



The Pelee Island Bird Observatory Auspice

Summer 2008

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And a sincere thank-you to our many individual donors, to our friends and supporters, to our partners and PIBO's hard-working volunteers!! We couldn't do it without you.

Spring Migration Report 2008



Migration monitoring started on April 3rd and ran until June 14th, for a total of 73 consecutive days of coverage. Mist nets were open for 55 of those days.

Despite a harsher than normal winter -- and a later than usual break-up of ice on the lake-- the station crew from last year found the field site in great shape, despite the usual April flooding in the netting area. It was a cool, damp spring on the island and migration activity at Fish Point was surprisingly light through April, although a

good variety of species was recorded towards the end of the month.

Warm southerly winds provided the backdrop for a noticeable jump in migration activity during the first week of May. Nineteen warbler species were recorded during the official count period, along with a good mixture of other songbirds including twenty-six 'firsts' for 2008. Migration activity remained light during the second week of May and there were none of the significant fall-outs we have encountered in past years. Flycatchers, vireos, and thrushes, along with a nice variety of other species, appeared in small numbers but warblers were few-and-far between. Just twenty species were recorded that week and no more than ten species were observed on any given day during the official count.

The final week in May finally brought a couple of consecutively busier days in the netting area. It was a good and productive week with lots of birds recorded during the count period. Shorebird numbers increased considerably along with a rewarding number of flycatchers and warblers.

We recorded 175 species in the official census area and banded 794 birds of 76 species, which is slightly up from the 600 birds captured in the spring of 2007.

The highlight of my own spring was the sighting of my favourite bird - a Burrowing Owl! Just as it sounds, this tiny Endangered owl actually nests underground. It summers in Alberta and Saskatchewan and winters in Texas and Mexico so it seems that this little guy was a little lost on its long journey. It was the first sighting in Ontario in 15 years.

Our fall migration study starts on August 1st. Visitors are always welcome, so please give us a call if you'd like to join us for a morning of bird banding.

Top 10 species banded in Spring 2008 and previous spring totals

	2008	2007
Red Winged Blackbird	100	36
Magnolia Warbler	91	77
Yellow Warbler	52	48
Brown Creeper	39	4
Common Yellowthroat	36	37
Golden Crown Kinglet	35	13
Gray Catbird	31	27
Canada Warbler	28	23
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	22	5
American Redstart	21	24



Trillium Funds PIBO

**THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION**



**LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO**

PIBO was delighted to learn recently that our application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation was successful! 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 organization. Additionally, funds were given to purchase tents and camping equipment to facilitate bringing more school groups to the island in the spring and fall.

Visiting Groups

Over 200 people visited the Bird Observatory this spring, including students from several schools in Ontario and Michigan. Guided bird walks took place for three weeks in May and though the migration was a little slow again this spring, PIBO staff learned a lot about the local plants to show the participants!

Students from the Environmental Leadership Program at Catholic Central High School in London joined us again and spent a week working with various community partners. They did several projects at the PIBO cottage, such as putting up birdhouses and helping to prepare the land for a cedar hedge we are planting in our yard.

Did You Know...?

At the end of its breeding season, a typical Blackpoll Warbler weighs about 11 grams – equivalent to the weight of 4 pennies. In preparation for its transatlantic migration, over 2 to 3 weeks it may accumulate fat reserves and increase its body weight to as much as 21 grams. This will give the bird enough energy for its non-stop flight of up to 3500 km, and 90 hours in the air. In human terms, this fuel strategy would be equivalent to a 150-pound person gaining 15 pounds of pure fat per day until tipping the scale at 300 pounds, and then shedding 1.8 pounds per hour through vigorous exercise!!

Many birds passing through Pelee have at least a 1,000 km yet to go before reaching their breeding ground in northern Ontario, or even Alaska. The island is therefore an incredibly important place for them to stop and refuel.

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email only, please contact us. Please recycle or pass it on to someone else when you've finished reading it.

Changes at PIBO

>> Master bander, Graeme, became a master carpenter this spring when he built a banding lab down at the station. This small screened-in structure will give us some much-needed relief from the bugs and mud while banding. We were keen to start using it but before we could move in, a pair of Carolina Wrens beat us to it and built a nest under the roof overhang. As a result we ended up watching from the outside as the pair fledged four young ones! We certainly enjoyed the experience of sharing our workspace with those industrious little birds but we look forward to using the lab this fall.

>> We are spending some of our summer 'down-time' doing renovations to our cottage. A little paint here and there and some dry walling in the bathroom will make a big improvement to our small, cozy home. A new water tank system this spring has already made a huge difference by ensuring we have a constant clean water supply.

>> PIBO is getting a new toilet! The Seiwa biodegrader really is the top biotoilet on the planet. Made of steel with a control system based on a decade of research, and another decade of in-field use, the toilet is waterless and smell-free. No septic tank or sewage system is required, and it produces minimal quantities of E.coli-free compost. This toilet will be one of the first of its kind in Canada, though it's been in use for over a decade in extreme and high volume situations by some of the pickiest people in the world, the Japanese. It was awarded the top environmental award by the Japanese Ministry of the Environment in 2006 for saving Mt. Fuji from being the world's tallest open latrine.

