

**Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory**

**Season End Report**

**September 02, 1996**

**Compiled By:**

**Laura-Jean Blonski  
Senior Bird Bander**

## General

1996 commenced the third season of the operation of the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory. The LSLBO came into existence in 1994 and is the newest and most northerly of the three bird banding stations in Alberta (Lesser Slave Lake, Beaverhill Lake and Inglewood).

## Objectives

The aim of the LSLBO is to monitor the migration of songbirds through the spring and fall and to look at the productivity and survivorship of on site breeding birds. Since the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory is located within the boundary of a provincial park, the staff and volunteers at the observatory play a big role in terms of visitor services and interpretation.

## Staff and Volunteers

The Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory is a non-profit organization that operates with two paid summer students with the assistance of volunteers. For the 1996 field season, Laura Blonski filled the position of "Bander In Charge". On May 15 Christina Rogers filled the position of "Assistant Bander". Unfortunately, she was unable to remain with the observatory and left of May 20. Brenda Sanderson was then hired as the assistant and filled the position from May 20 through till August 23, 1996.

From May 01 through till June 04, Denis Rathig, a German ecology student dedicated numerous hours as a volunteer. He was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable addition to the LSLBO and we greatly appreciated his contributions to our institution.

The Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory is fortunate to have an enthusiastic volunteer committee which assists with maintenance, administration and computer details. The Provincial Park and the department of Natural Resources have also been wonderful assisting with use of supplies and photocopier access.

## Interpretation and Special Events

The staff at LSLBO give both informal, impromptu demonstrations to walk up visitors and more scheduled, elaborate demonstrations to school groups, Junior Forest Rangers, and youth camps. On the May long weekend the second annual *Songbird Festival* was held. Attendance for the weekend was down from the previous year, with ~ 70 individual visitors. Decreased attendance was due in part to the heavy rain which fell on the Saturday and forced us to close nets quite early in the morning. Despite this, crowds were enthusiastic, appreciative and in good humor.

The interpretation and visitor involvement in the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory is important. Visitors are very interested and receptive to what it is that the LSLBO does; the experiences which the LSLBO offers to the public are truly unique and impressionable.

## Programs

The Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory operates 3 main programs. These are (1) Spring Migration Monitoring (2) Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) (3) Fall Migration Monitoring. In addition to these programs, staff and volunteers perform interpretive duties, carry out site maintenance, search for bird nests and enter all data collected on a regular basis. The season of 1996 was roughly broken down as follows.

### **1) Site Maintenance (May 01 - May 05)**

The first few days of the season were spent locating equipment and orientating ourselves to the site. Net lanes were overgrown, in some cases quite badly and we trimmed them. A box of mist-nets was sorted

through, and about 6 were mended. During this time we also organized the lab and photocopied Daily Log, Daily Total, and Banding Schedule sheets in preparation for spring migration.

## **2) Monitoring Spring Migration (May 06 - June 07)**

Monitored the migration of birds through the "corridor" created between Marten Mountain and Lesser Slave Lake. Used a combination of banding, visual observations and standardized census route to monitor types and numbers of species migrating through the region. During this time period, we began to prepare for MAPS by moving net poles into the three MAPS sites and clearing and flagging the trails traversing through these MAPS sites.

For the 1996 season, 25 banding days were utilized during spring migration between May 06 and June 07. Over these days, 443 birds were newly banded and 52 were recaptured.

## **3) Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (June 12 - August 10)**

The objective here is to look at the breeding success of local nesting birds. This is done by using a combination of banding techniques and standardized point counts at each of the three sites; FAWA, FEGU and ROAD. In addition to this, staff carried out nest searches and reported on the vegetational composition of each of the three sites. MAPS and Fall Migration Monitoring overlap, and so some time was spent setting up the migration net lanes and doing site maintenance.

During MAPS, 12 days were utilized for banding. This is down from the previous year (22 days) due to inclement weather and a bear scare that closed the observatory for five days. Over the 12 days on which banding took place, 112 birds were netted. The number of birds trapped per site as follows.

