LESSER SLAVE LAKE BIRD OBSERVATORY

The Warbler

Summer 2011

NESTED IN THIS ISSUE:

Executive Director Update
By Patti Campsall

To say that this has been a challenging summer at the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation (BCBC) and the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory (LSLBO) is an understatement. But the good news is that we are still here, we are delivering our programs...and despite the rumours, the buildings are still standing!!

Staff had no sooner settled into their summer at the Boreal Centre when we were evacuated due to the Slave Lake forest fires in mid-May. It was early June before we could get back to the centre and slowly resume our operations. Thanks to the energy and hard work of our summer staff, we had our banding operations up and running just in time for our MAPS (breeding bird program) and the U of A research project. Our interpreters started developing and delivering special Slave Lake school programs as soon as we got home. The Boreal Centre took a little longer to get reopened as we were busy moving the local AB Parks District staff out to the centre after the loss of their offices at the government centre. But we were glad to finally get back to "business as usual" by the July long weekend.

We were very grateful for the dedicated staff who returned to the BCBC after the fire to provide the excellent research and education programs that you all enjoy. Our staff and board members were all impacted in some way by the forest fires, and our main priority has been to provide them with all of the support that they needed this summer. The LSLBO staff and board members would like to thank all of our friends who called and emailed during the evacuation. Your concern and words of encouragements were really appreciated by all of us. And it was wonderful to know that so many people cared about us during a very difficult time.

With all the challenges this summer, we missed some things:

- No Songbird Festival for the first time in 18 years!! This is always our chance to visit with our many friends and members, and celebrate the important conservation work of the LSLBO.
- We missed the peak of our busy spring migration season: the last half of our migration monitoring, programs, spring fieldtrips were cancelled, and we missed our enthusiastic spring birders!
- We totally missed our 2011/12 membership drive so we encourage you to renew your membership with the LSLBO and help support our conservation and education programs!
- We missed you! The tourist season has been a little slower than normal, but we have enjoyed visits from many of our friends and members this summer!

But there were some great successes this summer:

- Our staff delivered on our mandate of research and education programs, and they did it very well!! We had dedicated and enthusiastic staff who rose to the challenge this summer.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

- We partnered with the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society to provide special fieldtrips and classroom programs for the returning Slave Lake students. The goal...to let the kids have some fun! Over 450 students and teachers learned about the wonders of the boreal forest with our educators. Check out Annie's article for some of the fun.
- We also volunteered some of our staff time to assist with the rebuilding work in Slave Lake. It was our turn to give back to a community that has been so supportive of us.

Despite the challenges this summer, this is also a time to celebrate for the LSLBO. It is hard to believe, but it has been 5 years since the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation opened and none of us could ever have envisioned the success of this joint venture when all of this first started. The Boreal Centre has created new opportunities for our society including international exposure, new research partnerships with several universities, expanded year-round education programs, and the chance to share the world of the LSLBO with visitors from around the world. To say that the Boreal Centre has been a success is an understatement. We have created a centre that is an integral part of our local community as well as being recognized as a leader in environmental education and research programs. We have the unique ability to show our visitors and students real science being done by real scientists. By connecting them with our small part of the boreal forest, we really are "nurturing stewards of the boreal forest:".

The Board of the LSLBO will be working with Alberta Parks this fall on the details of the next 5 year agreement for the operation of the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation. This will be an opportunity to set the course for the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation for the next 5 years. Throughout this process, the research and monitoring work of the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory will continue to be our top priority. Last winter, Tyler Flockhart (Director for Field Research), and Richard Krikun developed a 5 year plan for our special Canada Warbler research project. Field operations are scheduled to commence next summer and we are very excited about this important project designed to learn more about the breeding ecology of this threatened species.

So, thank you for your support for the great work that we have done, and we hope that we can count on your support in the future. The LSLBO is very unique and special place. Through our work, we have opportunity to create incredible connections with our visitors that they will remember for a lifetime...and many of them become lifelong friends. Care about that tiny fragile songbird in Rich's hand, and the fact that it traveled 4000 km to raise a family...and you will care about the boreal forest that it needs to survive. Conservation starts one step at a time, and many of those steps start at the LSLBO and the Boreal Centre. That is why our staff love the work that they do! So enjoy their stories in the Warbler….

Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation 2011 Summer Staff

A huge thanks to our exceptional staff that kept our programs running despite all the unexpected challenges this summer!! All the exciting things that take place at the Boreal Centre and the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory happen because of the great staff that come to work here. We couldn't do it without you!

