



THE MARSH WREN

BRADDOCK BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY

A HOME FOR BBBO HOUSE TO SERVE AS BASE OF OPERATIONS

*"Dreams CAN come true ...
we have a home!"*
-Betsy Brooks

The Observatory is pleased to announce that we now have a place to call home! On March 24, 2006, BBBO purchased the Gisela Kohnen home on the corner of Second Street and Braddocks Avenue. This home will provide accommodations for banders, field assistants, bander training students, and visiting researchers—space that has long been a dream of the Observatory's board of directors and one of the goals of the current capital campaign.

For the last 10 years we have relied upon the generosity of friends and neighbors at Braddock Bay, especially Jim Gillette, Bill Kaiser, and Bob and Charlene Reed, to provide housing for our volunteer staff. With the new acquisition, BBBO will be able to offer additional space to encourage even more research at one of North America's most unique and active migration monitoring stations.

The house is located only a few yards from the driveway of the banding station and overlooks 13 acres of land, which was purchased last year by the Genesee Land Trust (GLT) and BBBO and permanently protected for the benefit of

migratory birds. The home will provide adequate space to accommodate a small crew of banders, field assistants, and visiting researchers each season. The property also features a two-car garage and a yard that may prove useful for future studies of hummingbird migration.

The process of acquiring the house began in the fall of 2005 when BBBO began to work out the details of how the estate of Mrs. Kohnen would be dissolved. This turned out to be a fairly involved process because Mrs. Kohnen's only surviving heirs live in Germany! By December 2005, BBBO had explored numerous scenarios for how the property may be acquired. After learning BBBO (as a non-profit organization) would not be eligible for a traditional mortgage, the Board of Directors approached several private individuals and asked for help to quickly increase the funds raised through our 2009 Capital Campaign. The response was overwhelmingly supportive. In mid-December a very generous anonymous donor offered a dollar-for-dollar matching challenge to BBBO and its Membership. Thanks to the positive response of

Continued on page 2. House photo by Phil Marino.



A NEW HOME FOR BBBO

Continued from page 1.

our members to the challenge, BBBO raised more than \$20,000 in less than one month! The same anonymous donor committed to a generous down payment on the house once BBBO had a purchase contract in place! In addition to that, Sandy and David Junkin, BBBO members and banders from North Java, New York, have graciously pledged to donate a substantial portion of the purchase price of the house. However, in order to purchase the house this spring, BBBO needed to secure enough money to submit a purchase offer and close on the house by March. This is where BBBO's partner in conservation, the GLT, became part of the equation. BBBO was able to secure a private mortgage from the GLT, which enabled the Observatory to complete the purchase of the house on March 24th.

In December 2004, BBBO announced that the organization was initiating a Capital Campaign in order to meet the goals and objectives identified in its Strategic Plan. The goal of the Capital Campaign was to raise \$375,000, of which \$250,000 was earmarked for housing and office space. Due to the financial contributions and commitments of several donors, BBBO is approximately 40 percent toward meeting the housing goal!

In the coming months BBBO will increase fundraising efforts in order to achieve its capital needs. Part of the capital earmarked for the house will be used to pay off the GLT mortgage, while other funds will be used to establish an endowment fund in order to operate and maintain the house on an annual basis. Money is also needed for renovations (most notably with regard to the outdated electrical system) and for furnishing the house.

The Board of Directors would like to extend a special thank you to two of our own, Rick Marx and Rob van der Stricht, who spent countless hours working with lawyers, realtors, appraisers, inspectors, and Town officials during the acquisition process. BBBO thanks Sandy and David Junkin and our anonymous donor for their tremendous financial support. BBBO also extends its sincere appreciation to the following individuals who contributed time and in-kind services in conjunction with the acquisition of the house: Scott Forsyth (Forsyth & Forsyth - Attorneys and Counselors at Law), Michael Cooney, John Hood, Mike Tullio and Jason Zwetsch (Nixon Peabody LLP), Jim LeGrett (Midland Appraisal Associates, Inc.), and Lauren Judson (Mitchell Pierson, Jr. Realtors, Inc.).