	<b>BANDED</b>	<b>UNBANDED</b>	<b>RETRAPPED</b>
<b>FEGU</b>	24	7	16
<b>ROAD</b>	25	4	18
<b>FAWA</b>	8	4	6

## **4) Monitoring Fall Migration (July 27 - August 30)**

Fall migration is essentially monitored in much the same manner as spring migration. Banding techniques are utilized, as are visual observations and the standardized census route. The difference between spring and fall migration are found in number of birds netted and/or moving through the area. This is due to the movement of hatch-year birds making their first migration.

Banding took place over 15 days in this time period. Weather played a major factor here in determining the number of available banding days. In those 15 days 529 birds were newly banded and 32 were retrapped.

## **5) Administrative and Office Work (August 31 - September 02)**

The last three days were spent tidying up the lab, organizing and photocopying data and writing up the year end report and evaluation. August 31 was spent topofiling out the distances between MAPS sites as requested by the Institute for Bird Populations in Point Reyes, California. A big thanks goes out to Wayne Bowles of Forestry for his gracious assistance with this "project".

### **Other Wildlife**

The LSLBO is located inside the provincial park boundary; a region rich in natural wildlife resources. Black bears (*Ursus americanus*), Moose (*Alces alces*), White Tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), Coyotes (*Canis latrans*), Gray Wolves (*Canis lupus*), Cougar (*Felis concolor*), and a few Grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos*) are among the larger mammals within the park boundary. Smaller species such as Ermine, Least Chipmunk, Beaver, Red Fox, Red Squirrel, and a variety of voles are also present.

The staff at the LSLBO have encountered wildlife on the job in numerous occasions. Usually these encounters involved deer or small mammals and were not threatening. Black bears were encountered on several occasions and their scat and tracks were prevalent on the site. Fortunately, unlike the previous year no moose were encountered at the LSLBO.

The staff at the LSLBO had a frightening encounter with a Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) during the running of the MAPS program. The staff unknowingly got between a Black Bear and its cub and were false charged. Luckily no one was hurt in this encounter, but the site was closed for 5 days to trap the bear and cubs out of the area.

## 1996 LSLBO Banding Totals

May 01 - August 30 1996

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>LATIN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Alder Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax alnorum</i>	73
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	1
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	214
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	9
American Tree Sparrow	<i>Spizella aborea</i>	2
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula galbula</i>	2
Bay Breasted Warbler	<i>Dendroica castanea</i>	1
Black and White Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	24
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Parus atricapillus</i>	8
Blackpoll Warbler	<i>Dendroica striata</i>	6
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Dendroica virens</i>	2
Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	1
Canada Warbler	<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>	95
Cape May Warbler	<i>Dendroica tigrina</i>	1
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	5
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	14
Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>	9
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	9
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	2
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes vespertina</i>	1
Fox Sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>	1
Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	3
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	33
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	13
Magnolia Warbler	<i>Dendroica magnolia</i>	21
Mourning Warbler	<i>Oporornis philadelphia</i>	22
Myrtle Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	50
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Sieurus novboracensis</i>	14
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>	16
Ovenbird	<i>Sieurus autcapillus</i>	24
Philadelphia Vireo	<i>Vireo philadelphicus</i>	4
Purple Finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>	2
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	19
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	4
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	1
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	4
Slate-colored Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis hyemalis</i>	2
Solitary vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>	2
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	1
Swainsons Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>	30
Swamp Sparrow	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	3
Trail's Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax ?</i>	1
Tennessee Warbler	<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>	108
Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	1
Western Palm Warbler	<i>Dendroica palmarum</i>	1
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	6

White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	49	7
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	9	
Yellow-Bellied Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>	3	
Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	5	
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	80	J

## **1996 PRELIMINARY SUMMARY**

*by Stefan Jungkind/Edited by Frank*

### **Personnel**

The field work was handled by Laura Blonski, Bander-in-Charge -- May 1 to Sept. 2, Christina Rogers, Assistant Bander -- May 15 to May 20 (Christina accepted a position with Midland Provincial Park), Brenda Sanderson, Assistant Bander -- May 20 to August 23, Dennis Verbeek, Bander-in-Charge -- September 6 to September 29, and Dennis Rathig, a German ecology student who was a dedicated volunteer for three weeks.

