



## Opening of the banding station

From now until the end of October, *les Dunes de Tadoussac* within the *Parc national du Saguenay* will be home to the *Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac's* (OOT) team of bird banders. The team is active from daybreak until the early hours of the morning, capturing and banding passerines, woodpeckers, and owls; Sharp-shinned Hawks and bats are occasionally caught too! This year, Christophe Buidin (bander-in-charge, diurnal activities), Yann Rochepault (bander-in-charge, nocturnal activities) and a team of five volunteers will operate the banding station. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who replied to our call for help with the running of the station. The volunteers provide precious aid, ensuring the rapid extraction of birds from the mist nets prior to

Number of owls and woodpeckers banded		
Species	Week 3 (starting date: 12 sept.)	Season 2006
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	1
Boreal Owl	0	0
American Three-toed Woodpecker	-	-
Black-backed Woodpecker	-	-

The five most frequently banded passerine species	
Week 3 (starting date : 12 sept.)	Season 2006
Yellow-rumped Warbler (145)	Yellow-rumped Warbler (145)
Magnolia Warbler(22)	Magnolia Warbler(22)
White-throated Sparrow(16)	White-throated Sparrow(16)
Golden-crowned Kinglet(14)	Golden-crowned Kinglet(14)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (9)	Ruby-crowned Kinglet (9)

Banders : Christophe Buidin et Yann Rochepault

banding. From the 25 September until the 22 October, the banding station will be using a loud-speaker system surrounded by a quadrilateral arrangement of mist nets to actively net Black-backed and American Three-toed Woodpeckers. During the day, the speakers will diffuse the calls of the above two species; however, after sunset, the calls are changed and the same arrangement of nets is used to catch Boreal and Northern Saw-whet Owls, another two of the OOT's priority species. We would like to remind you that during visits to the OOT, two of our naturalists will be available to explain how the banding station operates and to guide you round the site. For further information concerning those activities, please call the *Maison des Dunes* (418-235-4238) situated in the *Parc national du Saguenay*.

**BANDING STATION :** The first day that the nets were opened was marked by an important passage of Yellow-rumped Warblers. This species is normally the second most numerous on the OOT's annual banding list (422 individuals in 2005). With regards to the OOT's nocturnal activities, one Northern Saw-whet Owl was captured on the 13 September. In contrast to last year, this year the OOT should band a larger number of Northern Saw-whet Owls than Boreal Owls. This situation, which is observed every four or five years, is due to the population cycles of small



rodents in the boreal forest. This year, small rodent numbers should have been relatively high and this should, subsequently, have resulted in higher owl productivity. As Northern Saw-whet Owls leave the boreal forest to winter further south, a highly productive year will result in a greater number of individuals being caught at Tadoussac. In contrast, Boreal Owls are residents of the boreal forest, and for this species an abundant food resource reduces competition between individuals. This, in turn, allows a greater number of females and juveniles to winter in the north, so reducing the number of individuals passing through Tadoussac.

**AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR :** For the fifth year out of ten, a Dickcissel was observed during the OOT's visual counts. This species nests

mainly in the central United States, where it is associated with either prairie or open farmland habitat. In winter it migrates to central America. It is, therefore, difficult to explain why an individual would find itself in the boreal forest. Even today, we poorly understand the reasons behind such changes in the flight direction of migratory birds. Usually, short distance displacements can be attributed to certain weather systems that force birds off-course. However, in the present case, it seems likely that the individual was disorientated. Research has shown that nocturnally migrating passerines use both the stars and the earth's magnetic field to orientate themselves. In fact, small crystals of magnetite have been found in the olfactory zone of the brain of certain species. As the magnetic and geographic poles are not identical, the stop-off periods during migration serve to re-equilibrate the bird's internal compass with regards to its deviation from the magnetic pole. However, if a bird is not able to rest for a sufficiently long period in the same place, it could, in theory, become disorientated and, therefore, be more susceptible to getting lost. Another visitor that was a little off-track was a White-crowned Sparrow of the sub-species *gambelli* (a sub-species from the west) that was sighted on the 13 September.

Raptor counts		
Species	Weeks 2 and 3 31 Aug. to 13 sept.	Total 2006
Osprey	44	45
Bald Eagle	18	23
Northern Harrier	52	68
Sharp-shinned Hawk	892	998
Goshawk	14	18
Broad-winged Hawk	346	377
Red-tailed Hawk	178	185
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0
Golden Eagle	0	0
American Kestrel	241	261
Merlin	30	36
Peregrine Falcon	4	6
Gyrfalcon	0	0
Turkey Vulture	17	19
Unidentified raptor	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1837</b>	<b>2037</b>

**VISUAL COUNTS :** The first large passage of raptors was observed on the 10 September, bringing the season's total up to 2,037 individuals since the 24 August. Although the birds were mainly Broad-winged Hawks and American Kestrels, the numbers for these two species remain well below the mean for this time of year (776 Broad-winged Hawks and 467 American Kestrels). With regards to non-raptors, the number of Rusty Blackbirds so far observed (77) is already greater than last year's total count for this species (54). This is encouraging because this species has undergone a rapid decline in recent years.

The five most abundant migrating passerines	
Weeks 2 and 3	Season 2006
Cedar Waxwing (4121)	Cedar Waxwing (5700)
Yellow-rumped Warbler (974)	Yellow-rumped Warbler (1010)
American Pipit (515)	White-winged Crossbill (763)
White-winged Crossbill (499)	American Pipit (516)
American Goldfinch (204)	American Goldfinch (253)

Official counters : Samuel Belleau et Samuel Denault



Keep your eyes open and enjoy the migration!

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