

the Sand Bluff Birder

the official newsletter of the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory

March 2011

President's Message

You hear it all the time! Where has the time gone? It doesn't seem possible that banding season is just a few weeks away. Soon we will drag out the nets and stage the trails for spring season. What will this year bring? Once again, I can't wait to get my hands on that first bird to get that feeling of awe all over again. We complain about the cold and snow, yet the birds and wildlife survive. It's hard to believe that they fare as well as they do.

This year we have moved out of the normal Mother's Day weekend "Birdfest" attempting to catch warblers in migration. We have decided to have our festival May 14 and 15. Please come and join us for an exciting weekend of birds and nature.

During the last weekend of October 2010, Lee and Lynda Johnson, my wife, Deb, and yours truly traveled to northern Ohio to the Inland Bird Banding Association annual meeting held at the Black Swamp Bird Observatory located on the shores of Lake Erie. It consisted of three days of very interesting programs one of which featured several studies on birds and their habitat. Our own Lee Johnson presented his study of Bird Population Decline, a study done at Sand Bluff over several decades. Sunday morning we visited their banding station, located on a power plant's property, which was very interesting. In comparison, Sand Bluff Bird Observatory does not have to take a back seat to any other banding station.

Sincerely,
Mike Eickman
President SBBO



Female American Goldfinch—fall plumage

Photo by John Longhenry

Goldfinches – Where They Go

by Lee G. Johnson

The American Goldfinch is found in our banding area year 'round. The population is made up of various components. Some of the goldfinches are permanent residents and are present all year. During the nesting season, they are joined by others from further south to form a nesting population which nests mainly in August. In spring and fall, the numbers of goldfinches grow as the local birds are joined by migrants going north and south. In the fall, sometimes these flocks are almost all young birds of the current year. In winter a part of the population is birds from further north.

From banding, we have found that the American Goldfinch is very erratic in its occurrence--one year common, the next very scarce. Also, the time of its movements changes from year to year. Sometimes the peak of migration or occurrence is in September and other times it is in November or anywhere in between. Except during the breeding season, it is a particularly gregarious bird and may collect into very large flocks.

Over the years, we have banded 20,007 American Goldfinches making it the second most numerous bird captured at SBBO. The erratic nature of the population is shown by the wide range in yearly banding totals from a low of 64, to a high of 3,158.

We also recapture birds on subsequent days and subsequent years.

Because goldfinches are birds which commonly visit feeders, people are more likely to find ones that we have banded. Through the years, 16 of our goldfinch numbers have been returned to the banding office and we have learned of their movements. The goldfinches are coming from north and west of here and then fanning out into the central part of the southeast. The majority of the birds are found within a year of the initial banding with the longest elapsed time being 4 years and 3 days.

The following is a chart of our birds found other places:

Date Banded	Date Found	Location	Lat & Long
10/28/1972	6/15/1973	Spring Grove Twp, WI	423-0892
12/1/1974	3/18/1975	Marengo, IL	421-0883
11/8/1974	4/15/1975	Pinson, TN	353-0884
11/21/1976	4/10/1977	Portage, WI	433-0892
3/6/1977	4/15/1978	E. Peoria, IL	484-0893
9/1/1985	3/2/1987	Stanon, AL	342-0865
5/6/1989	8/7/1992	Lindstrom, MN	452-0925
11/7/1993	3/15/1994	Pine Bluff, AR	341-0920
10/1/1994	6/24/1995	Yellow Grass, SASK	494-1041
10/8/1994	1/29/1998	Galena, MO	364-0932
4/26/1998	7/8/1998	Pine City, MN	455-0925
5/12/2002	6/19/2002	Waukesha, WI	430-0881
10/27/2001	8/3/2002	Clear Lake, WI	451-0921
3/29/1999	4/2/2002	Newark TWP, WI	423-0891
10/12/2008	2/4/2009	Nacogdoches, TX	313-0943
11/1/2008	7/21/2009	Lannon, WI	430-0880

IT WAS A GOOD FALL!

Lee G. Johnson, Master Bander

Hawk trapping in the fall of 2010 had the highest numbers ever. Of course, the major excitement was two Peregrines caught within a few minutes of each other.

Numbers at the mist nets were good with flycatcher numbers higher than usual. Warblers were good for current averages. Swallows stayed later than average this year, so our catch was good. Unusual birds last fall were: Sora, Summer Tanagers - 2, Harris' Sparrow, and LeConte's Sparrow.