Dennis Verbeek came to us from the Beaverhill Bird Observatory, BBO. He liked the LSLBO so much that he is returning this spring for the entire season. Other stalwart volunteers who assisted in the field work were Marian Whitby, Roxann Anderson, Wayne Bowles, Gordon Firth, Aaron Lehman, Stefan Jungkind, Steve Lane, Andrea Revel, Andrea Pollock, Cheryl Dash, and Cindy Verbeek. The LSLBO executive provided many hours of volunteer work with maintenance, administration, and computer stuff. Many others have also contributed their time and energy to this project including Dan Tarney, Melanie ??, Susan Hofforth, Tammy Vineberg, Shirley Ross, Darrell Walde, Joanne Walde, Collen Johnston, Doug Greenfield, Harold Hironnelle, Grant Kihn, and Brian Kelly.

### **Field Work**

A total of 101 days of field work, from May 4 to September 29, was miraculously completed. There were 24 fewer days of field work than in 1995 (10 fewer days in spring, 7 fewer days during the breeding season, and 7 fewer days in the fall).

### **Spring Migration Monitoring**

The spring migration was characterized by good manpower, adequate banding weather and very few birds. It was a cold and late spring (May 20, the aspen leaves were still not out and ice covered Lesser Slave Lake). Migrating birds responded by delaying their arrival or possibly over-flying the site altogether.

**Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS)**

This year the data collected was compromised by a combination of bad weather and closure of the field station for 5 days due to a sow black bear with cubs in the vicinity. She may have charged the field staff, Laura heard a heartstopping and crashing noise in the nearby bush, but she never saw the instigator. A sow with cubs was observed by the field staff shortly after this incident and was reported to the Park Office. Grant Kihn, Ranger-In-Charge, decided to be safe rather than sorry and closed the area. So with these minor inconveniences out of the way, only 13 days of birdbanding were accomplished out of the standard 21 days. Nevertheless, the data was very valuable and useful because it is one of a kind. The Institute For Bird Populations in California is extremely keen to obtain our breeding bird data and grateful even for 13 days worth of data! Very few researchers are based in the heart of the neotropical migrants breeding grounds like we are.

Capture rates were low. For example, on July 25, not a single bird was caught during six hours with ten nets open. Point counts were done and a detailed vegetation analysis was also completed.

Nest searches turned up three nests (Lincoln's sparrow, Spotted sandpiper, and Cedar waxwing) for which Prairie Nest Record Cards were filled out.

**Fall Migration**

For the first 5 weeks of fall migration (July 16, yes folks, that early, to August 19) only 7 days of birdbanding were done (compared to 19 days for the same time period in 1995). One of those 7 days (August 7) had the most birds captured in a single day -- 123 birds, 16 different species banded, and 138 birds caught in total. The poor weather also caused flooding in some net-lanes for extended periods of time (try the whole summer).

For the last part of August, reduction of manpower meant that only 4 net-lanes could be used at a time to avoid potential diasters if migrant birds suddenly hit the nets. The latter part of the fall migration (Sept. 6 to 29) was more completely covered than in either of the previous two years. Banding totals and sight records from September indicate that it would be worth-while continuing full September coverage in future years.