Top left to right:
Nicole Linfoot (Assistant Bander), Javen Green (U of A Field Assistant), Richard Krikun (Bander in Charge),

Bottom left to right:
Patti Campsall (Executive Director)), Kaley Donaldson (Information Officer), Annie Hervieux (Boreal Interpreter).

Missing: Cori Klassen (Boreal Educator)

The LSLBO's Great Aspirations for the 2011 Bird Season....

By Richard Krikun, LSLBO Bander in Charge

On April 22nd the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory (LSLBO) opened nets to start the 2011 spring migration monitoring season; the beginning of our 18th year of operation and a very busy summer. The bulk of the summer's activities include the three core monitoring projects: spring and fall migration monitoring and the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program. These three projects have been running since the LSLBO opened in 1994. Banding and various counts take place nearly every day from late April until the end of September, keeping the bird banders very busy and quite happy.

We try to find time to fit in two additional projects that were established in 2004. The first is the Canada Warbler Project. This project has evolved since its inception, but our goal this year was to conduct point counts throughout the Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park to locate Canada warblers and conduct vegetation surveys. Very little is known about Canada warbler breeding habitat and this project would help provide coarse habitat associations for this species. The second project is northern saw-whet owl fall migration monitoring. This project is just plain fun. We stay up late into the night throughout September and band northern saw-whet owls. Unfortunately we end up severely sleep deprived because it overlaps with fall migration; we have to get up early in the morning to monitor songbirds.

Last year the LSLBO participated in a joint research project with the University of Alberta to further understand the migration patterns at the observatory. These projects continued for their second year this summer. The first component of the project is to collect feathers for stable isotope analysis. This analysis will help locate where the birds migrating through the LSLBO are coming from and describe patterns in migration timing. The second part of the project will determine how local vegetation change has affected our ability to monitor birds. This project will factor in changes in capture rates and the composition of species captured with vegetation growth at each net used for migration monitoring. Part of this study included setting two raised nets to sample migrants moving through the upper reaches of the canopy. The aerial nets performed very well in the fall of 2010 and we planned to use them through both the spring and fall migration this year.

Above: Aerial nets used in the fall of 2010.

Our ambitious plans were going very well until the wildfires occurred in mid-May. Fortunately the fires did not reach the monitoring station, but we were evacuated at the midway point of spring migration. This meant that we were not able to operate during the heaviest migration period of the spring and missed the migratory window of a number of species. We only caught the first arrivals of several species, such as the Swainson's thrush, yellow warbler, northern waterthrush, and ovenbird. Some of the most colourful wood-warblers were still a week or two away from arriving; including Tennessee warbler, American redstart, common yellowthroat, mourning warbler, Wilson 's warbler, and Canada warbler. Though spring migration was cut short and we missed a good number of birds, one particularly exceptional bird was captured. On May 8 the LSLBO banded a hoary redpoll. This adorable little bird was a first for the observatory and represented the 102nd species to be banded at the station.

It would have been interesting to see how these large scale fires would have affected migration patterns. On May 13 we experienced a large chipping

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

sparrow migration; nearly 5000 were counted over the course of a few hours. A large fire began burning approximately 100 kilometres directly north of the banding station and we began to see chipping sparrows fly south the next day. Reverse migration events that we have witnessed before have occurred during bad spring snowstorms as the migrating birds try to escape the nasty weather. Perhaps the chipping sparrows were looking for a way around the huge plume of smoke from that fire. We will never know the full extent of the reverse migration because the strong winds that drove the fires greatly reduced our ability to detect birds and we were evacuated from the area shortly after these events began.

After a few weeks we were able to return to the banding station in time to start the MAPS program and conduct the full fall migration monitoring period and owl banding. We will not be able to gauge the success of the remaining projects until the summer is over. But after the events of the spring, we are quite content with just being out there. Hopefully we can have a few extra surprises to add to the hoary redpoll.

Left: Meet species # 102: A very cute hoary redpoll.

