

Net Results

SPRING—
SUMMER 2006

RRBO monitoring avian influenza

Sampling part of a hemisphere-wide effort in early detection

In spring 2006, RRBO was one of only 34 migration monitoring stations in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America to participate in a new program to monitor avian influenza. This effort was sponsored by the Landbird Migration Monitoring Network of the Americas (LaMMNA), of which RRBO is a charter member.

Though highly pathogenic avian influenza (which normally does not occur in wild birds) hasn't been found yet in the Americas, many entities are setting up monitoring programs to detect it if and when it does arrive. Much of the monitoring in North America is concentrated in Alaska, and there, as elsewhere, it has been focused on waterfowl and domestic fowl. But there are 143 other different avian flu subtypes, most of which are low pathogenic, and not enough is known about which landbirds might carry which subtypes. Bird banding networks have a unique opportunity to provide a service to the public by providing the field sampling vital for disease surveillance and important information on disease dynamics

and diversity.

The sampling protocol is simple and fast, and involves gathering cells shed from the intestinal lining on tiny swabs, which are then placed in a vial with preservative and sealed. Two feathers from each bird are also obtained. These will help determine birth places and migratory routes through stable isotope analysis.

RRBO obtained samples from 53 birds of 29 species. The sampling was limited by the nationwide shortage of the special swabs. We used up all the supplies provided before the end of the season. Samples will be analyzed by UCLA using facilities developed by the Los Alamos National Lab and funded by the U.S. Department of Defense. RRBO will continue this work in the fall, and the program is expected to continue for four years.

More information on avian flu, and the role of migratory birds, can be found via the link on the front page of the RRBO web site: www.rrbo.org



More about our logo on page 4

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Breeding Bird Atlas update

Thanks to the efforts of dozens of volunteers, 132 species of birds have been recorded as breeding in Wayne County through 2005, the fourth of six years of effort for the Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas II project. Julie Craves of RRBO serves as the field work coordinator for Wayne County. Over 5,000 records have been received for the county. Interesting new finds for 2005 included Wild Turkey, Bell's Vireo, Hooded Warbler, and Pine Siskin. Bald Eagles had nests in three locations. The species found in the most locations are European Starling, American Robin, House Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Mourning Dove, Warbling Vireo, and Red-winged Blackbird.

We welcome your participation! See the back page of this newsletter for more information.

RRBO work at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

RRBO has completed a number of surveys for birds and insects on the Humbug Marsh unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR). The DRIWR, established in 2001, is the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America. It includes islands, wetlands, and riverfront lands along 18 miles of the Lower Detroit River and the entire Michigan shoreline of the western basin of Lake Erie. Humbug Marsh and island, 410 acres in Gibraltar and Trenton, representing the last mile of natural shoreline on the U.S. side of the Detroit River, was added to the Refuge in 2003. Data collected by RRBO will help establish a baseline for future decisions on how to plan trails and facilities at the site, and guide wildlife management decisions.

RRBO has completed surveys in all seasons beginning in late 2004, including two Christmas Bird Counts (Humbug is part of the Rockwood Christmas Bird Count circle) and two North American Migration Counts, as well as lots of Breeding Bird Atlas work. Breeding Bird Atlas effort has recorded over 70 nesting species in the Humbug complex, including the first confirmation of breeding American Redstarts in the county in many years! You can look at the complete results of the Christmas Bird Counts and the North American Migration Counts on a page of the RRBO web site devoted to the DRIWR/RRBO partnership: www.rrbo.org/driwr.html.

Also available on this web site is a detailed report, *Thirty Years of the Rockwood Christmas Bird Count, 1974-2004*, by RRBO's Julie Craves. She conducted the analysis and authored the report under contract by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It contains a summary of all the birds counted over the 30-year period, as well as trends for a number of species of waterfowl, birds of prey, and songbirds. For example, Mute Swans on this count, which includes much of the lower Detroit River, have shown a strongly increasing trend over the years. On the 2004 Christmas Bird Count, the first at Humbug, RRBO counted nearly 600 Mute Swans in the open water between Humbug Marsh and Island, birds that were probably not accurately counted in previous years. As this species is not native



Aerial view of the Humbug Marsh Unit of the DRIWR.