**1996 Highlights**

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The following sightings and birds banded merit special mention:

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<b>Oldsquaw</b>	<b>1 observed, May 19</b>
<b>Surf Scoter</b>	<b>32 observed, May 16</b>
<b>Broad-winged Hawk</b>	<b>1 obs., Sept. 29</b>
<b>Swainson's Hawk</b>	<b>1 obs., Sept. 25</b>
<b>Rough-legged Hawk</b>	<b>1 obs., Sept. 20    1 obs., Sept. 21</b>
<b>Herring Gull</b>	<b>3 obs., May 19    1 obs., Sept. 22,    1 obs., Sept. 23</b>
<b>Caspian Tern</b>	<b>1 obs., May 19</b>
<b>Barred Owl</b>	<b>1 heard, May 4</b>
<b>N. Saw-Whet Owl</b>	<b>1 heard, May 20    1 heard, May 25</b>
<b>Common Nighthawk</b>	<b>1 obs., Sept. 8</b>
<b>Rufous Hummingbird</b>	<b>1 captured, May 21</b>
<b>Yellow-bellied Flycatcher</b>	<b>1 obs., May 24    1 banded, May 30    1 banded, June 7</b>
<b>Horned Lark</b>	<b>3 obs., Sept. 23</b>
<b>Gray-cheeked Thrush</b>	<b>1 banded, Sept. 14</b>
<b>Bohemian Waxwing</b>	<b>1 obs., May 4</b>
<b>Cape May Warbler</b>	<b>1 banded, July 28</b>
<b>Fox Sparrow</b>	<b>1 banded, May 8, Sept. 10, and Sept. 15</b>
<b>Black-throated Green Warbler</b>	<b>2 obs., June 2    1 banded, July 26    1 banded, Aug. 7</b>
<b>Bay-breasted Warbler</b>	<b>1 banded, Aug. 7    1 banded, Sept. 6</b>

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Some of the non-avian wildlife observed during the banding season included: White-tailed deer, Snowshoe hare, Chipmunk, Ermine, Red squirrel, Black bears, Coyote, Moose (one "large" moose knocked down five nets on Sept. 21 and destroyed three of them), Beaver, Boreal chorus frogs, and Wood frogs.

1996 Preliminary Summary

<b>Summary of field activity at LSLBO during 1996</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Spring Migration</b>	<b>MAPS</b>	<b>Fall Migration</b>
First day	May 4	June 12	July 27
Last day	June 7	August 13	Sept. 29
# of field days	28	28	45
# of census days	27	6*	40
# of Vis-Mig days (visibile migration)	27		31
# bird banding days	25	13	35
Total net-hours	1551	772.5	1387.7
Total birds banded	444	57	960
# recaptured	52	40	49
# unbanded & released	16	11	38
<b>Capture rate (per 100 net-hours)</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>75.5</b>
* days of point counts for MAPS			

Birds banded at LSLBO during spring migration, 1994 - 95, top 20 species

Species	1994	%	1995	%	Total	%
Least Flycatcher	128	21.48	166	18.14	294	19.46
American Redstart	141	23.66	119	13.01	260	17.21
Trail's Flycatcher	87	14.60	69	7.54	156	10.32
White-throated Sparrow	35	5.87	93	10.16	128	8.47
Swainson's Thrush	32	5.37	45	4.92	77	5.10
Yellow Warbler	21	3.52	33	3.61	54	3.57
Canada Warbler	26	4.36	25	2.73	51	3.38
Common Yellowthroat	21	3.52	29	3.17	50	3.31
Myrtle Warbler	5	0.84	40	4.37	45	2.98
Clay-coloured Sparrow	11	1.85	21	2.3	32	2.12
Lincoln's Sparrow	6	1.01	23	2.51	29	1.92
Magnolia Warbler	19	3.19	9	0.98	28	1.85
Slate-coloured Junco		0.00	27	2.95	27	1.79
Red-eyed Vireo	8	1.34	16	1.75	24	1.59
Mourning Warbler	3	0.50	18	1.97	21	1.39
American Robin	9	1.51	12	1.31	21	1.39
Northern Waterthrush	3	0.50	15	1.64	18	1.19
Orange-crowned Warbler	2	0.34	16	1.75	18	1.19
Black & White Warbler	4	0.67	13	1.42	17	1.13
Wilson's Warbler	9	1.51	7	0.77	16	1.06

