers** about, but not too much else to report.
- May 26th** Lots of rain and heavy thunderstorms in the morning and just the census completed along with some additional observations.
- May 27th** Cloudy again but a little busier with 61 species tallied on the day and 31 bird banded of fourteen species. An **Alder Flycatcher** and **Philadelphia Vireo** were both new for 2008.
- May 28th** It was active again today with good numbers of **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** recorded (11 banded) along with a nice variety of other late-Spring migrants. Highlights on the day included a captured **Acadian Flycatcher** and a **Western Kingbird** (a first for Pelee Island) observed a number of times on the west beach during census. A male **Summer Tanager** was also new for the Spring.

MAY 29th – JUNE 5th

(not available)

JUNE 6th – 15th

(not available)

Table 1 – Spring Coverage Totals

Description	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Coverage Period	Apr 3-Jun 14	Apr 1–Jun 15	Apr 2–Jun 8	Apr 5–Jun 6	Apr 13–May 31	Apr 7–Jun 4
Days	73	76	67	61	45	59
Netting Period	Apr 5-Jun 10	Apr 2–Jun 1	Apr 15–Jun 7	Apr 6–Jun 5	Apr 20–May 28	Apr 24–Jun 4
Netting Days	55	n/a	35	55	30	33
Birds Banded	794	637	1033	1151	602	1116
Net Hours	2569	1831	1796	2223	1078	1305
Birds/Net Hour	0.31	0.35	0.61	0.52	0.56	0.86
Species Banded	69	67	62	72	63	67
Recaptures	95	66	68	147	43	76
Species Recaptured	9	10	17	23	16	16
Species Recorded	175	177	181	171	179	180

Fall Migration Summary

After a busy and productive summer and a bit of a break in July, the PIBO team started-up the Fall coverage season on August 1st. In all, 107 consecutive days of monitoring were completed to November 15th. During this time staff recorded 171 species in the 'count' area at Fish Point and banded 2711 birds of sixty-nine species in 4199 net-hours, for an average catch-rate of .65 birds/net-hour. While activity in the netting area was up considerably from Fall 2007, the catch-rate this year was still low compared to the station's five-year Fall average (.90 birds/net-hour).

AUGUST 1st – 7th

In keeping with the time of year, most of the birds recorded at the Point this week were locally-fledged young and moulting adults, including small numbers of **Yellow-billed Cuckoos**, **Eastern Wood Pewees**, **House Wrens**, **Yellow Warblers** and **Indigo Buntings**, among others. It was warm and somewhat humid, with dawn temperatures reaching 24° C on the 1st and 5th, winds were variable, and there was little precipitation. An average daily total of thirty-six species was recorded at the station from the 1st - 7th and 55 species were tallied during the week.

In addition to the local activity, a small number of early migrants were observed on a daily basis. Nine shorebird species were recorded during the summary period ranging from a few dozen **Sanderlings** to ones-and-twos of **Semipalmated Plover**, **Least** and **Semipalmated Sandpipers**. Three **American Avocets** on census on the 5th were a treat, and a first for the station. While migrant songbird activity was limited, a few individuals were noted moving south, including small numbers of a variety of swallow species.



Blue Jay

AUGUST 8th – 14th

Although it was generally quiet at the Point this week, a small but steady number of migrants were recorded at the station on a daily basis including nine warbler species and a variety of flycatchers and shorebirds. **Double-crested Cormorants** were active, with 4500 birds recorded on census on August 12th, along with **Ring-billed Gulls** and **Common Terns**, with 560 and 400 individuals counted on the 9th, respectively.

Slightly cooler temperatures and light northwest winds from the 8th to 11th produced a variety of firsts for the autumn including **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**, **Swainson's Thrush**, **Blackburnian Warbler**, **Black-and-white Warbler** and **Northern Waterthrush**.

Other early-Fall migrants included 5 **Blue-grey Gnatcatchers** on August 12th, **Trail's** and **Least Flycatchers**, a small but steady stream of **Barn Swallows**, and the following additional warbler species: **Tennessee**, **Magnolia**, **American Redstart**, **Ovenbird** and **Canada Warbler**.

AUGUST 15th – 21st

Migration activity continued to increase at the Point this week, with ones-and-twos of fourteen warbler species recorded during the summary period along with seven Fall 'firsts'. The weather remained warm - dawn temperatures ranged from 16-21 ° C - winds were variable, and precipitation was recorded on one morning.

Although shorebird numbers were down, cormorants, gulls and terns were abundant this week, with 8000 cormorants recorded on the 15th along with almost 1000 **Ring-billed Gulls** (Aug. 18) and 600 **Common Terns** (Aug. 20 & 21).

A mild cold front and northwest winds at the beginning of the week prompted some migrant songbird activity including the first **Mourning** and **Cape May Warblers** of the Fall on the 16th and 17th, respectively. Forty-six species were tallied on August 17th during the official count period, including ten warbler spp., and fourteen warblers of nine species were banded.

The wind returned to the south on the 18th and it was generally quiet for a couple of days, but birds were active again on the final two days of the summary period. A nice variety of flycatchers and warblers were observed on August 20th including nine banded **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** and the first **Wilson's Warblers** and **Bobolinks** of the Fall. Forty-nine species were tallied on the morning of the 21st, including 'firsts' for **Chestnut-sided** and **Black-throated Blue Warblers**, along with small numbers of flycatchers and eight other warbler spp.

AUGUST 22nd – 28th

Migration activity picked up considerably at the Point this week with the arrival of the first significant waves of warblers along with a nice variety of other songbirds. Seventeen warbler species were tallied from the 22nd to 28th. Flycatchers continued to move through in moderate numbers and thrushes and vireos were active as well. Bird numbers peaked on August 25th when 55 species (including twelve warbler spp.) were recorded during the morning count period and 63 birds were banded of seventeen species.

Eight shorebird species were observed during the summary period and gulls and terns were numerous, with 800 **Common Terns** noted on the 26th. An **Osprey** on the 25th was the first this Fall, a small influx of **Veerys** was evident on the 26th, with seven birds tallied, and a whopping 9000 **Double-crested Cormorants** were counted on August 27th.

Hot and humid conditions and southwest winds from August 22nd-24th made for a quiet time at the beginning of the week, but cool temperatures on the 25th produced lots of activity on the day including a season 'first' for **Nashville Warbler**.

Warblers dominated this week in the netting area, with 177 banded of fifteen species (75% of all banded birds) – including a young male **Brewster's Warbler** (Aug. 27th). **Redstarts** and **Magnolias** led the way, with 39 and 37 banded respectively, but a variety of additional species appeared in fair numbers as well including 9 **Black-throated Blue Warblers**

captured on the 27th. The second **Eastern Screech-Owl** of the Fall and a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** were also banded along with small numbers of flycatchers, vireos and others.

AUGUST 29th – SEPTEMBER 4th

Migrants were active at the Point during most of the summary period and a moderate but steady stream of birds was recorded moving through the count area on a daily basis. The wind went south on September 1st and activity eventually tapered off towards the end of the week, but 91 species were tallied over seven days – a season-high to date – including nineteen warbler species.