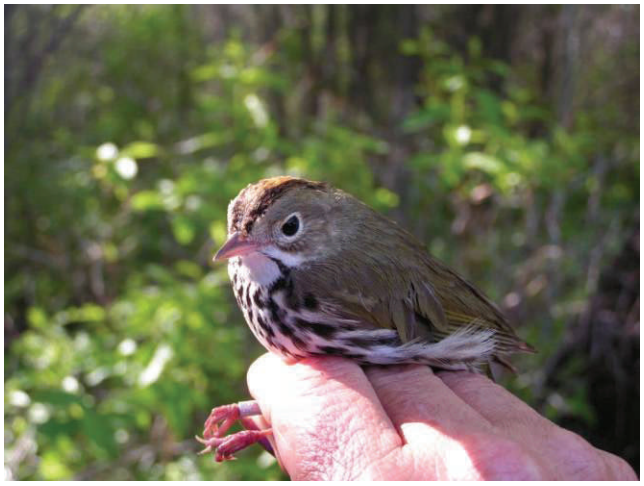
The Secret Life of a Neotropic Songbird

By Javan Green,
University of Alberta Field Assistant

Have you ever seen a brightly coloured summer bird and wondered where it came from? Well you're in good company; scientists are still asking that same question. Canada's boreal forest is the breeding area of over one billion birds. Over 50% of these are neotropical migrants, meaning they spend their winters in Central or South America. Banding programs such as the one at LSLBO have contributed a great deal to our understanding of migration, but there is still much that we don't know. Tracing migration is vital for songbird conservation, as it helps us to identify the sources of declines in their populations.

One valuable approach to tracking avian movement is the use of stable isotopes. Isotopes are atoms of an element (like hydrogen) that have different numbers of neutrons. The result is that the isotopes have different weights. In Alberta, this difference in weight causes the hydrogen isotopes in rainfall to vary in a North-South gradient. These isotopes enter the food chain and end up in the tissues of young birds that are raised in that particular area. By collecting feather samples from these birds, it is possible to get a rough idea of where they originated.

Last summer I collected feathers from first year breeding Ovenbirds in Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park. To achieve this I would locate a singing male, set up a mist



Above: Oven Bird

net in the middle of its territory, and hide a speaker playing an Ovenbird song near the net. With practice and a bit of luck I could usually trick the males (and sometimes females) into flying into the net. The two tail

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

feathers that were collected from each bird can now be use to determine the birds' origin. The purpose of this study is to compare natal dispersal distances of Alberta's Ovenbirds with those my supervisor Samuel Haché is studying in New Brunswick. Although we are looking at the same species, they breed in very different habitats. This study is still in progress, so there hasn't been any data analysis yet.

My job last year had a second component. During the fall I helped the LSLBO collect feather samples from juvenile Myrtle Warblers, Swainson's Thrushes, Ovenbirds, American Redstarts, and Tennessee Warblers. My project during the winter was to analyze the 125 Myrtle Warbler samples to determine where they are coming from. The results showed that some of the individuals are from farther north, but the majority are local birds. This adds one more puzzle piece to what we know about our boreal songbirds.

I will be graduating from the University of Alberta this winter, so I am sad to say that my part in this research will soon be over. But Dr. Bayne and his students are continuing to investigate the mysteries of migration with the assistance of the LSLBO. The Boreal Centre's current interpreter, Annie Hervieux, will be continuing the project this winter by analyzing the Swainson's Thrush samples. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with the LSLBO these last two summers, and I hope to stay involved in the future.

Above: a juvenile Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warbler

Wildlife Spying

By Kaley Donaldson, Information Officer

When I was first offered the position of Information Officer at the Boreal Centre, I thought I had a pretty good idea of what I could expect each day. Was I ever wrong!! I learnt very quickly that you can never predict what might come your way out at the BCBC, whether it was calls for advice on baby bats and birds with broken wings or having curious black bears sniffing at the windows!

Who knew my job working at the front desk would actually become the perfect excuse for spying on wildlife? Looking out my window, I sure got my fair share of close up views of everything from robins and fawns, to even a black bear cub! Every morning there was something exciting to see. You're always left with the feeling of being included in a captivating secret each time you have the opportunity to peek at nature in those unsuspecting moments.

While I was always surprised by what was waiting outside for me each day, I also couldn't believe all of the interesting facts and stories I heard from the visitors! I had the chance to hear all about purple martins' voracious appetites for mosquitoes and to become more familiar with my bird species. Each visitor that had questions about a mysterious bird they had spotted ended up teaching me a new bird as well!

My birding knowledge was definitely lacking lustre when I started, but I can now say I know a thing or two thanks to everyone who came to visit us this summer!

Above: Kaley masquerading as a "fun-guy" for one of our summer programs...just list it as one of her many 'other related duties"

Below: A mother bear and two cubs spotted on our way to work one morning...another day at the BCBC!