Birds banded at LSLBO during fall migration, 1994 - 95, top 20 species

<i>Species</i>	1994	%	1995	%	Total	%
American Redstart	310	16.69	362	15.13	672	15.81
Myrtle Warbler	104	5.60	480	20.06	584	13.74
Tennessee Warbler	347	18.69	229	9.57	576	13.55
Yellow Warbler	127	6.84	216	9.03	343	8.07
Traill's Flycatcher	164	8.83	70	2.93	234	5.51
Least Flycatcher	98	5.28	74	3.09	172	4.05
Canada Warbler	73	3.93	96	4.01	169	3.98
Swainson's Thrush	75	4.04	86	3.59	161	3.79
White-throated Sparrow	50	2.69	60	2.51	110	2.59
Wilson's Warbler	61	3.28	47	1.96	108	2.54
Black-capped Chickadee	31	1.67	60	2.51	110	2.59
Magnolia Warbler	38	2.05	44	1.84	82	1.93
Mourning Warbler	38	2.05	43	1.80	81	1.91
Black & White Warbler	29	1.56	50	2.09	79	1.86
Red-eyed Vireo	28	1.51	50	2.09	78	1.84
Orange-crowned Warbler	16	0.86	48	2.01	64	1.51
Common Yellowthroat	26	1.40	38	1.59	64	1.51
Lincoln's Sparrow	29	1.56	32	1.34	61	1.44
Swamp Sparrow	21	1.13	17	0.71	38	0.89
Cedar Waxwing	11	0.59	24	1.00	35	0.82

Birds banded at LSLBO during MAPS, 1994 - 95

<i>Species</i>	1994	%	1995	%	Total	%
American Redstart	70	24.73	67	31.46	137	27.62
White-throated Sparrow	42	14.84	41	19.25	83	16.73
Canada Warbler	33	11.66	35	16.43	68	13.71
Mourning Warbler	20	7.07	18	8.45	38	7.66
Swainson's Thrush	19	6.71	10	4.69	29	5.85
Tennessee Warbler	20	7.07	8	3.76	28	5.65
Myrtle Warbler	14	4.95	7	3.29	21	4.23
Ovenbird	7	2.47	7	3.29	14	2.82
Yellow Warbler	9	3.18	3	1.41	12	2.42
Least Flycatcher	8	2.83	1	0.47	9	1.81
Magnolia Warbler	4	1.41	4	1.88	8	1.61
Red-eyed Vireo	3	1.06	3	1.41	6	1.21
American Robin	5	1.77	1	0.47	6	1.21
Trail's Flycatcher	3	1.06	3	1.41	6	1.21
Black & White Warbler	5	1.77		0.00	5	1.01
Chestnut-sided Warbler	4	1.41		0.00	4	0.81
Black-capped Chickadee	3	1.06		0.00	3	0.60
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		0.00	2	0.94	2	0.40
Cedar Waxwing	2	0.71		0.00	2	0.40
Western Tanager	1	0.35	1	0.47	2	0.40
Chipping Sparrow	2	0.71		0.00	2	0.40
Song Sparrow	2	0.71		0.00	2	0.40
Common Yellowthroat	1	0.35	1	0.47	2	0.40
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	0.35		0.00	1	0.20
Western Palm Warbler	1	0.35		0.00	1	0.20
Winter Wren		0.00	1	0.47	1	0.20
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	0.35		0.00	1	0.20
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1	0.35		0.00	1	0.20
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>283</b>		<b>213</b>		<b>496</b>	
<b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>18</b>		<b>29</b>	