PIBO staff were kept busy in the final days of August with 124 birds banded from the 29th – 31st including 92 warblers of twelve species. **Magnolias** and **American Redstarts** were active along with good numbers of **Chestnut-sided** and **Black-throated Blue Warblers**. Other species appearing in increasing numbers included **Least Flycatcher**, **Red-eyed Vireo**, **Veery**, **Swainson's Thrush** and **Bobolink**, with 33 of the latter species recorded on August 31st. An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** observed on census on the 30th was new for the Fall. The first **Merlin** of the season and 'firsts' for **Bay-breasted** and **Palm Warbler** were also noted during this time.

A similar mix of species arrived on September 1st when 51 birds were banded and 47 species were recorded during the count period. Warm temperatures and south winds on the 2nd produced a quieter morning although thirteen warbler species were noted on the day and **Red-eyed Vireos** were active, with ten recorded. The final two days of the summary period saw a further drop in numbers and there were no new arrivals with the exception of a **Baird's Sandpiper** on the 4th. Just seven birds were captured on the 3rd and 42 species were tallied the next day compared to 61 a few days earlier on August 30th.



Wood Thrush

SEPTEMBER 5th – 11th

There were no large 'fall-outs' at the Point this week and rainy weather affected coverage at the start of the summary period, but there were still lots of migrants recorded at the station from the 5th – 11th and the PIBO crew kept busy both on the census and in the netting area.

Shorebirds continued to move through the area in small numbers, with eleven species noted including the first **Black-bellied Plovers** and **Baird's Sandpipers** of the Fall. Hawks and waterfowl were scarce, however, with the exception of ones-and-twos of **Osprey**, **American Kestrel**, **Northern Shoveler** and a **Redhead**.

The first significant waves of autumn thrushes arrived this week when hundreds of birds were heard migrating overhead on the evening of the 5th followed by lots of activity at the Point on the morning of September 6th. Forty-five thrushes were banded on the day and **Swainson's Thrushes**, especially, continued to arrive on-and-off throughout the week. In all, 122 *Catharus* thrushes were banded from the 6th – 11th (89 **Swainson's**, 20 **Gray-cheeked** and 13 **Veerys**). In keeping with the rapid turnover of songbirds at the Fish Point study site, just one on these birds was recaptured at the station in the days after its initial capture.

Magnolia Warblers and **American Redstarts** were the most common of twenty warbler species tallied during the week along with good numbers of **Black-throated Blues** and **Northern Waterthrushes**. Two banded **Northern Parulas** and a young, male, **Hooded Warbler** were both 'firsts' for the Fall. In addition to the warblers, a nice variety of other songbirds were recorded including **Olive-sided Flycatcher** and the first **Philadelphia Vireo** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** of the season. A **Rock Dove** recorded on September 10th was new for 2008!

SEPTEMBER 12th – 18th

Two days of steady rain and strong south winds associated with hurricane Ike produced little migration activity at the beginning of the week, but conditions changed dramatically on September 16th and a wonderful variety of birds appeared in significant numbers during the final three days of the summary period. Season-high daily counts were established for many species including 54 **Swainson's Thrushes** (September 16th), 28 **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** (16th), 52 **Magnolia Warblers** (18th), 22 **Ovenbirds** (16th) and 15 **Black-throated Blue Warblers** (16th), among others.

There were lots of birds recorded on both the census and in the netting area on the 16th and 18th, with 54 species tallied on census on the latter day along with 129 birds banded of twenty-five species. In all, 68 species were recorded in the official count area on September 18th including 19 warbler species and forms. The 16th was even more active in the netting area when 153 birds were captured including 43 **Swainson's** and 29 **Gray-cheeked Thrushes**.

Shorebirds, flycatchers and swallows continued to taper off this week and raptors were few and far between, with just four species observed from the 12th - 18th. At the same time, warblers and thrushes showed a dramatic increase (all but thirty-four of the 357 birds banded this week were from these two families) along with a host of typical September migrants that made their first appearance of the fall on the final morning of the summary period including **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **Blue-headed Vireo**, **Winter Wren**, **Pine Warbler** and **White-throated Sparrow**.

SEPTEMBER 19th – 25th

The week started off on a busy note and there was lots of activity at the station on September 19th, but south winds and warm temperatures set-in and migrants tapered off towards the end of the summary period. There was still a nice variety of birds recorded at the Point from September 19th - 25th including seventeen warbler species and increased numbers of late-Fall migrants such as **Golden-crowned Kinglet** and **Winter Wren**. **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were active along with ones-and-twos of **Merlin** and **American Kestrel**. A **Peregrine Falcon** observed on census on the 22nd was new for the Fall.

Thirteen warbler species were recorded on the 19th and thrushes remained active, with 18 **Gray-cheeked** and 15 **Swainson's Thrushes** banded on the day. In all, 66 birds of twenty

species were captured and 56 species were noted during the 'count' period. Totals dropped off the next morning when just 37 species were recorded and 32 birds were banded of eight species.

The wind shifted to the northeast on the 21st but it remained warm, with a dawn temperature of 18 C. Migrants were few-and-far between with the exception of 12 **Sharp-shins** tallied on the census and small numbers of warblers and thrushes captured in the netting area. Activity picked up on the 22nd when 51 species were noted including good numbers of **Winter Wrens** (12 DT) and **Magnolia Warblers** (15 banded), among others.

Warm winds continued from the south and migration was generally light during the final three days of the summary period, although small numbers of warblers and thrushes were observed and banded each day. The first **Red-headed Woodpecker** of the Fall was noted on census on the 25th. Kinglets and **White-throated Sparrows** were observed in increasing numbers as well.



Blue-winged Warbler

SEPTEMBER 26th – OCTOBER 2nd

Migration activity was fairly low-key at the Point during the final days of September and early October, yet cool weather and steady north winds made for a reasonably busy time and a nice variety of birds (82 species) were recorded during the official count period. Typical late-Fall migrants were counted in moderate numbers including both kinglet species, **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, and **White-throated Sparrow**, along with ones-and-twos of **Brown Creeper**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and **Winter Wren**.

Fourteen warbler species were noted during the week and thrushes continued to filter through the area, with **Hermit Thrushes** starting to outnumber the **Swainson's** and **Gray-cheeked**. The first significant wave of **Blue Jays** arrived on the 26th, with 418 birds tallied on the morning census.

Shorebird activity tapered off - four species were observed this week - and many early-Fall migrants such as orioles and most of the flycatchers and swallows were entirely absent. At the same time, a number of species made their first Fall appearance including **Slate-colored Junco** (27th), **Scarlet Tanager** (29th) and **Dunlin** (30th).

PIBO's **Northern Saw-whet Owl** monitoring project got underway on the evening of October 2nd at a new survey site near the PIBO staff house. While no saw-whets were detected, we're confident the new location will prove to be a suitable (and practical) setting for future monitoring efforts.