FALL 2010 BANDING REPORT

SPECIES	2010	2000	1980	SPECIES	2010	2000	1980
Wood Duck	0	0	0	Nashville Warbler	23	31	13
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	3	7	Northern Parula	0	2	2
American Kestrel	0	0	0	Yellow Warbler	0	0	0
Sora	1	0	0	Chestnut-sided Warbler	24	8	14
American Woodcock	1	1	0	Magnolia Warbler	116	110	68
Mourning Dove	1	1	0	Cape May Warbler	2	0	1
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	0	0	3	Black-throated Blue Warbler	6	1	2
Black-billed Cuckoo	2	1	7	Yellow-rumped Warbler	144	123	67
Barred Owl	0	2	0	Bk-throated Green Warbler	6	5	9
Long-eared Owl	0	2	0	Blackburnian Warbler	1	1	5
N. Saw-Whet Owl	24	135	3	Pine Warbler	0	0	0
Common Nighthawk	2	1	0	Palm Warbler	34	72	43
Whip-poor-will	0	0	1	Bay-breasted Warbler	4	4	19
Belted Kingfisher	0	0	1	Blackpoll Warbler	3	2	0
Red-headed Woodpecker	0	0	0	Black-and-white Warbler	18	8	23
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3	1	2	American Redstart	63	35	37
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	1	1	Worm-eating Warbler	0	0	0
Downy Woodpecker	47	14	38	Ovenbird	96	59	57
Hairy Woodpecker	6	1	6	Northern Waterthrush	8	5	10
Yellow-shafted Flicker	7	2	4	Prothonotary Warbler	0	0	0
Olive-sided Flycatcher	8	0	1	Kentucky Warbler	0	0	0
Eastern Wood-Pewee	79	13	13	Hooded Warbler	1	0	0
Acadian Flycatcher	0	0	0	Connecticut Warbler	1	1	1
Willow Flycatcher	28	5	3	Mourning Warbler	5	2	4
Least Flycatcher	36	5	12	Common Yellowthroat	18	11	4
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	11	10	18	Wilson's Warbler	5	1	2
Eastern Phoebe	58	71	9	Canada Warbler	12	3	14
Great Crested Flycatcher	7	0	1	Yellow-breasted Chat	0	0	0
Eastern Kingbird	8	26	0	Summer Tanager	2	0	0
Tree Swallow	4	0	0	Scarlet Tanager	16	4	7
Barn Swallow	6	0	0	Northern Cardinal	26	12	1
Cliff Swallow	4	0	00	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	24	1	34
Blue Jay	13	1	20	Blue Grosbeak	0	0	0
Black-capped Chickadee	47	24	29	Indigo Bunting	28	29	7
Tufted Titmouse	17	5	10	Eastern Towhee	3	1	12
Red-breasted Nuthatch	0	0	0	American Tree Sparrow	65	33	66
White-breasted Nuthatch	24	7	14	Chipping Sparrow	266	267	25
Brown Creeper	29	17	8	Clay-colored Sparrow	0	0	0
Carolina Wren	0	0	0	Field Sparrow	96	124	91
House Wren	56	40	4	Vesper Sparrow	8	10	49
Winter Wren	12	11	9	LeConte's Sparrow	1	0	0
Sedge Wren	0	0	0	Henslow's Sparrow	0	0	0
Golden-crowned Kinglet	94	130	30	Lark Sparrow	0	2	0
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	99	92	76	Savannah Sparrow	6	9	4
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	5	0	0	Grasshopper Sparrow	15	11	10
Eastern Bluebird	69	85	12	Fox Sparrow	80	34	36
Veery	24	56	17	Song Sparrow	67	61	18
Gray-cheeked Thrush	23	5	4	Lincoln's Sparrow	47	9	9
Swainson's Thrush	170	58	33	Swamp Sparrow	27	32	21
Hermit Thrush	194	73	29	White-throated Sparrow	195	63	162
Wood Thrush	15	6	10	White-crowned Sparrow	14	3	0
American Robin	145	18	14	Harris's Sparrow	1	0	0
Gray Catbird	156	35	24	Dark-eyed Junco	429	308	203
Northern Mockingbird	0	0	0	Oregon Junco	0	0	0
Brown Thrasher	1	1	2	Bobolink	0	0	0
Cedar Waxwing	360	13	5	Red-winged Blackbird	0	3	0
Loggerhead Shrike	0	0	0	Eastern Meadowlark	0	1	0
Northern Shrike	0	1	0	Common Grackle	0	0	31
White-eyed Vireo	0	0	0	Brown-headed Cowbird	1	0	0
Blue-headed Vireo	0	1	2	Rusty Blackbird	0	1	0
Yellow-throated Vireo	7	0	5	Orchard Oriole	4	4	0
Warbling Vireo	5	0	1	Baltimore Oriole	37	6	22
Philadelphia Vireo	7	2	1	Purple Finch	9	3	32
Red-eyed Vireo	111	7	15	Pine Siskin	0	0	2
Blue-winged Warbler	2	0	1	American Goldfinch	279	165	331
Golden-winged Warbler	3	1	1	House Finch	4	16	0
Tennessee Warbler	67	44	58	House Sparrow	0	0	1
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	4	8				
				TOTAL	4447	2685	2189

PLEASE HELP US ... in any way you can

Our non-profit organization survives because of private contributions of time and money from friends just like you. Please examine the list below and help us continue our important banding program by making your contribution!