Birds banded at LSLBO, 1996 & earlier

Species	1996		1996 Total	1995 Total	1994 Total	1993 Total	93-95 Total
	Spring	MAPS Fall					
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	5	7	13	5		18
American Kestrel	1		1				
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4	2	6	9	2	1	12
Downy Woodpecker				3			3
Yellow-shafted Flicker				1	1		2
Western Wood Pewee				1	3		4
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	3		3	3	8	1	12
Trail's Flycatcher	55	2	91	142	254	26	422
Least Flycatcher	26	14	40	241	234	27	502
Eastern Phoebe	2		2	2	1		3
Gray Jay				1			1
Blue Jay	1	1	2		1		1
Black-capped Chickadee	3	52	55	65	36	3	104
Boreal Chickadee		2	2	3	7		10
Red-breasted Nuthatch		1	10	19	1	1	21
Brown Creeper				1			1
House Wren				1			1
Winter Wren				1			1
Golden-crowned Kinglet				4	1		5
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	23	24	16	15	1	32
Veery				4			4
Gray-cheeked Thrush				1	1		1
Swainson's Thrush	14	2	59	141	126	5	272
Hermit Thrush	3	5	8	4	4		8
American Robin	8	2	10	19	17	3	39
Gray Catbird					1		1
Cedar Waxwing		6	6	25	13	5	43
Warbling Vireo	1	1	2	9	5		14

Species	1996			1995	1994	1993	93-95
	Spring	MAPS	Fall				
Solitary Vireo		1	3	9	4	1	14
Philadelphia Vireo			4	29	6	2	37
Red-eyed Vireo	13		7	69	39	15	123
Tennessee Warbler	18	2	90	248	371	4	623
Orange-crowned Warbler	16		66	64	20	7	91
Nashville Warbler				1			1
Yellow Warbler	17	2	67	252	157	37	446
Chestnut-sided Warbler				3	4		7
Magnolia Warbler	6	1	25	57	61	6	124
Cape May Warbler			1	10	8		18
Myrtle Warbler	34	1	58	527	123	15	665
Bl.-throated Green Warbler		1	1	5			5
Blackburnian Warbler				1			1
Western Palm Warbler	1		17	11	4	1	16
Bay-breasted Warbler			2	4			4
Blackpoll Warbler	4		5	22	7		29
Black and White Warbler	8	1	19	63	38	3	104
American Redstart	59	9	164	548	521	43	1112
Ovenbird	7	3	16	30	25	1	56
Northern Waterthrush	6	1	13	21	16	2	39
Connecticut Warbler				1			1
Mourning Warbler	6	5	13	79	61	2	142
Common Yellowthroat	8		3	68	48	15	131
Wilson's Warbler	8		7	54	70	9	133
Canada Warbler	25	10	61	156	132	21	309
Western Tanager				6	4		10
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2		2	12	14		26
American Tree Sparrow	2		31	33			33
Chipping Sparrow	14		1	10	8	2	20





**Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory**

**Spring Migration Report**

**June 20, 1996**



**Compiled By:**

**Laura-Jean Blonski**

**Senior Bird Bander**

**1996 Field Season**

### Migration Monitoring Period

Spring migration monitoring commenced May 06 and concluded June 07, 1996. Cold, damp weather delayed monitoring efforts; days previous to May 06 were spent conducting site maintenance and mist-net repairs. Migration for the period was monitored through the use of 12 strategically-placed mist-nets, a daily census route and visual observations.

### Staff and Visitation

The station was managed by myself and Denis Rathig, a German ecology student who volunteered from May 01 - June 04. On May 15, Christina Rogers came to act as field assistant but was unable to stay for the entirety of the season. On May 20, Brenda Sanderson fulfilled the position of field assistant and has remained as such. Visitation was relatively low, excluding the Songbird Festival and other planned interpretive events.

### Songbird Festival and Other Events

The second annual songbird festival was held on the weekend of May 18 & 19. May 18 was a dismal rainy day with approximately 20 guests, predominantly LSLBO committee members. Fortunately the first couple hours were pleasant; early arrivals were able to observe a variety of species in-the-hand and were treated to interpretive banding demonstrations. May 19 was a more pleasant and well-attended day. 26 birds were banded and approximately 60 visitors were accounted for. The park interpreters, Andrea Revel and Andrea Pollock assisted the younger children in making bird feeders. Myrna Pearman gave an informative and much appreciated talk on "how to attract birds to your backyard." Volunteers of the LSLBO gave hourly guided "bird walks" through the mixedwood boreal forest.