EDUCATION WORLD!!

Special Fieldtrips for Returning Slave Lake Students

By Annie Hervieux, Boreal Interpreter

This year's fire had some pretty dramatic effects on the school group programs arranged for this spring. Typically, the Boreal Centre Interpretative staff works hand in hand with the Lesser Slave Lake Forest Education Society to provide the students of the area with curriculum based programming every spring. Unfortunately, the fire ate up a lot of the time we had allotted to the Slave Lake students. We had to re-think our plan so that we would still get the chance to see all the kids!

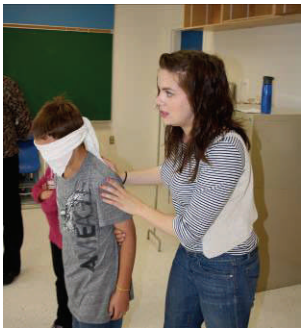
Our new plan came to us quite easily: we really wanted to make sure we were able to see all the Slave Lake students, so we decided to squish all of the programming into the two remaining weeks!

We enjoyed our first fun filled day in C. J. Schurter Park with an excited group of grade ones. Dividing the students into three main stations, the children were able to enjoy a mixture of fun and learning activities. They learned about what makes birds different from other animals… pretending to be migrating birds so they could understand some of the challenges they might face. They enjoyed searching for insects, touching a variety of animal pelts, and learning about camouflage. We greatly enjoyed our first day with the kids, and couldn't wait for the next!

Unfortunately, the weather didn't particularly agree with us! Day two of Park fun had to be postponed due to downpours. Looking at the forecast, we realized that there wasn't much sunshine predicted for the remainder of the week…we had to think up another plan!

The sun only came out once over the next few weeks, but that didn't bother us as we had made a killer backup plan. Moving our activities inside, we spread out inside the schools, occupying the libraries, gyms, and various classrooms; the six of us decided to run 5 station activity days.

Kaley and Amy worked together running a games station



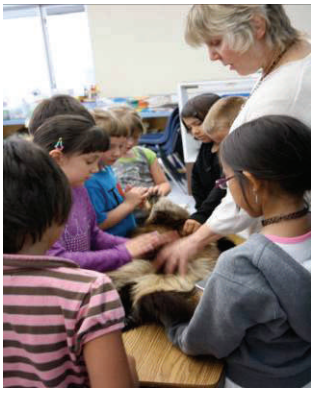
Right: Kaley from the BCBC guides the blindfolded "bat" to the center of the circle.

Above: The "bat" has to use his hearing to find the "moth"!

Cori helped the children make a boreal forest scene, providing them with building blocks from the forest, as well as manmade plasticine, popsicle sticks and fluff balls. Some of the children even had stories to go along with their creations!

Left: Cori , our Boreal Educator , helps as this group puts rabbits together for their Boreal Forest!

MJ guided the students through a fun "animal ID" test in which they had to decide which pelt, skull or claws belonged to which Boreal animal.



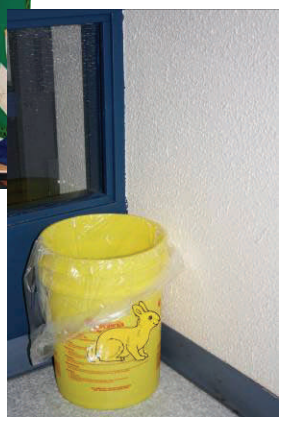
Above Left: "Maybe this one's a Wolf?"
Above Right: MJ, Educator with the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society explains that this pelt is the elusive Wolverine!

(Continued on page 7)

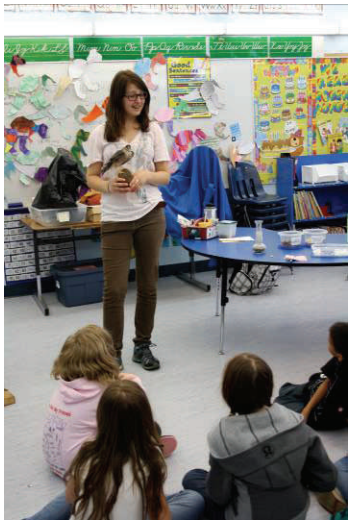
(Continued from page 6)

The premise of camouflage was taught to the students by Tanis as she lead them on an adventure through the hallways. Cartoon bunnies were hidden everywhere, and it was the students task to find them all!