OCTOBER 3rd – 9th

Cool weather on October 3rd and 4th made for a busy time at the Point until the 6th, but then south winds, rain and balmy conditions produced a decline in activity towards the end of the summary period. Kinglets, **Hermit Thrushes**, **Yellow-rumped Warblers** and **White-throated Sparrows** were the most common birds encountered this week along with a nice assortment of other species.

While warbler diversity dropped off - thirteen species were recorded during the summary period - new arrivals for the Fall continued to appear including 'firsts' for **Northern Saw-whet Owl** (Oct 3rd), **Orange-crowned Warbler** (5th), **Swamp Sparrow** (5th), **Common Loon** (7th) and **Rusty Blackbird** (7th). More species were documented at the station this week (83) than in the last week of September and early-October (82), which is unusual.

Ruby and **Golden Crowned Kinglets** were quite active on the 5th, with 45 and 31 individuals tallied on the day, respectively, included thirty-two banded. In all, 81 birds of seventeen species were captured on October 5th followed by 54 banded birds of twenty-two species on the 6th. Other species of note this week included the first **Lesser Scaup** (October 6th) and **Green-winged Teals** (7th) of the Fall, a **Peregrine Falcon** (6th), **Pine Warbler** (6th), and a somewhat tardy **Indigo Bunting** (6th).

It remained fairly active on the 7th, with 41 birds banded including a young male and female **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, but steady showers and warm southerly winds on October 8th made for a very quiet morning, with just the 90-minute census conducted in a heavy downpour. There was not much to report on the 9th with the exception of an exciting find - a **Short-eared Owl** - near the PIBO cottage in the early afternoon.

OCTOBER 10th – 16th

After a busy morning at the start of the week, southerly winds and warm temperatures from the 11th-15th produced a lull in bird numbers, but migration activity picked up again towards the end of the summary period. Light northwest winds and a dawn temperature of 10° C on October 10th made for an active morning - 48 species were recorded on the day and 82 birds were banded of fourteen species. **Yellow-rumped Warblers** and **Hermit Thrushes** were numerous along with a nice variety of other migrants including **Blue-headed Vireo**, five thrush species, **Nashville**, **Black-throated Blue** and **Palm Warblers**, and the first **Fox Sparrow** of the Fall.

Warm conditions returned to the Point on the 11th and south winds persisted for three days. Despite the weather, both kinglet species were noted in moderate numbers and sparrows remained active along with diurnal migrants such as **Red-winged Blackbirds**, **Common Grackles**, **American Pipits** and **American Robins**. The warm weather didn't discourage migrating **Saw-whets Owls** either - sixteen birds were captured on the evening of October 14th, including one foreign encounter.

Songbird activity picked up again on the 15th when 45 species were observed and 67 individuals of fifteen species were banded. Sightings included 4 **Northern Harriers**, ones-and-twos of five warbler species (**Magnolia**, **Black-throated Blue**, **Yellow-rumped**, **Palm** and **Blackpoll**), seven sparrow species, and the first **Eastern Meadowlarks** of the Fall. Kinglets and **White-throated Sparrows** remained active on the final day of the summary period and **Winter Wrens** were tallied in good numbers, with 26 birds counted on census and in the netting area.

OCTOBER 17th – 23rd

Cool temperatures and brisk north winds made for an active time at the Point this week and PIBO staff and volunteers kept busy throughout most of the summary period. While overall species diversity continued to decline compared to the first half of October, there were lots of **Kinglets**, **Hermit Thrushes**, **Yellow-rumped Warblers** and **White-throated Sparrows** recorded at the station along with a good variety of other late-Fall migrants.

Both kinglet species were active, with 70 **Ruby-crowns** noted on October 18th and 80 **Golden-crowns** tallied on the 19th (233 kinglets were banded this week). **Winter Wrens** were numerous as well, with 31 birds recorded on the 18th, along with smaller numbers of **Eastern Phoebes** (5 on the 17th), **Blue-headed Vireos** (5/17th) and **Tree Swallows** (22/18th). A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** banded on October 19th was a PIBO record-late date for this species.

Waterfowl activity on the lake remained light despite the cool temperatures, with only small numbers of **Red-breasted Mergansers** recorded on census along with the first **Buffleheads** of the Fall. Raptors were few-and-far between, with ones-and-twos of five species counted from the 17th-23rd. Other 'firsts' for the Fall this week included **Chipping Sparrow**, **Purple Finch** and **Pine Siskin**.



Sharp-shinned Hawk

OCTOBER 24th – 30th

It was a wet and very windy week at the Point and migration activity was generally light due to strong southwest winds at the start of the summary period followed by northerly gales and lots of rain from the 28th - 30th. Field coverage was reduced to the morning census and some intermittent banding.

Songbirds were few-and-far between apart from diurnal migrants flying over the count area, including 155 **Rusty Blackbirds** on October 30th, and there were small numbers of **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, **Hermit Thrushes** and a variety of sparrows in the netting area. Activity on the lake was light with the exception of 410 **Red-breasted Mergansers** (Oct. 25th) and 40 **Buffleheads** (30th). A few raptors were noted this week including a **Red-shouldered Hawk** recorded on census (Oct. 30th).

The mild weather came to an end when a cold front moved through the area on October 27th, bring with it the first **Eastern Bluebirds**, **American Tree Sparrows** and **Snow Buntings** of

the Fall. Cool temperatures on the 29th (2° C) made for an active night of owling, with 9 **Northern Saw-whets** and 1 **Eastern Screech Owl** captured during six hours of operation.

OCTOBER 31st – NOVEMBER 6th

Although mild weather and southerly winds made for a fairly quiet time at the Point, a nice variety of migrants continued to filter through the area, with 67 species tallied during the summary period. Highlights this week included the first **Tundra Swans** of the Fall on November 1st, a late **Tennessee Warbler** banded on the 2nd, 5 **Northern Saw-whet Owls** banded on the 4th, and a station-high 190 **Horned Grebes** recorded on census on November 5th.

Blackbirds and other diurnal migrants were active, with more than 2000 **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Common Grackles** noted on November 2nd and 6th, along with smaller groups of **Eastern Bluebird**, **American Pipit**, **Cedar Waxwing** and **Pine Siskin**, among others. Nine sparrow species were counted this week, **American Crows** were active, with 180 birds noted on the 1st, and a small influx of **Purple Finches** included 5 banded birds on the 1st.