- Enclosed is a (tax-deductible) contribution of
- \$5.00 (Subscriber)
 - \$15.00 (Donor)
 - \$25.00 (Supporting Member)
 - \$50.00 (Net Sponsor)
 - \$100.00 (Sustaining Member)
- I'd like to learn more about volunteering, please call me!
- Please contact me to schedule a program/tour for my group!

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Telephone (days) _____ (evenings) _____ (e-mail) _____

Please return this form to: Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, P. O. Box 2, Seward, Illinois 61077

SBBO Annual Meeting

The SBBO annual meeting was held Saturday, January 8, 2011 from 1-3 p.m. at Severson Dells Environmental Education Center with over 25 volunteers present. The minutes of the last board meeting and 2010 treasurer's report were approved. All board members whose terms expired in 2011, as well as the executive board, were unanimously reelected.

The nets for spring banding will go up as soon as weather allows after March 1. Based on typical migration patterns, it was decided to hold Birdfest on the weekend of May 14-15 during the peak of warbler migration. Owl nights will be Oct. 15 and/or Oct. 22 and Hawking days will begin Sept. 15 (look for details in future issues). New volunteer training will be March 19.

The bluebird nesting box monitors will be working closely with the banders on the weekends in a more diligent effort to band the nestling bluebirds. The yearly bander/recorder refresher training was scheduled for Feb. 12 or 13 at Lee and Lynda Johnson's home.

Midway Village Bluebird Project

by Julie Thompson, SBBO Volunteer and Master Naturalist

My thanks to Sand Bluff for helping to finance the bluebird path at Midway Village. We put up ten houses and checked them all nearly every week from March through October. The houses hosted several species of birds including Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Black-capped Chickadees and English Sparrows.

There were six nests of bluebirds. The first bluebird nest was destroyed, probably by a raccoon, but quickly reestablished in the next nesting box where they successfully raised two babies. There were five other nests where a nesting pair successfully raised their young for a total of about 20 bluebird hatchlings.

In July, I was out of the country and Kaye Puffett checked the nests in my absence. Later in the summer, the native plantings got so high that I could not get around the trail successfully. I also cleaned and checked nests at Sandy Hollow Golf Course, intermittently throughout the summer, where I found three birds' nests and know that at least five bluebirds fledged.

GROUP VISITS— Schools, groups, clubs, retirees, etc. may call now to schedule a special weekend or weekday visit during the spring migration season. Experience the banding process and a net run with trained volunteers. A per person donation is expected. Call Lisa Weckerly at 815-623-1815 to make a reservation.



Photo by John Longhenry

Volunteer Training Spring 2011

Interested in learning about becoming a volunteer at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory? We welcome volunteers, ages 13 and older. We do require that young teens be accompanied by their parent[s] or other adult designated by their parent[s]. Please come to the **SPRING ORIENTATION** at SBBO, Colored Sands Forest Preserve, Saturday, March 19 from 10:00am – 12:00 noon. The qualifications are easy:

- 1.) a desire to learn about birds
- 2.) a willingness to share your enthusiasm about birds and nature with visitors
- 3.) a wish to be part of a team of dedicated people collecting important scientific data

Oh, yes....one more important criteria...you do have to show up at SBBO on a regular, consistent manner, even if the weather isn't swell, and the mosquitoes are rampant.

The pay stinks, but the personal rewards are great!
Call Lynda to register: 815-629-2781

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P. O. Box 2
Seward, IL 61077



Photo by John Longhenry

Read more about the
American Goldfinch
See page 1

Birdfest 2011

Sat. May 14—8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sun. May 15—8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Warbler Spring Migration Week

Adults—\$2.50

4-12 yrs.—\$.50

3 & under—free

See & touch a wild bird & learn why birds are banded. See raptors, visit the Kid's Korner, Silent Auction, Eickman's food tent and much, much more.

Come on out to Colored Sands & SBBO!

Here's How To Reach Us!

During Operating Hours: 815-629-2671

Mailing Address: Sand Bluff Bird Observatory
P. O. Box 2
Seward, IL 61077

Be sure to visit our website at: www.sandbluff.org

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS

If you wish to cancel, subscribe or correct your mailing address for the Sand Bluff Birder, please e-mail: bottum4548@gmail.com.
Subject: SBBO Birder



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