Tanis, LSFES educator leads the search!

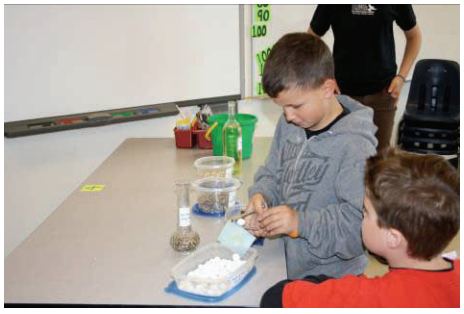


Can you spot the bunny?



I got the fun task of teaching the children about birds!! Together we discussed not only what makes the birds special compared to other animals, but some characteristics that make bird species unique from each other.

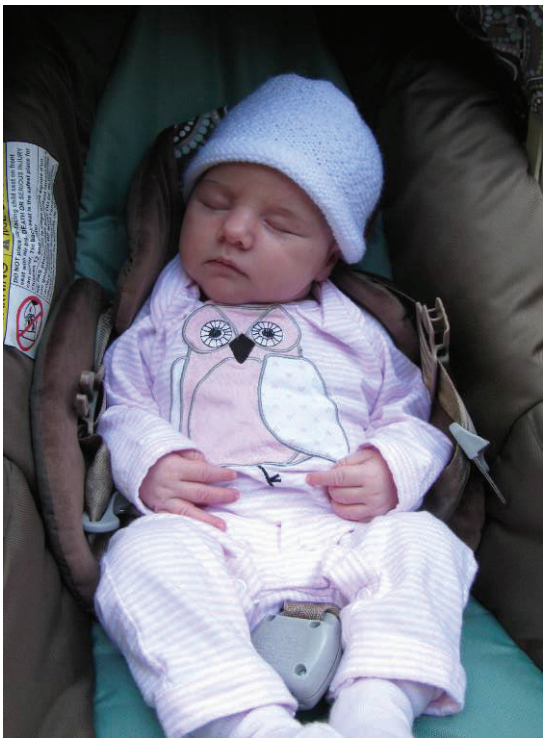
Annie explains how awesome a Sharp - shinned Hawk's eyesight is.



The Common grosbeaks' beak is like a nut-cracker… what can it's beak open?

Even though we barely got to see the sun over those couple weeks, we enjoyed ourselves immensely! The students (and the teachers as well!) always left our programs smiling, showing us that we had made their day special. There is something almost magical about teaching an interested audience about a topic you love!

Welcome to our little Boreal Baby!!



Sporting the latest in birding attire, meet ***Delta Margaret Bott***, our Boreal baby! Cori Klassen (Boreal Educator) and Chris Bott are very proud parents...and of course we all think that she is the cutest baby ever! Congratulations!!

Birds, the Boreal Forest, and Fire

By Nicole Linfoot, Assistant Bander, LSLBO

The boreal forest is the largest ecosystem in the world. It is circumpolar and comprises approximately 25% of the world's forests. In North America the Boreal forest covers over 520 million hectares of land, which is approximately 35% of Canada's land mass (Boreal Songbird initiative, 2007). Fire is an essential part of the boreal forest's life cycle. It represents both destruction and renewal. According to the Natural Resources Canada website, there are 9000 wildfires, consuming over 2 million hectares of forest, recorded in Canada annually; 85% of these fires are started by lightning, with the rest being human-caused (2009). Other major disturbances to the boreal forest are timber harvest and insect damage. Human harvest accounts for the consumption of approximately 800 thousand hectares, and insects affect an area as high as 6.6 million hectares. All forest dwellers are affected one way or another by fires. Birds, being extremely mobile, are less affected than plants and mammals, but they do still show a response to fire. This article will hopefully shed some light on the effect wildfires have on boreal birds in general. I will also offer my opinion on the effect that the Slave Lake fires may have on bird populations in the area.

Depending on the severity, timing and extent of a fire, it can affect birds in a positive or negative way. The habits of each particular bird species will also determine whether a fire will be beneficial or harmful to that species. Direct mortality to birds due to fire is extremely low (Ganeyl et al., 1996). Adult birds and fledged young have the advantage of being able to fly away and escape the immediate danger of fires. Young birds still confined to the nest are the only ones at risk of direct mortality; however, in the boreal forest, the fire season is typically short and occurs early in the spring, before most birds have produced young. Thus, fires tend to affect birds in more indirect ways, the three major ones being changes in food supply, changes to forest structure, and changes in the abundances of predators and competitors (Ganeyl et al., 1996).