Table 2 – Fall Coverage Totals

Description	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Coverage Period	Aug 1-Nov 15	Aug 1–Nov 15	Aug 7–Nov 15	Aug 4–Nov 14	Aug 6–Nov 9	Aug 5–Nov 4
Days	107	107	101	102	94	92
Netting Period	Aug 3-Nov 11	Aug 1–Nov 13	Aug 8–Nov 15	Aug 9–Nov 11	Aug 18–Nov 1	Aug 5–Nov 4
Netting Days	92	n/a	82	89	63	72
Birds Banded	2711	2035	3426	4325	2849	2175
Net Hours	4199	4488	3246	4182	2191	3225
Birds/Net Hour	.65	0.45	1.05	1.03	1.3	0.67
Species Banded	69	74	74	82	78	77
Recaptures	56	60	77	112	54	83
Species Recaptured	18	18	17	25	15	16
Species Recorded	171	178	174	180	170	150

NOVEMBER 7th – 15th

PIBO's 2008 monitoring season wrapped-up on November 15th after 107 consecutive days of Fall field coverage at the Point. It was blustery and cold during most of the summary period, with strong winds from the west and northwest, along with sub-zero temperatures, showers and snow squalls towards the end of the week.

Migration activity was up-and-down with the weather and daily coverage was reduced to the morning census and some additional observations on a number of days due to rain and snow. At the same time, a nice variety of species was recorded including season-high counts of 14 **Tundra Swans** (Nov. 11th), 863 **Red-breasted Mergansers** (9th), 102 **Buffleheads** (14th), 51 **American Pipits** (12th) and 25 **American Tree Sparrows** (15th).

Nine waterfowl species were noted including the first **Hooded Mergansers** of the Fall along with small numbers of **scaup**, **Mallard** and **Common Goldeneye**. Although migrant

songbirds were generally scarce, some kinglets, creepers, **Winter Wrens** and **Hermit Thrushes** were recorded on a daily basis and seven sparrow species were tallied from the 7th - 15th. Diurnal migrants were active - 2600 **Common Grackles**, **Rusty**, and **Red-winged Blackbirds** were counted heading south on the 11th as well as smaller groups of **Cedar Waxwings**, **Pine Siskins** and **American Goldfinches**.

Table 3 – Combined Spring & Fall Coverage Totals

Description	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Coverage Period	Apr 3-Jun 14	Apr 1–Jun 15	Apr 2–Jun 8	Apr 5–Jun 6	Apr 13-May 31
Days	180	183	168	163	139
Netting Period	Apr 5-Jun 10	Apr 2–Jun 1	Apr 15–Jun 7	Apr 6–Jun 5	Apr 20-May 28
Netting Days	147	n/a	117	144	93
Birds Captured	3505	2672	4459	5490	3451
Species Captured	82	84	81	91	87
Net Hours	6767	6319	5042	6393	3269
Birds/Net Hour	0.52	0.41	0.88	0.85	1.06
Recaptures	151	126	145	259	97
Species Recaptured	25	23	24	35	22
Species Documented	194	205	201	199	193



Yellow-rumped Warbler

Table 4 – Top Ten Species Banded in 2008 and Previous Years

Species	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	Total
Magnolia Warbler	349	236	617	410	337	335	2284
Swainson's Thrush	315	314	389	542	314	312	2186
Golden-crowned Kinglet	312	168	218	766	312	151	1927
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	211	102	423	485	325	134	1680
"Myrtle" Warbler	168	143	154	270	156	131	1022
Hermit Thrush	166	154	228	269	143	141	1101
American Redstart	161	84	273	162	141	159	980
Gray-cheeked Thrush	152	110	91	222	100	56	731
White-throated Sparrow	112	72	105	146	137	118	690
Black-throated Blue Warbler	100	38	84	67	104	60	453

Migration Monitoring on Pelee Island in 2008
Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO)

Table 5 – Birds Captured at Fish Point in 2008 and Previous Years

Species	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	Total
Sharp-shinned Hawk	14	16	7	11	8	12	68
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1		3		1	3	8
Black-billed Cuckoo	2			1	2	2	7
Northern Saw-whet Owl	45	44	7	12	1		112
Eastern Screech-Owl	4	2		1		1	5
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	7	7	11	15	4	1	75
Red-bellied Woodpecker		1					1
Downy Woodpecker	14	13	12	9	12	14	74
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1		2	2	1		6
"Yellow-shafted" Flicker	3	3	1	2	1	2	12
Eastern Wood-Pewee	6	1	4	3	3	7	24
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	76	32	79	134	58	39	418
Acadian Flycatcher	1			1			2
"Traill's" Flycatcher	17	12	20	57	23	38	167
Least Flycatcher	12	30	36	73	18	51	220
Eastern Phoebe	6	2	4	5	3		19
Great Crested Flycatcher			1	4		1	6
Eastern Kingbird					2		2
Red-eyed Vireo	53	40	141	113	71	48	466
Warbling Vireo	1		11	6	3	4	25
Philadelphia Vireo	3	8	27	35	31	15	119
White-eyed Vireo			4	1	1	1	7
Blue-headed Vireo	16	14	26	36	28	17	137
Blue Jay	14	17	3	50	8	13	105
Black-capped Chickadee	14	15	8	29	16	21	103
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	8		5	2	1	17
White-breasted Nuthatch						1	1
Brown Creeper	74	21	25	29	30	13	192
Carolina Wren	3	5	9	7	5	13	42
House Wren	24	17	28	46	16	22	153
Winter Wren	48	26	21	80	48	14	237
Marsh Wren					1	1	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	312	168	218	766	312	151	1927
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	211	102	423	485	325	134	1680
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher					3	1	4
American Robin	34	6	9	6	11	6	72
Wood Thrush	21	27	24	18	18	12	120
Veery	66	74	128	83	67	79	497
Swainson's Thrush	315	314	389	542	314	312	2186
Gray-cheeked Thrush	152	110	91	222	100	56	731
Hermit Thrush	166	154	228	269	143	141	1101
Gray Catbird	39	44	51	48	43	64	289
Brown Thrasher	1	1	1	3	2	2	10
Cedar Waxwing	5	2		1	2	2	12
European Starling	1						1
Northern Parula	7	2	6	1	2	2	20
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	5	7	4	17	10	44
Tennessee Warbler	24	14	39	23	16	85	201
Blue-winged Warbler	3	1	5	3	9	4	25
Golden-winged Warbler		1	3	1	1	1	7
"Brewster's" Warbler	2			1			3
Nashville Warbler	53	64	67	127	57	90	458
Yellow Warbler	59	50	41	88	45	70	353
Chestnut-sided Warbler	39	40	117	75	45	45	361
Magnolia Warbler	349	236	617	410	337	335	2284

Migration Monitoring on Pelee Island in 2008
Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO)