In addition to the festival, 2 separate interpretive demonstrations were given. The first took place on June 03. Nearly 50 grade 8 & 9 students from Swan Hills learned about migratory songbirds, the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory and why and how we capture and band such birds. A similar presentation was given to about 30 girls from Oliver School in Edmonton on June 06.

### Numbers of Birds and Species Banded

The number of birds newly banded during the migration period was 445; 52 birds were retrapped. Number of birds banded ranged from 1 lone Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) on May 06 to a high of 47 birds banded on May 30. The peak migration for the season occurred from May 28 to May 30 with numbers of captured birds being 40, 45, and 54 respectively. This suggests a shorter peak migration with a great reduction in numbers when compared to past years' data. For instance, in 1995 peak migration occurred from May 28 to June 01 with numbers of 64, 61, 65, 93, and 55 respectively.

Number of species banded varied throughout the spring migration season. The lowest number occurred on May 06 with only 1 species banded. The highest numbers occurred on May 30 with 18 species banded. Number of species banded remained at or below 10 prior to May 19.

### Species of Interest

Interesting banding events include the banding of a Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*) on May 08, an American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) on May 09, a Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) on May 17 and the banding of 3 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers (*Empidonax flaviventris*) on May 30, June 04 and June 07. Several Blackpoll Warbler females (*Dendroica striata*) were caught and banded - not unusual, but not overly common at LSLBO. An Evening Grosbeak female (*Coccothraustes vespertina*) was banded on June 02, the same day that a male of the same species was seen and heard singing around the lab.

Interesting sightings include a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers (*Dryocopus pileatus*) which appeared to be nesting in the area. A pair of Ring-necked Ducks (*Aythya collaris*) were spotted close to the lakeshore on May 08. The following day a Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) was spotted as it perched on some deadwood, then flew low over the lake. An Oldsquaw (*Clangula hyemalis*) was heard and later seen through a scope on May 19; as well a Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) was seen on May 19 and on June 02. The highlight of the season was the capture of a Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) in a mist-net on May 21. Wow!!!

### Casualties

Unfortunately, injuries and deaths are a normal part of any banding operation and this year was no exception. Staff and volunteers do their best to keep casualties to a minimum by checking nets every 20 -30 minutes and by keeping the nets in good repair. Weather is also a consideration. For the safety of the birds banding is not carried out in inclement weather. That is, nets remain closed in conditions of (1) high winds, (2) rain, or (3) extreme temperature variants.

In summary, 2 cases of predation occurred; 1 bird was found dead in the net, presumably from stress; 2 birds died after being removed from the net, probably a combination of stress and injuries sustained from severe entanglement. In addition to these deaths, 1 bird received leg lacerations from struggling in the net. He was quickly removed and released without being banded.

The 2 predated birds were American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*). The predator is believed to have been a bird of prey, possibly a Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) based on our visual observations of them around the area. The other deaths include 2 American Redstarts (*Setophaga ruticilla*) and 1 Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*). The injured bird with leg lacerations was a Lincoln's sparrow (*Melospiza lincolni*)

**1996 LSLBO Spring Migration Banding Totals**  
(excludes retrap species)

Species	Latin	Total
Alder Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax alnorum</i>	54
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	1
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	59
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	8
American Tree Sparrow	<i>Spizella arborea</i>	2
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula galbula</i>	2
Black and White Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	8
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Parus atricapillus</i>	3
Blackpoll Warbler	<i>Dendroica striata</i>	4
Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	1
Canada Warbler	<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>	26
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	14
Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>	9
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	7
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	2
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes vespertina</i>	1
Fox Sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>	1
Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	3
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	27
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	10
Magnolia Warbler	<i>Dendroica magnolia</i>	5
Mourning Warbler	<i>Oporornis philadelphia</i>	6
Myrtle Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	34
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>	6
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>	16
Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>	7
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	13
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	1
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	2
Slate-colored Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis hyemalis</i>	1
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	1
Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>	14
Swamp Sparrow	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	3
Trail's Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax ?</i>	1
Tennessee Warbler	<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>	18
Warbling vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	1
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	6

White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	32
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	8
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>	3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	4
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	=	<b>445</b>