Want to learn more about our new toilet? Check it out at biodegrader.com.





Birds of Pelee Island Checklist (311 species) Compiled by the Pelee Island Bird Observatory

Loons & Grebes

- Red-throated Loon
- Pacific Loon*
- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Horned Grebe
- Eared Grebe
- Red-necked Grebe

Cormorants

- Double-crested Cormorant

Pelicans

- American White Pelican

Hérons & Bitterns

- American Bittern
- Least Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Great Egret
- Snowy Egret
- Little Blue Heron*
- Cattle Egret
- Green Heron
- Black-crowned Night Heron

- Yellow-crowned Night Heron*

- White Ibis*

- Glossy Ibis*

- Wood Stork*

Ducks, Geese & Swans

- Tundra Swan
- Trumpeter Swan
- Mute Swan
- Greater White-fronted Goose

- Snow Goose

- Brant

- Canada Goose

- Cackling Goose

- Wood Duck

- Green-winged Teal

- American Black Duck

- Mallard

- Northern Pintail

- Blue-winged Teal

- Garganey*

- Northern Shoveler

- Gadwall

- American Wigeon

- Canvasback

- Redhead

- Ring-necked Duck

- Greater Scaup

- Lesser Scaup

- King Eider

- Long-tailed Duck

- Black Scoter

- Surf Scoter

- White-winged Scoter

- Common Goldeneye

- Bufflehead

- Hooded Merganser

- Common Merganser

- Red-breasted Merganser

- Ruddy Duck

Vultures, Kites, Hawks

& Eagles

- Turkey Vulture

- Osprey

- Swallow-tailed Kite*

- Bald Eagle

- Northern Harrier

- Sharp-shinned Hawk

- Cooper's Hawk

- Northern Goshawk

- Red-shouldered Hawk

- Broad-winged Hawk

- Red-tailed Hawk

- Rough-legged Hawk

- Golden Eagle

- Crested Caracara*

Falcons

- American Kestrel

- Merlin

- Peregrine Falcon

Grouse, Pheasants & Turkeys

- Ring-necked Pheasant

- Wild Turkey

Rails, Galinules & Coots

- Yellow Rail

- King Rail

- Virginia Rail

- Sora

- Common Moorhen

- American Coot

Cranes

- Sandhill Crane

Plovers

- Black-bellied Plover

- American Golden Plover

- Semipalmated Plover

- Snowy Plover*

- Piping Plover*

- Killdeer

Stilts & Avocets

- American Avocet

- Black-necked Stilt*

Sandpipers & Phalaropes

- Greater Yellowlegs

- Lesser Yellowlegs

- Solitary Sandpiper

- Willet

- Spotted Sandpiper

- Upland Sandpiper

- Whimbrel

- Hudsonian Godwit

- Ruddy Turnstone

- Red Knot

- Sanderling

- Semipalmated Sandpiper

- Western Sandpiper

- Least Sandpiper

- White-rumped Sandpiper

- Baird's Sandpiper

- Pectoral Sandpiper

- Purple Sandpiper

- Dunlin

- Stilt Sandpiper

- Buff-breasted Sandpiper

- Short-billed Dowitcher

- Snipe

- American Woodcock

- Wilson's Phalarope

Gulls & Terns

- Parasitic Jaeger

- Laughing Gull

- Franklin's Gull

- Black-headed Gull

- Little Gull

- Bonaparte's Gull

- Ring-billed Gull

- California Gull*

- Herring Gull

- Iceland Gull

- Lesser Black-backed Gull

- Glaucous Gull

- Thayer's Gull

- Great Black-backed Gull

- Caspian Tern

- Common Tern

- Forster's Tern

- Black Tern

Pigeons & Doves

- Rock Dove

- Mourning Dove

- Collared Dove*

Cuckoos

- Black-billed Cuckoo

- Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Owls

- Barn Owl*

- Long-eared Owl

- Short-eared Owl

- Eastern Screech-Owl

- Great Horned Owl

- Snowy Owl

- Barred Owl

- Northern Saw-whet Owl

- Burrowing Owl*

Goatsuckers & Swifts

- Common Nighthawk

- Chuck-will's-widow*

- Whip-poor-will

- Chimney Swift

Hummingbirds

- Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Kingfishers

- Belted Kingfisher

Woodpeckers

- Red-headed Woodpecker

- Red-bellied Woodpecker

- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

- Downy Woodpecker

- Hairy Woodpecker

- Black-backed Woodpecker

- Northern Flicker

- Pileated Woodpecker

Flycatchers

- Olive-sided Flycatcher

- Eastern Wood-Pewee

- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

- Acadian Flycatcher

- Alder Flycatcher

- Willow Flycatcher

- Least Flycatcher

- Eastern Phoebe

- Great Crested Flycatcher

- Eastern Kingbird

- Western Kingbird

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher*

Shrikes

- Northern Shrike

- Loggerhead Shrike

Vireos

- Warbling Vireo

- Philadelphia Vireo

- White-eyed Vireo

- Bell's Vireo*

- Red-eyed Vireo

- Yellow-throated Vireo

- Blue-headed Vireo

Crows & Jays

- Blue Jay

- American Crow

Larks

- Horned Lark

Swallows

- Purple Martin

- Tree Swallow

- N. Rough-winged Swallow

- Bank Swallow

- Cliff Swallow