Cape May Warbler	3	3	6	6	5	6	29
Black-throated Blue Warbler	100	38	84	67	104	60	453
Blackburnian Warbler	6	10	33	31	5	9	94
"Myrtle" Warbler	168	143	154	270	156	131	1022
Black-throated Green Warbler	10	10	21	7	14	10	72
"Western" Palm Warbler	6	4	1	5	14	2	32
Bay-breasted Warbler	4	6	25	19	10	6	70
Blackpoll Warbler	28	19	17	41	55	22	182
Worm-eating Warbler				1	1		2
Prothonotary Warbler				1			1
Black-and-white Warbler	57	49	146	71	38	39	400
American Redstart	161	84	273	162	141	159	980
Ovenbird	95	77	119	107	82	73	554
Louisiana Waterthrush		1					1
Northern Waterthrush	38	26	27	38	35	43	207
Kentucky Warbler		1	2				3
Connecticut Warbler		2	4	3	2	3	14
Mourning Warbler	11	12	18	22	8	16	87
Common Yellowthroat	38	42	41	57	35	43	256
Hooded Warbler	2	2	1				5
Wilson's Warbler	19	30	46	32	33	28	189
Canada Warbler	50	38	54	60	24	44	270
Yellow-breasted Chat	1	1	1	1	3	1	8
Summer Tanager				1		1	2
Scarlet Tanager		2	2	3		3	10
Northern Cardinal	13	9	6	10	9	22	69
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		3	3	12	13	5	36
Indigo Bunting	6	9	8	19	4	20	66
Eastern Towhee		2	1	3	1	1	8
American Tree Sparrow	7	1	13	3			24
Field Sparrow	1	2		3	3		9
Chipping Sparrow		1		2	1	3	7
Grasshopper Sparrow		1					1
White-throated Sparrow	112	72	105	146	137	118	690
E. White-crowned Sparrow	5	8	9	7	6	6	41
Fox Sparrow	6	3	9	14	3	2	37
Song Sparrow	19	10	14	10	5	12	70
Lincoln's Sparrow	7	10	11	20	10	18	76
Swamp Sparrow	20	15	2	27	31	17	139
"Slate-colored" Junco	29	25	16	91	34	24	219
Brown-headed Cowbird	2		4	9	1	5	21
Red-winged Blackbird	100	45	35	75	60	34	349
Common Grackle	33	15	6	23	18	24	119
Baltimore Oriole	6	6	12	23	9	15	71
Orchard Oriole				1	1	5	7
Purple Finch	5	2		1	1	1	10
Pine Siskin			1				1
American Goldfinch	46	6	4	41	10	14	121
Total Captured	3505	2672	4459	5490	3451	3291	22868
Species & Forms	82	84	81	91	87	86	103
Net Hours	6767	6319	5042	6393	3269	4530	32320
Birds/Net Hour	0.52	0.41	0.88	0.85	1.06	0.73	0.71

¹ includes birds captured but not banded

2008 Recaptures

There were 151 birds of twenty-five species recaptured in 2008 at least once after their original banding compared to 126 recaptures of twenty-three species in 2007. The rapid turnover of migrants at Fish Point is an interesting feature of the site. For example, 700 *Catharus* thrushes (Veery, Gray-cheeked, Swainson's and Hermit Thrush) were banded at the station this year and only eight were caught at least one day after their original capture. Similarly, only four of 523 banded kinglets were recaptured and just one of 349 banded Magnolia Warblers.

The majority of recaptures were birds banded by PIBO in 2008, although three local nesting species – Black-capped Chickadee, Yellow Warbler and Red-winged Blackbird – continued to show high return rates from previous years.

Table 6 – 2008 Recaptures

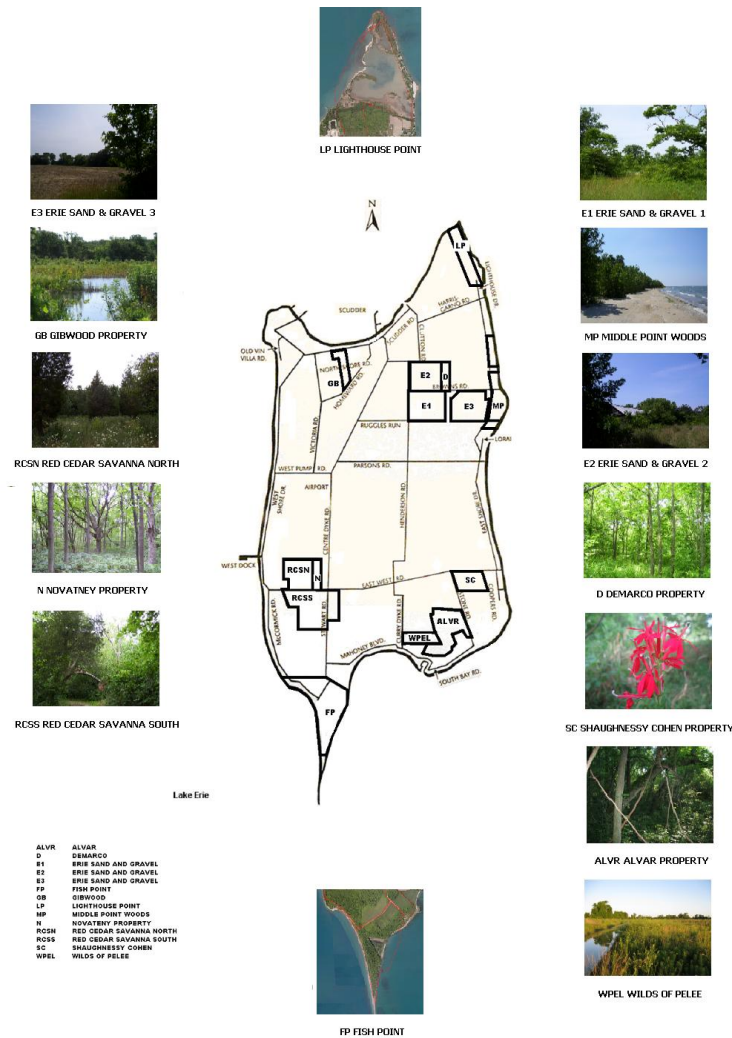
Species	Spring	Fall	Total
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		1	1
Northern Saw-whet Owl		2	2
Downy Woodpecker		5	5
Black-capped Chickadee	4	25	29
Brown Creeper	2		2
House Wren		2	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet		3	3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1	1
Veery		2	2
Gray-cheeked Thrush		2	2
Swainson's Thrush		1	1
Hermit Thrush		3	3
Wood Thrush		1	1
American Robin	3		3
Yellow Warbler	52		52
Magnolia Warbler		1	1
"Myrtle" Warbler		1	1
Black-and-white Warbler		1	1
American Redstart	2		2
Ovenbird		1	1
Northern Waterthrush	1	3	4
Canada Warbler	3		3
White-throated Sparrow		1	1
Red-winged Blackbird	23		23
Baltimore Oriole	5		5
Total	95	56	151

Breeding Bird Surveys

In recognition of the island's unique nesting bird communities, PIBO initiated a wide range of long-term field studies on the island beginning in 2006. In keeping with our mandate, the goal of the research is to generate data on the current status of the breeding bird communities on Pelee, with an emphasis on Species at Risk (SAR), and to establish permanent survey points for ongoing research.

Comprehensive field surveys were conducted on Pelee again in 2008 following the study protocol of the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario (Cadman *et al.* 2007). The fieldwork this summer was coordinated in partnership with NCC and the Township of Pelee Island as part of an ongoing cooperative stewardship project made possible with financial support from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource's Species At Risk Fund.