News of former interns

Anna Ludi, a graduate of the BBBO bander training course (BTC) and the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), is busy taking courses at Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine. Last summer she worked for SEANET studying seabirds. Anna hopes to publish results of her studies looking at the effect of lead fishing gear on Common Loons. * Former BBBO bander Mike Lanzone and his wife Trish are the proud parents of a baby girl, Phoebe Nevalia, born March 14. * Rodney and Meghen Olsen are the parents of their first son, Ian Edward, born March 9, 2006. * Chara Batchelder, RIT student and graduate of the BTC class of fall 2000 began graduate school at Towson University in Baltimore on 30 January. She wrote that one of the faculty members had already recruited her to show his students how to use mist nets! * Chris Gates, graduate of the May 2005 BTC, received his banding subpermit under the BBBO station permit in September. He will conduct research and education in connection with his Tree Swallow nest box project. * Coby Klein, graduate of the May 2003 BTC, has begun graduate study in Animal Behavior and Conservation at Hunter College in New York City. * Katherine Clemens O'Clair, graduate of Nazareth College and the May 2000 BTC, was married last May to Timothy O'Clair. Katherine is a Life Science Reference Librarian at Arizona State University. * Karen Koehler Sargent, intern in 1996 and 1997, continues to teach half time. Karen and her husband Robert were guides for Canadian Wilderness Trips last summer and fall.

Bander publishes "skulling" paper

BBBO Bander Bob McKinney has recently published a technical paper in *North American Bird Bander*, a journal published jointly by the Eastern, Inland and Western Bird Banding Associations. The title of the paper is "Skull Pneumatization in Passerines: A table of Last Dates Many Passerines in the Northeast Can be Aged Safely by Skulling" (Vol. 29. No. 4, October-December 2004).

Pneumatization is a process whereby a second layer of bone develops beneath the bone on the top of the head. A pocket of air remains between the two layers and many tiny columns of bone separate the layers.

Continued on page 8.



MONITORING FOR THE “BIRD FLU”

BBBO JOINS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH EFFORT

Braddock Bay Bird Observatory is launching a new research program to test migratory songbirds for avian influenza, joining an international research effort coordinated through the Landbird Migration Monitoring Network of the Americas (LaMMNA). Samples will be collected from songbirds captured at BBBO and shipped to the University of California Los Angeles and the Los Alamos National Laboratories for testing. Birds will be sampled by swabbing the cloaca (the bird's posterior opening), a procedure that will not harm the birds.

What is bird flu?

Birds have always had the flu. In fact, at least 144 strains of influenza exist, most of which cause few symptoms in either birds or people. The current strain of highly pathogenic bird flu (HPAI H5N1) has circulated in Southeast Asia since 1997. In recent months, the virus has spread to many countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa. This is the strain that is referred to as the “bird flu” by the media.

Media coverage warns of a potential human flu pandemic, yet the virus would need to undergo numerous mutations to become easily transmitted between people. As such, it does not currently present a major threat to human health. Although more than 200 people in Asia have died from the bird flu in recent years, more than 36,000 Americans die from other influenza viruses each year.

Banders and bird flu

The HPAI H5N1 virus has received such extensive media coverage in part because infection frequently results in death in humans. Nearly all human cases of this virus have occurred in people who have been in close contact with infected poultry. Although there are currently no confirmed cases of transmission between wild birds and humans, few people engage in the close contact with wild birds (and their fecal material) that banders do. (No, our hands are not turned purple by grape juice!)

Although HPAI H5N1 is not yet known to occur in North America, BBBO is encouraging all banders and volunteers to wear latex gloves and to minimize exposure to the bird's fecal material. Further, while we greatly appreciate all of the muffins and other goodies brought to the station (keep 'em coming!), food will no longer be allowed in the banding room. (A separate area will be set aside for snacks and socializing.)



Birds and the flu

HPAI H5N1 is currently a pandemic affecting some bird populations in Asia, Europe, and Africa. For instance, approximately 10% of the global population of the Bar-headed Goose was reportedly killed by the virus during a 2005 outbreak in China.

It is possible that the virus will affect North American birds in the future. BBBO is committed to helping better understand the impact of the virus on bird populations if it does reach our continent. Sampling birds for the LaMMNA initiative is part of a larger effort monitoring the spread of the virus throughout the world.

Although the primary motivation for sampling the birds is to detect the H5N1 virus, the procedure will also allow researchers to identify which strains of avian influenza are circulating in wild bird populations and to better understand which species carry the viruses. The lack of information on influenza in songbirds is striking as nearly all research on avian influenza has been conducted on waterfowl and shorebirds.