Depending on the bird species, fire can either cause a major increase or decrease in food availability. Most bird species, especially migratory ones, in northern Alberta are insectivorous. Insect eating birds can be grouped into four major feeding styles: ones that capture flying insects, such as flycatchers and some warblers; ones that pick insects off the ground, such as robins and other thrushes; ones that search for insects under bark and within trees, such as woodpeckers and nuthatches; and birds that pick insects out of the foliage, including most warblers and vireos. According to a study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, of these groups, the only one that seems to respond negatively to fire is the foliage gleaners, as fires typically consume a vast majority of the tree foliage. Conversely, the group that most benefits from fire is the bark/wood gleaners. The trees, weakened by the fire, are quickly colonized by a multitude of wood-boring insects, which the birds are quick to capitalize on. The other two feeding-style groups showed mixed, but mostly positive, responses (Saab et al., 2007).

Habitat modification greatly affects birds in their search for suitable nesting sites. Birds can be broadly grouped into cavity nesters and open-cup nesters. Cavity nesters, such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, swallows, bluebirds and chickadees, require enclosed areas (bird houses, tree hollows, etc.) in which to build their nests. Open-cup nesters, which include the vast majority of bird species, build their nest in open spaces (tree branches, on the ground, etc.). Open-cup nesters can be further grouped according to where they build their nests; they can build on the ground, in the shrub layer or in the canopy.

Above: This Cedar waxwing was easy to spot within the new burned area along the Devonshire Beach Road in Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park.
Photo Credit: LSLBO

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Overall, regardless of the severity of a fire, cavity nesters seem to respond positively to fire as there is an increase in snags and dead trees. The heavy feeding activity by woodpeckers in burned areas also creates an abundance of new nest sites for species, such as chickadees, that cannot drill their own holes. On the other hand, the severity of the fire has a huge impact on whether cup-nesters will be affected positively or negatively. In both extreme and moderate fires, ground nesting species will often show a short-term negative response followed by a positive response as the ground-level plants experience a rapid renewal in response to the increase in sunlight that can reach the forest floor. The shrub nesters are the only open-cup nesters that show a negative response regardless of the severity of the fire. The shrub layer is generally completely destroyed, even in mild forest fires, and takes a number of years to re-establish itself. As a result, it will often take a few seasons for shrub-nesting birds to re-colonize an area hit by fire. The canopy nesters will show either a positive or neutral response in mild to moderate fires where the canopy is spared. In the case of a severe fire, however, where the canopy is destroyed, it can often take a decade or more before a suitable canopy is sufficiently re-established for canopy nesters to return to the area (Saab et. al., 2007).

The overall change in species composition in the area also plays a huge role in how birds are affected by fire as there is a change in potential predators and competitors in the area. With so many levels of interaction between species, it is hard to predict how any one bird species will respond. For example, the increase in sunlight to the forest floor caused by the opening up of the canopy after a fire causes a major flush of growth at the ground level. This heavy ground cover attracts large numbers of rodents, which is beneficial to many bird species, such as northern hawk owls, which prey on the rodents. The influx of rodents, though, will also attract weasels, which are major nest predators for both ground -nesting and cavity-nesting birds. Also, aggressive species such as magpies, crows and brown-headed cowbirds respond very favourably to disturbances, and the opening up of the forest due to fires will often attract them, which can negatively affect many small songbirds. So, although the heavy ground cover provides lots of food and cover for ground-nesting birds, they may have difficulty colonizing the area because of negative interactions with other species that are also attempting to colonize.

This spring, the Slave Lake area experienced a severe fire season. According to the Alberta SRD website, 138 fires consumed almost 140 000 hectares of forest. Across Alberta, 850 wildfires were recorded and consumed 940 000 hectares (2011). The majority of the active burning occurred in the latter half of May. To put these fires into the context of the boreal forest in its entirety, Alberta's wildfires consumed 0.18% of forest, and Slave Lake area fires consumed only 0.0002%. Still, the question has been posed as to how these fires have affected the bird populations in the area.