Figure 1 – Properties Surveyed in 2008



Numerous monitoring activities were carried out in 2008 including 1) 212 surveys were conducted at 106 point count sites situated throughout a broad range of habitats 2) data was

compiled during unofficial visits to the sites 3) results were recorded from field surveys designed to detect the presence or absence of Species At Risk 4) a marsh bird monitoring survey was completed 5) additional data on breeding birds and Species At Risk was collected during PIBO's migration monitoring study. In all, four full-time staff and volunteers contributed more than 225 person-hours to the 2008 effort and surveyed approximately 700 hectares.

During this time, PIBO staff documented eighty species on Pelee, sixty-eight of which are designated in the study report as *at least* possible breeders. Four Species at Risk were recorded: Least Bittern (threatened), Bald Eagle (concern), Acadian Flycatcher (endangered) and 'eastern' Yellow-breasted Chat (concern), as well as three provincial priority species. Fifteen priority species for Essex County were also noted along with two species listed by Partners in Flight as "highly vulnerable throughout the species range irrespective of regional status".

The following table presents some of the results of the 2008 study. A full account of PIBO's activities this summer is available on our website in the report entitled: The Breeding Birds of Pelee Island – Results from 2008 Point Count Surveys, a Status Report on Species at Risk, and Recommendations for Future Conservation Efforts.

Table 7 – Percentage of Point Count Sites on Pelee Island Where Species Was Recorded *at Least* Once During Two 5-minute Point Counts

Species	%	Species	%
Common Grackle	85	Field Sparrow	9
Red-winged Blackbird	83	Wild Turkey	8
American Robin	66	Killdeer	8
Brown-headed Cowbird	56	Great Crested Flycatcher	8
Northern Cardinal	55	Gray Catbird	8
Yellow Warbler	52	Northern Flicker	7
Indigo Bunting	52	American Crow	7
Baltimore Oriole	50	Orchard Oriole	7
Cedar Waxwing	44	Warbling Vireo	5
Tree Swallow	36	Brown Thrasher	5
Mourning Dove	34	Eastern Towhee	4
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	31	Chimney Swift	3
Downy Woodpecker	29	Chipping Sparrow	3
Purple Martin	27	Song Sparrow	3
Red-eyed Vireo	26	Mallard	2
House Wren	26	Red-tailed Hawk	2
European Starling	25	Spotted Sandpiper	2
American Goldfinch	21	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2
Blue Jay	19	Acadian Flycatcher	2
Eastern Wood-Pewee	18	Eastern Phoebe	2
Black-capped Chickadee	16	Wood Thrush	2
Black-billed Cuckoo	14	Common Yellowthroat	2
Ring-necked Pheasant	13	Yellow-breasted Chat	2
Eastern Kingbird	13	Wood Duck	1
Carolina Wren	13	Cooper's Hawk	1
Barn Swallow	11	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1
Horned Lark	10	House Finch	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	9	Total species	55

Northern Saw-whet Owl Monitoring

Staff and volunteers were kept busy in October and early-November with the observatory's saw-whet owl monitoring program. Standardized mist-netting was conducted on thirty-four evenings from October 3rd to Nov 10th for a total of 494 net-hours. In all, 45 Northern Saw-whets and three Eastern Screech-Owls were banded, and two saw-whets were recaptured, for a capture rate of 0.1 birds/net-hour. Similar to other reports in southern Ontario this Fall, a very large number of birds (68%) captured on Pelee were adults. The most active night for owls was on October 14th when 15 saw-whets were banded in 23 net-hours for a catch-rate of .65 birds/net-hour.



After three seasons of monitoring at Fish Point from 2005-2007, this Fall the mist-netting operation for PIBO's owl project was relocated to a new site at the Stone Road alvar complex. This locale is directly across from the PIBO cottage on conservation land under the stewardship of the Essex Region Conservation Authority. Four 9-m owl nets were erected in a rectangular shape with a playback tape centered in the middle of the array.

While perhaps not as productive for owls as Fish Point, the new location is much more practical for intensive, 'constant-effort' monitoring, and a suitable number of owls were banded in 2008 to justify the time commitment. As a result, the program will continue at this site in 2009.

Table 8 – Owl Monitoring Activities at Stone Road in 2008

Date	Banded	Recaptured	Net-hours
3-Oct			12
4-Oct	2 NSWO		20
5-Oct			16
6-Oct			16
7-Oct			17
8-Oct	2 EASO		16
9-Oct	1 NSWO		17
10-Oct	1 NSWO		14
11-Oct			12
12-Oct			12
13-Oct			16
14-Oct	15 NSWO	1 NSWO	23
15-Oct			0
16-Oct	1 NSWO	1 NSWO	9
17-Oct			11
18-Oct			12
19-Oct	2 NSWO		14
20-Oct			6
21-Oct	5 NSWO		22
22-Oct	1 NSWO		14
23-Oct			14
24-Oct			0
25-Oct			12
26-Oct			5
27-Oct	1 NSWO		16
28-Oct			12
29-Oct	9 NSWO 1 EASO		26
30-Oct			12
31-Oct			0
1-Nov	2 NSWO		15
2-Nov			15
3-Nov			15
4-Nov	5 NSWO		21
5-Nov			12
6-Nov			18
7-Nov			0
8-Nov			6
9-Nov			0
10-Nov			16
34 nights	45 NSWO 3 EASO	2 NSWO	494
NSWO	Northern Saw-whet Owl		
EASO	Eastern Screech-Owl		

SECTION TWO – EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Education & Outreach Programs in 2008

PIBO had a great deal of success with both outreach and in-house education programs in 2008. *Endangered Species, Endangered Spaces* is the Pelee Island Bird Observatory's newly designed, comprehensive education outreach program. The Program sends a trained interpreter to elementary and high schools, community and youth groups, around the county and province to teach conservation and stewardship information. This year, our pilot year, we were able to deliver our program to 17 groups, or 745 people, in the province. The project was designed to be an interactive program that teaches students about Carolinian forest, breeding birds and migration, with a focus on species at risk, and the importance of stewardship in conserving and managing habitat.

Topics discussed in the classroom presentation included: COSEWIC, the Species at Risk Act, bird population studies, banding and migration studies, how government and industry make decisions about protecting Species at Risk, what can be done locally to help SAR species and migratory songbirds. Other hands-on activities were directed at understanding problems associated with habitat loss and fragmentation and discussions about bio-accumulation and bio-magnification. Information was presented on number of Species at Risk in Essex County.



Feedback from staff and students was extremely positive with very high levels of satisfaction reported by all teachers. We continue to work on our programs and in future years plan to develop and implement a formal participant evaluation program to incorporate suggestions

for improvement whenever possible. We are certain that by targeting student audiences, we have a secondary audience in their parents, many of whom could be local landowners. Giving students the knowledge and awareness, as well as take home materials such as Environment Canada's *Species at Risk in Ontario* posters and fact sheets and the Canadian Wildlife Federation's *Wild About* poster series, encourages discussion in the classroom and around the dinner table.