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Summary of Birds Banded by RRBO fall 1992 through spring 2006

Sharp-shinned Hawk	11
Virginia Rail	1
Killdeer	1
American Woodcock	10
Mourning Dove	23
Black-billed Cuckoo	7
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1
Eastern Screech-owl	8
Northern Saw-whet Owl	34
Common Nighthawk	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3
Downy Woodpecker	157
Hairy Woodpecker	25
Yellow-shafted Flicker	107
Eastern Wood-Pewee	11
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	48
"Traill's" Flycatcher	265
Least Flycatcher	186
Eastern Phoebe	13
Great Crested Flycatcher	22
Eastern Kingbird	25
White-eyed Vireo	6
Blue-headed Vireo	15
Yellow-throated Vireo	2
Warbling Vireo	93
Philadelphia Vireo	61
Red-eyed Vireo	324
Blue Jay	168
Barn Swallow	1
Black-capped Chickadee	361
Tufted Titmouse	57
Red-breasted Nuthatch	9
White-breasted Nuthatch	15
Brown Creeper	24
Carolina Wren	55
House Wren	338
Winter Wren	32
Marsh Wren	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	220
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	424
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	11
Veery	133
Gray-cheeked Thrush	227
Swainson's Thrush	1364
Hermit Thrush	764
Wood Thrush	153
American Robin	2593
Gray Catbird	2902
Brown Thrasher	38
Cedar Waxwing	308
European Starling	46*
Blue-winged Warbler	20
Golden-winged Warbler	9
"Brewster's" Warbler	4
"Lawrence's" Warbler	1
Tennessee Warbler	211
Orange-crowned Warbler	116

(Continued on page 3)

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Bird surveys of the
Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
by the Rouge River Bird Observatory

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(Continued from page 2)

Nashville Warbler	541
Virginia's Warbler	1
Northern Parula	6
Yellow Warbler	294
Chestnut-sided Warbler	146
Magnolia Warbler	699
Cape May Warbler	22
Black-throated Blue Warbler	140
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1067
Black-thr. Green Warbler	64
Blackburnian Warbler	16
Palm Warbler	226
Bay-breasted Warbler	54
Blackpoll Warbler	324
Black-and-white Warbler	134
American Redstart	497
Prothonotary Warbler	1
Ovenbird	359
Northern Waterthrush	192
Louisiana Waterthrush	1
Kentucky Warbler	1
Connecticut Warbler	27
Mourning Warbler	80
Common Yellowthroat	385
Hooded Warbler	2
Wilson's Warbler	260
Canada Warbler	96
Yellow-breasted Chat	7
Summer Tanager	2
Scarlet Tanager	15
Eastern Towhee	13
American Tree Sparrow	97
Chipping Sparrow	76
Clay-colored Sparrow	4
Field Sparrow	61
Savannah Sparrow	19
Grasshopper Sparrow	1
Fox Sparrow	110
Song Sparrow	1003
Lincoln's Sparrow	270
Swamp Sparrow	362
White-throated Sparrow	1657
White-crowned Sparrow	555
Dark-eyed Junco	588
Northern Cardinal	467
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	63
Indigo Bunting	212
Red-winged Blackbird	219
Rusty Blackbird	1
Common Grackle	159
Brown-headed Cowbird	84
Orchard Oriole	1
Baltimore Oriole	106
Purple Finch	39
House Finch	170
Common Redpoll	1
Pine Siskin	4
American Goldfinch	2000
House Sparrow	22*

Total: 26,130

*no longer banded

RRBO joins Bird Conservation Alliance

The American Bird Conservancy's Bird Conservation Alliance is a network of organizations with a shared interest in the conservation of wild birds. The Alliance's goals are to prevent further bird extinctions, to reverse declines in bird populations, and to assure the protection and management of sufficient habitat to effectively conserve populations of the full range of native, wild bird species for the future.