- Cave Swallow*

- Barn Swallow

Chickadees & Titmice

- Black-capped Chickadee

- Boreal Chickadee

- Tufted Titmouse

- Great Tit*

Nuthatches & Creepers

- Red-breasted Nuthatch

- White-breasted Nuthatch

- Brown Creeper

Wrens

- Carolina Wren

- Bewick's Wren*

- House Wren

- Winter Wren

- Sedge Wren

- Marsh Wren

Kinglets & Gnatcatchers

- Golden-crowned Kinglet

- Ruby-crowned Kinglet

- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Thrushes

- Eastern Bluebird

- Mountain Bluebird*

- American Robin

- Townsend's Solitaire*

- Wood Thrush

- Veery

- Swainson's Thrush

- Gray-cheeked Thrush

- Hermit Thrush

Mockingbirds & Thrashers

- Gray Catbird

- Northern Mockingbird

- Sage Thrasher*

- Brown Thrasher

Starlings

- European Starling

Pipits & Waxwings

- American Pipit

- Cedar Waxwing

Warblers

- Northern Parula

- Orange-crowned Warbler

- Tennessee Warbler

- Blue-winged Warbler

- Golden-winged Warbler

- "Brewster's" Warbler

- Nashville Warbler

- Virginia's Warbler*

- Yellow Warbler



Highlights!

PIBO had a number of interesting sightings on the island this spring:

- Burrowing Owl (April 25)
- Long-eared Owl (April 30)
- Worm-eating Warbler (May 4)
- Yellow-breasted Chat (May 5)
- Hooded Warbler (May 6)
- Sedge Wren (May 7)
- 160+ Whimbrels (May 23)
- Red Knot (May 25)
- Acadian Flycatcher (May 28)
- Summer Tanager (May 28)
- Western Kingbird (May 28)
- Laughing Gull (May 30)
- Western Meadowlark (June 22)
- Black-headed Gull (June 25)

We welcome inquiries from anyone with birding experience who would like to volunteer at the station. PIBO will cover accommodation costs for those able to commit one month or more to the study. Experienced bird banders who would like to visit the station should contact PIBO by phone or email.

Pelee Island Bird Observatory

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More News from PIBO



Breeding Bird Point Counts

PIBO staff set-up and monitored 98 breeding bird point count sites on six conservation properties on the island in June. This represents the most comprehensive coverage of the island's breeding birds to date. Each site was visited twice during the month and all breeding evidence was recorded. Many of the points surveyed were on recently acquired Nature Conservancy of Canada properties on Brown's Road. It is a beautiful area with a wonderful stretch of sandy beach. We were

pleased to have a chance to survey these pristine areas and had some exciting finds, including several Yellow-breasted Chats on territory. Others of interest included an Acadian Flycatcher heard several times at the south end of the island.

Eight marsh monitoring point counts were surveyed in Lake Henry at Lighthouse Point Provincial Nature Reserve. A Least Bittern was heard during one of the two visits made to the survey stations.

A full report will be published in the Fall. These points can be re-surveyed annually or bi-annually and the information gathered will help the Nature Conservancy to make informed land management decisions.

Baillie Birdathon

PIBO raised money for Bird Studies Canada and PIBO operations by doing the Baillie Birdathon again this year. Graeme had a great day and recorded 102 species in 24-hours on May 25th. Thanks to all who sponsored us! And its not too late to contribute, either...

Another Successful Spring Song!

A big thank-you goes to the Pelee Island Heritage Centre for hosting another successful Spring Song festival. A wonderful weekend of bird migration and conservation was celebrated with guest author Vincent Lam and guest birder Bridget Stutchbury. Eight teams entered the Green Bird Race.

Congratulations to team 'Fynch and Chypts' - Rob Tymstra and Paul Carter, who won the Botham Cup with 109 species (Team PIBO was a close second with 102 species!) Thank you to everyone who participated and we look forward to seeing you next year.

Become a Friend of PIBO...

Please enroll me as a Supporter of the Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO), in the category indicated below. (You will receive a charitable receipt for the full amount of your donation. Cheques should be made out to the Pelee Island Bird Observatory.)

Friend of PIBO at \$35.00 to \$99.00 Companion of PIBO at \$100 to \$249
 Benefactor at \$250 and above

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