PIBO hosted a number of organised visits to the field station in 2008 including school groups from Ontario, Ohio and Michigan. Other visitors included members of the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Essex County Field Naturalists Club. In all, more than 330 people stopped by the banding lab and had the opportunity to see a variety of songbirds in the hand and to learn about birds and bird migration. PIBO staff stress the importance of stopover sites like Pelee Island for migratory birds during their lengthy journeys, along with other topics concerning the conservation of birds and their habitats. At the same time, we took the opportunity to engage these individuals in conversation about the island's Species at Risk and about stewardship activities designed to help vulnerable species and their habitats.



Table 9 - Program Delivery Results

Activity	Results
<p>Outreach to Youth</p> <p>- deliver SAR education/ awareness to youth</p>	<p>13 Classrooms (435 students)</p> <p>Essex High School, Pelee Island School, Catholic Central High School, Kingsville High School</p>
<p>Public Outreach</p> <p>- deliver SAR education/ awareness to public</p>	<p>5 Groups (350 people)</p> <p>Friends of the Second Marsh, Ontario Bird Banding Association, Essex County Field Naturalists, Pelee Island Spring Song, Durham Field Naturalists</p>

In-House Education	16 Groups (331 people)
	<p>SPRING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University of Waterloo Field Course (17) - Windsor Lutheran School (40) - Leamington District High School (16) - Grosse Point School, Michigan (15) - Catholic Central High School, London (23) - Sciensational Snakes (25) - Essex County Field Naturalists (15) - Great Waters Institute for Journalism and Natural Resources (18) - Walk-in visitors (39) - May Bird Walks (24) <p>FALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ontario Nature (15) - Ohio State Uni field course (10) - Organic Growers (15) - Walk-in visitors (47) - Owling nights (12)
PIBO Media and Communications	
PIBO Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spring Newsletter distribution – 60 people on mailing list; 35 email - Summer Newsletter distribution – 90 people on mailing list; 40 email - Fall Newsletter distribution – 100 people on mailing list; 43 email - Grapevine articles – 6 short articles published in local community newsletter. Distribution ranges from 200 people to 500 people
Website	PIBO website updated & maintained. Weekly summaries posted. Section added on education and species at risk.
Brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PIBO Species at Risk colour brochure designed, printed and distributed - Pelee Island checklist and 'Where to Watch Birds' brochure designed and distributed
Weekly Summary	During spring & fall migration weekly summary email distribution to 40 people and also posted on website
Articles About PIBO	The Toledo Blade (July 6, 2008) Carolinian Canada Newsletter Species at Risk Edition

SECTION THREE – ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Ontario Trillium Foundation Funding



In 2008, PIBO received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. OTF will be supporting our work over the next two years. In addition to helping cover some of the more onerous operating costs, including staff wages, the funding will go towards increasing the operational capacity of the organisation. Additionally, funds were given to purchase tents and camping equipment to facilitate bringing more school groups to the island in the spring and fall.

Species at Risk Partnership

PIBO, in partnership with the Township of Pelee Island and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, received funding from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species At Risk Stewardship Fund. These funds will enable a coordinated stewardship approach to provide for the long-term conservation and restoration of Pelee Island's Species at Risk (SAR). Pelee Island hosts some of the most biologically diverse natural heritage in Canada and has one of the highest densities of SAR species. This funding will support a wide range of projects on the island including species inventories, control of invasive species, and development of nature trails, along with many other research and education initiatives.



Prothonotary Warbler

Data Management

PIBO reached a milestone this year when the observatory submitted all of its migration monitoring counts (our "Daily Totals") from 2003 – 2007 to the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) and Bird Studies Canada (BSC). This data contains the daily

standardized migration counts conducted by PIBO at Fish Point and represents more than 800 days and approximately 15,000 person-hours of fieldwork.

Senior scientists at BSC will analyze PIBO's raw data and produce population indices for upwards of sixty neotropical (long-distance) migrant species. This information will become part of the CMMN national database that tracks and monitors population trends at more than twenty stations situated across the country from British Columbia to the Maritimes. Trends from the 5-year period, once adjusted for a number of variables including daily field-effort, weather conditions and other factors, will be generated for each target species. These reports will provide information about the relative increase/decline in the number of individuals migrating through the Fish Point study site.

In addition to PIBO's Daily Total's, staff and volunteers have also entered all of the observatory's bird banding records for the period 2003-2008. This data is submitted to the Bird Banding Office, Environment Canada, in Ottawa, and contains details for almost 23000 banded birds of one-hundred-and-three species. PIBO has also computerized it's historic breeding bird data that includes information about the nesting status on Pelee of more than eighty-five species.

Staff & Volunteers

Eleven staff, interns and volunteers contributed approximately 3200 field-hours to PIBO's research projects this year compared to ten participants and 3000 field hours in 2007. The migration program benefited immensely from the hard work of PIBO's 2008 field crew: Erica Dunn, Émilie Germain, David Hussell, Kerry McGuire, Sumiko Onishi, Adam Pinch, Kirk Stewart and Jim & Pat Woodford.

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Seacology
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Species documented by PIBO on Pelee Island from 2003 – 2008

Loons & Grebes		Rough-legged Hawk	FP
Common Loon	FP	Golden Eagle	FP
Pied-billed Grebe	FP		
Horned Grebe	FP	Falcons	
Red-necked Grebe	FP	American Kestrel	FP
		Merlin	FP
		Peregrine Falcon	FP
Cormorants			
Double-crested Cormorant	FP	Grouse, Pheasants & Turkeys	
		Ring-necked Pheasant	FP
Hérons & Bitterns		Wild Turkey	FP
American Bittern	FP		
Least Bittern	FP	Rails, Gallinules & Coots	
Great Blue Heron	FP	Virginia Rail	FP
Great Egret	FP	Sora	FP
Cattle Egret	P	American Coot	FP
Green Heron	FP		
Black-crowned Night Heron	FP	Cranes	
		Sandhill Crane	FP
Ducks, Geese & Swans			
Tundra Swan	FP	Plovers	
Mute Swan	P	Black-bellied Plover	FP
Canada Goose	FP	American Golden Plover	FP
Cackling Goose	FP	Semipalmated Plover	FP
Wood Duck	FP	<i>Snowy Plover</i>	FP
Green-winged Teal	FP	<i>Piping Plover</i>	FP
American Black Duck	FP	Killdeer	FP
Mallard	FP		
Northern Pintail	FP	Stilts & Avocets	
Blue-winged Teal	FP	American Avocet	FP
Northern Shoveler	FP	<i>Black-necked Stilt</i>	FP
Gadwall	FP		
American Wigeon	FP	Sandpipers & Phalaropes	
Canvasback	FP	Greater Yellowlegs	FP
Redhead	FP	Lesser Yellowlegs	FP
Ring-necked Duck	FP	Solitary Sandpiper	FP
Greater Scaup	FP	Willet	FP
Lesser Scaup	FP	Spotted Sandpiper	FP
Long-tailed Duck	FP	Upland Sandpiper	P
Black Scoter	FP	Whimbrel	FP
Surf Scoter	FP	Ruddy Turnstone	FP
Common Goldeneye	FP	Red Knot	FP
Bufflehead	FP	Sanderling	FP
Hooded Merganser	FP	Semipalmated Sandpiper	FP
Common Merganser	FP	Least Sandpiper	FP
Red-breasted Merganser	FP	Baird's Sandpiper	FP
Ruddy Duck	FP	Pectoral Sandpiper	FP
		Dunlin	FP
Vultures, Kites, Hawks & Eagles		Buff-breasted Sandpiper	FP
Turkey Vulture	FP	Short-billed Dowitcher	FP
Osprey	FP	Common Snipe	FP
Bald Eagle	FP	American Woodcock	FP
Northern Harrier	FP		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	FP	Gulls & Terns	
Cooper's Hawk	FP	Laughing Gull	FP
Northern Goshawk	FP	Franklin's Gull	FP
Red-shouldered Hawk	FP	<i>Black-headed Gull</i>	FP
Broad-winged Hawk	FP	Little Gull	FP
Red-tailed Hawk	FP		