RRBO joined the Alliance this past year. Issues for which RRBO lent its support were petitioning the Federal Communications Commission to act to reduce bird mortality at communications towers; opposition to the weakening of the federal Endangered Species Act, currently threatened by proposed legislation; and requesting lawmakers to enact rules and laws to protect the eastern population of Red Knots, a shorebird that is a candidate for Endangered Species status.

You can learn more about the Alliance by visiting www.birdconservationalliance.org.



AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

CONSERVING WILD BIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS THROUGHOUT THE AMERICAS

RRBO at the DRIWR

(Continued from page 2)

and can have dramatic negative effects on native species and wetlands, these data on overall trends and the birds' use of Humbug will be essential information in guiding future management plans at the Refuge.

RRBO will continue work this summer, including surveying another Refuge property in the Detroit River, Grassy Island off of Wyandotte. This island, once an emergent marsh, was used as a confined disposal facility for contaminated soils between 1961 and 1982. The Refuge is currently evaluating its use by wildlife to determine future management and remediation strategies.

RRBO is excited to be working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and contributing to the monitoring and planning of this jewel in the Refuge system.



RRBO banded a record-breaking number of White-crowned Sparrows in spring 2006.
More at www.rrbo.org/spring06.html

Rouge River Bird Observatory

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About our Logo

The University of Michigan-Dearborn is located on property that was once the home of Henry Ford. Ford was not only an industrial leader, but a great nature and bird lover -- he was instrumental in convincing Congress to pass the Migratory Bird Treaty in 1913.

Throughout Ford's estate, Fair Lane, there are carvings and other representations of birds. The bird in our logo is taken from the copper ventilator covers in the powerhouse at Fair Lane. Our logo reflects the historical nature of our location.

Participate in the Breeding Bird Atlas!

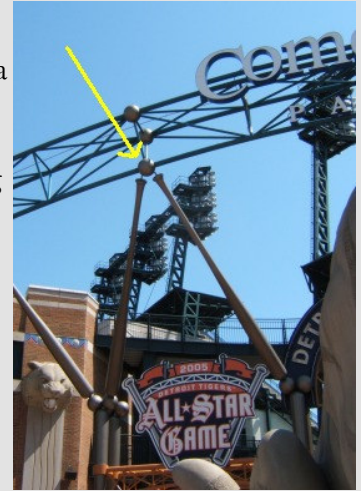
The goal of a Breeding Bird Atlas is to map the distribution of each species that nests in a region. The field work for the first Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas took place in 1983-1988. Wayne County is predominantly urban, and has undergone drastic changes in last twenty years. The new Atlas will help us compare population changes over the last 20 years, and guide future conservation plans.

Anybody can participate! Whether you have a strong knowledge of birds and would like to work intensively in a 9-square-mile quarter township Atlas "block," or just report nesting birds in your backyard, your contribution is vital to the success of this important project.

If you live in Wayne County, contact Julie Craves of RRBO, the county coordinator, at jac@rrbo.org. She can provide maps, forms, instructions, or just make note of your observations of nesting birds to add to the database. Log on to the Wayne County Atlas website at www.rrbo.org/bba.html for even more information.

If you live in Washtenaw County, the coordinator is Dea Armstrong at ddarm@umich.edu. The county coordinators for Oakland and Livingston counties are Dick Wolinski (rawolinski@comcast.net) and Mike Champagne (spnc@tir.com); for Monroe it is Allen Chartier (amazilia1@comcast.net). For other parts of the state, contact Atlas Headquarters at Kalamazoo Nature Center at miatl@naturecenter.org or (269) 381-9738.

Join in!



European Starlings nesting in a decorative ball at Comerica Park in Detroit. Every bird observation is important!

Yes, I/we want to support the work of the Rouge River Bird Observatory

Enclosed is my/our gift of:

Name _____

\$25 \$100 \$150

Address _____

\$200 \$500 \$1,000

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Other \$ _____

Charge gift to: Visa Discover MasterCard AmEx

Account Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ / _____

Signature: _____

Make checks payable to the University of Michigan-Dearborn. If you/your spouse work(s) for a matching gift company, please include your matching gift form. FOR OFFICE USE EID _____ 303732