I believe that the fires of 2011 will have little impact on the overall population of birds in the area. I base this opinion on a number of factors, primary among these being the timing of the fire. The vast majority of bird species that use the Slave Lake area are migratory. The time of year at which the fires were burning at their highest intensity was during the migration period for most bird species, prior to them having established breeding territories. As I mentioned, the scale of the fires, although large from our perspective, is very small when viewed in the context of the boreal forest as a whole. Birds migrating into the area would have still had the option of either using the burn area or finding other suitable habitat. As for resident bird species, the fire occurred prior to their nesting seasons, with the exception perhaps of gray jays, which are extremely early nesters. With no unfledged young, the adult birds would have been able to vacate the area and then either move back in after the fire passed through (in the case of species that benefit from disturbance) or find new territories. I believe the species composition in the areas hit directly by the fires will change and fluctuate over the next few years as the forest renews itself, but the overall population of birds is unlikely to be significantly affected.

References:

About North America's Boreal Forest. (2007). In *Boreal Songbird Initiative*. Retrieved August 3, 2011, from http://www.borealbirds.org/forest.shtml?gclid=CJ6N2uGos6oCFUHe4AodBHe1DQ

ALBERTA WILDFIRE AND PRESCRIBED BURN SITREP. (2011, August 2). In *Alberta SRD*. Retrieved August 3, 2011, from http://www.srd.alberta.ca/Wildfire/WildfireStatus/Reports/sitrep.html

The Atlas of Canada: Boreal Forest. (2009, April 27). In *Natural Resources Canada*. Retrieved August 3, 2011, from http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/learningresources/theme_modules/borealforest/index.html

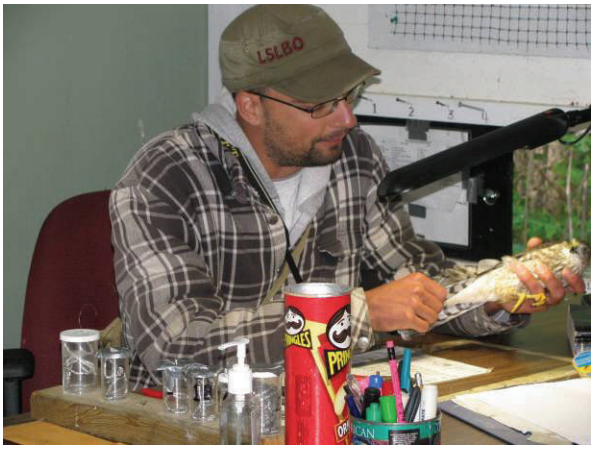
Ganeyl, J. L., Block, W. M., & Boucher, P. F. (1996, December). Effects of Fire on Birds in Madrean Forests and Woodlands. *USDA Forest Service*, 146-154. Retrieved August 3, 2011

Saab, V.A., Block, W., Russell, R.E., Lehmkuhl, J., Bate, L., & White, R. (2007). Birds and burns of the Interior West: descriptions, habitats, and management in western forests. *U.S. Department of Agriculture*, Retrieved August 3, 2011

The Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation reaches GOLD!

On October 2, 2010, the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation officially received Gold Certification for the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program. Only seven other buildings in Alberta had achieved Gold status to that point in time. The Green Building Council of Canada recognized this centre for its sustainable building design that conserves water and energy through such innovations as composting toilets, passive solar design, plus geothermal heating and cooling. Members of AB Parks, AB Infrastructure, the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory, dignitaries, staff and volunteers took part in this special event. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make this happen!

(l to r) Charity Beadow—LSLBO, Cori Klassen, - LSLBO Bong Estoque—AB Infrastructure, Robert Deacon—LSLBO Chair, Ronda Groom –LSLBO (hidden), Zoie McIntyre, Rob McGhee—AB Parks, Richard Krikun—LSLBO, Susan McGhee, Jule Asterisk, Terry Kristoff—LSLBO, Allan Atkinson, Patti Campsall—LSLBO, Aaron Lehman, Val Tradewell—Town of Slave Lake, Vivian Manasc—Architect firm, Ed Procyshyn—Town of Slave Lake , Denny Garratt—MD 124 Reeve, Cal McLeod—AB Parks, Pearl Calahasen—MLA Lesser Slave Lake.



Always a good day when you get a Sharpie (aka Sharp-shinned hawk.) in the net!

Happy families making ladybugs with Annie at her Patriotic Park Dwellers Point Duty at Marten River Campground.

LSLBO History Continued.....
Education and Interpretation

By Nanci Langford, Former Newsletter Editor.
This continuing series highlights the many accomplishments of the LSLBO since 1994!