Migration Monitoring on Pelee Island in 2008
Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO)

Bonaparte's Gull	FP	Red-eyed Vireo	FP
Ring-billed Gull	FP	Yellow-throated Vireo	FP
Herring Gull	FP	Blue-headed Vireo	FP
Iceland Gull	P		
Lesser Black-backed Gull	FP	Crows & Jays	
Glaucous Gull	FP	Blue Jay	FP
Thayer's Gull	FP	American Crow	FP
Great Black-backed Gull	FP		
Caspian Tern	FP	Larks	
Common Tern	FP	Horned Lark	FP
Forster's Tern	FP		
Black Tern	FP	Swallows	
		Purple Martin	FP
Pigeons & Doves		Tree Swallow	FP
Rock Dove	FP	N. Rough-winged Swallow	FP
Mourning Dove	FP	Bank Swallow	FP
		Cliff Swallow	FP
Cuckoos		<i>Cave Swallow</i>	P
Black-billed Cuckoo	FP	Barn Swallow	FP
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	FP		
		Chickadees & Titmice	
Owls		Black-capped Chickadee	FP
Long-eared Owl	FP		
Short-eared Owl	FP	Nuthatches & Creepers	
Eastern Screech-Owl	FP	Red-breasted Nuthatch	FP
Great Horned Owl	FP	White-breasted Nuthatch	FP
Northern Saw-whet Owl	FP	Brown Creeper	FP
<i>Burrowing Owl</i>	P		
		Wrens	
Goatsuckers & Swifts		Carolina Wren	FP
Common Nighthawk	FP	House Wren	FP
Whip-poor-will	FP	Winter Wren	FP
Chimney Swift	FP	Sedge Wren	P
		Marsh Wren	FP
Hummingbirds			
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	FP	Kinglets & Gnatcatchers	
		Golden-crowned Kinglet	FP
Kingfishers		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	FP
Belted Kingfisher	FP	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	FP
Woodpeckers		Thrushes	
Red-headed Woodpecker	FP	Eastern Bluebird	FP
Red-bellied Woodpecker	FP	American Robin	FP
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	FP	<i>Townsend's Solitaire</i>	P
Downy Woodpecker	FP	Wood Thrush	FP
Hairy Woodpecker	FP	Veery	FP
Northern Flicker	FP	Swainson's Thrush	FP
		Gray-cheeked Thrush	FP
		Hermit Thrush	FP
Flycatchers		Mockingbirds & Thrashers	
Olive-sided Flycatcher	FP	Gray Catbird	FP
Eastern Wood-Pewee	FP	Northern Mockingbird	FP
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	FP	Brown Thrasher	FP
Acadian Flycatcher	FP		
Alder Flycatcher	FP	Starlings	
Willow Flycatcher	FP	European Starling	FP
Least Flycatcher	FP		
Eastern Phoebe	FP	Pipits & Waxwings	
Great Crested Flycatcher	FP	American Pipit	FP
Western Kingbird	FP	Cedar Waxwing	FP
Eastern Kingbird	FP		
Vireos		Warblers	
Warbling Vireo	FP	Northern Parula	FP
Philadelphia Vireo	FP	Orange-crowned Warbler	FP
White-eyed Vireo	FP		

Migration Monitoring on Pelee Island in 2008
Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO)

Tennessee Warbler	FP	Eastern Towhee	FP
Blue-winged Warbler	FP	Chipping Sparrow	FP
Golden-winged Warbler	FP	Clay-colored Sparrow	FP
"Brewster's" Warbler	FP	Field Sparrow	FP
Nashville Warbler	FP	American Tree Sparrow	FP
Yellow Warbler	FP	Vesper Sparrow	FP
Chestnut-sided Warbler	FP	Grasshopper Sparrow	FP
Magnolia Warbler	FP	Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow	FP
Cape May Warbler	FP	Savannah Sparrow	FP
Black-throated Blue Warbler	FP	Song Sparrow	FP
Blackburnian Warbler	FP	Lincoln's Sparrow	FP
Cerulean Warbler	FP	Swamp Sparrow	FP
Black-throated Green Warbler	FP	Fox Sparrow	FP
Yellow-rumped Warbler	FP	Harris's Sparrow	P
Palm Warbler	FP	White-crowned Sparrow	FP
Pine Warbler	FP	White-throated Sparrow	FP
Prairie Warbler	FP	Dark-eyed Junco	FP
Blackpoll Warbler	FP		
Bay-breasted Warbler	FP	Longspurs & Buntings	
Yellow-throated Warbler	FP	Lapland Longspur	P
Black-and-white Warbler	FP	Snow Bunting	FP
American Redstart	FP		
Prothonotary Warbler	FP	Blackbirds	
Worm-eating Warbler	FP	Baltimore Oriole	FP
Common Yellowthroat	FP	Orchard Oriole	FP
Mourning Warbler	FP	Eastern Meadowlark	FP
Connecticut Warbler	FP	Western Meadowlark	P
Kentucky Warbler	FP	Bobolink	FP
Northern Waterthrush	FP	Red-winged Blackbird	FP
Louisiana Waterthrush	FP	Rusty Blackbird	FP
Ovenbird	FP	Common Grackle	FP
Canada Warbler	FP	Brown-headed Cowbird	FP
Hooded Warbler	FP		
Wilson's Warbler	FP	Finches	
Yellow-breasted Chat	FP	Purple Finch	FP
		House Finch	FP
Tanagers		Common Redpoll	P
Scarlet Tanager	FP	Pine Siskin	FP
Summer Tanager	FP	American Goldfinch	FP
Cardinals & Allies		Old World Sparrows	
Northern Cardinal	FP	House Sparrow	FP
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	FP		
Indigo Bunting	FP	FP - documented at Fish Point	241
		P - documented on Pelee Island	253
Sparrows			