The educational mandate of the LSLBO has been primary since 1995, when the first school groups visited the observatory operations. The cooperative relationship with Alberta Parks staff was demonstrated in these educational visits, as from 1995 to 2000 when an Important Bird Area Educator was hired, the seasonal park interpreter handled all the bookings for educational tours and shared responsibility for conducting them with the chief bander. In 1995, one school group travelled from St. Albert to visit the observatory. Aaron Lehman, a local biology teacher until his retirement in 1998, was an active member of the Bird Club that became the LSLBO and he ensured local school groups were exposed to the observatory activities. Aaron, along with Wayne Bowles a long time LSLBO volunteer and Board member, were responsible for local training and promotion of Project Feeder Watch, a program of Bird Studies Canada. Aaron Lehman has been a long term volunteer educator, providing interpretation tours at the Songbird festival, and the Forest Education Society camps. Both Wayne and Aaron continue to be active members in the LSLBO.

In 2002, the Society sponsored a course at Northern Lakes College for Bird-Banding Assistants. Also in 2002 IBA educator Gordon Eade hosted a stewards' workshop, with 16 potential stewards attending, to launch an environmental stewardship program focused on the lakeshore environment.

In 2003 the first Important Bird Area Day was organized by Bryn Jonzon with 82 people in attendance.

In 2004 Penn Sate University held a summer credit course at the Observatory and Amy Wotton hosted the group of eight university students and their professor on behalf of the Society.

The addition of the IBA (Important Bird Area) educator position in 2000, which subsequently was replaced in January 2006 by the new position of Boreal Educator, to work in partnership with the Lesser Slave Forest Education Society, strengthened the outreach program to schools. Our programs immediately took off! In 2006 over 3500 people participated in education programs, including fieldtrips for 786 Slave Lake region students. BCBC educators now offer a variety of standard programs to school group including Bird Banding 101, Banding Lab Tours, LEEDing the Way, LSLBO Research Programs, and Provincial Park Explorers.

A junior birding club was created in February 2006 by Patti Campsall and Jeff Manchak. The aim of the Junior Bird Club is to encourage young people and families to gain experience and knowledge about local birds and the boreal forest. It is also a chance to team up with other families for fun and educational birding events.

In 2008 Richard Krikun, Bander in Charge, was featured in a National Geographic Wild Chronicles video project. Also in 2008 the BCBC hosted the Slave Lake Corporate Challenge , focused on bird education, and helped to organize the Home Energy Alternative Trade Show.

In Fall 2008, NAIT Renewable Resources program established their 2nd year Fall Field School at the LSLBO to provide hands-on skills training for their ornithology course.

In May 2009, the LSLBO hosted a very special Peter Pyle workshop. Bird banders attended from across Western Canada to learn about molting patterns from the master.

Starting January 1, 2009, the BCBC is offering three new educational video conferences as part of a new Alberta Parks program. Now teachers and students can learn about the amazing boreal forest from their own classroom. Then in 2010, the LSLBO initiated a new partnership with Northern Lakes College to deliver two new webinar programs on owls and spring migration.

The education programs of the LSLBO continue to expand. Stay tuned!

Thanks to…

West Fraser Timber Co. Ltd

CANADIAN MIGRATION MONITORING NETWORK

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT CO-OP®

CARSON FORESTRY SERVICES INC

Federation of Alberta Naturalists

LESSER SLAVE FOREST EDUCATION SOCIETY

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE · SERVICE CANADIEN DE LA FAUNE

Baillie Fund

Stephen Partington

Government of Alberta

Community Development Trust

Community Spirit Program

BIRD STUDIES CANADA · ÉTUDES D'OISEAUX CANADA

Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.

Student Temporary Employment Program
Canada Summer Jobs Program

Alberta Conservation Association

Funded by Alberta Anglers, Hunters, and Other Conservationists

---

To become a member of the LSLBO, please fill out the information below and send this form, along with a cheque or money order to the address below.

Name: _____ **Telephone:** (_____) _____
First Last

Address: _____
Street City Province/State Postal Code/Zip

Email : _____

Membership Categories (please circle one):

Individual	$30	Benefactor	$250
Family	$60	Life	$500
		Platinum	$1000

Thank you for supporting the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory!

LSLBO

Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory
Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation
P.O. Box 1076
Slave Lake, AB T0G 2A0
Canada
(780) 849-8240
Fax: (780) 849-8239
www.lslbo.org, www.borealbirdcentre.ca