More information

The bird flu story is rapidly evolving. For the latest details about HPAI H5N1, visit the following web sites:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/

BirdLife International:
www.birdlife.org

National Wildlife Health Center:
www.nwhc.usgs.gov/

Cornell Lab of Ornithology:
www.birds.cornell.edu

THE SEASON AT BRADDOCK BAY

AUTUMN BANDING 2005

The 20th consecutive year of autumn banding at the Kaiser-Manitou Beach Banding Station began on 8 July and ended on 14 November 2005. The busiest day of banding was 30 September when 426 birds of 28 species were captured. Other days with more than 200 captures were 10 October (370), 9 October (341), 13 October (316), 12 October (268), 27 September (243), 8 October (226), and 11 October (210). The greatest species diversity occurred on 13 October when 31 species were banded. The complete list of birds banded during autumn 2005 appears on page 6.

Research & Education

Mark Deutschlander joined us for the whole season during his sabbatical from Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Mark continued his research on nocturnal migratory orientation in Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes. Together with data from spring migration, Mark will be publishing his findings on the effect of fat on the orientation of thrushes along the Lake Ontario shoreline. His findings complement similar experiments on thrushes near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Mark also prepared magnetic coils for orientation experiments he'll conduct this spring.

The Observatory hosted the Eastern Bird Banding Association's seventh North American Banding Council "bander" certification and second "trainer" certification on 7-9 October 2005. Participating Trainers included Tom Bartlett, Betsy Brooks, Mary Doscher, David Holmes, Erin Karnatz, Hannah Suthers, and Bob Yunick. Peter Doherty of Sharon Springs, NY and Annie Lindsay of Ligonier, PA both passed the Bander certification. Sue Finnegan of Brewster, MA, Anthony Hill of S. Hadley, MA and David Okines of St. Williams, Ontario passed the Trainer certification.

Four students successfully completed our Bander Training Course, including Andrea Basso, Heather Bradstreet, Sarah Lazazzero, and Rob van der Stricht.

Highlights & Appreciation

Highlights of the autumn 2005 season included the steady days of good migration; the initiative of the scribes to graduate to handling birds at the nets; swimming in the warm lake; four Cape May Warblers in one morning; the enthusiasm of the Memorial Garden Committee members; the beautiful moonrises; showing a handsome Northern Parula warbler to Dick and Mary Beth O'Hara; Erin Karnatz making plans for hummingbird banding in the spring; seeing photos of John Waud's Mexican birds; Dave Frosini's wonderful Louisiana coffee; the Gray Kingbird on Manitou Road; Cathy Tetlow's sumptuous feast; Delaney's butterfly birthday cake; Peter Doherty's visit for the final week; the nifty Bobolink 'Save Our Grasslands' socks from Barb; Sharon's pastry and Krispy Kremes, Ryan's chicken quesedillas, Linda's lasagne, Drea's chocolate cake, Lois's lemon bars, Mark's salmon, and Sarah's Mexican hors d'oeuvres (do we think too much about food?).



White-throated Sparrow, the most frequently banded species at Braddock Bay during autumn 2005. Photo by Charley Eiseman.

Banding was carried out when weather permitted for at least six hours beginning at dawn every day between 28 August and 21 October. Just one day (31 August) was completely lost due to rain and wind, when the remnants of Hurricane Katrina passed through the region. Banding was also conducted on 12 days prior to and 7 days after the intensive banding period, for a total of 12,374.5 net hours on 74 days. There were 6,470 birds banded of 92 species (compared to 5,176 birds banded of 84 species in 2004). Five male and eight female Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were released unbanded, the last captured on 22 September. The season's overall capture rate was 52.3 birds/100 net hours. Barn Swallow was a new species for the cumulative fall list that now stands at 123 species.



TOP 10 SPECIES Banded DURING AUTUMN 2005

WITH NUMBERS CAPTURED DURING PREVIOUS 10 AUTUMN SEASONS

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
White-throated Sparrow	524	299	715	526	898	1183	1379	867	1569	1146	1516
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	171	271	193	193	757	492	538	330	221	702	722
Golden-crowned Kinglet	136	100	165	294	556	814	358	312	193	473	502
Hermit Thrush	173	117	178	96	261	216	178	238	414	307	450
American Goldfinch	17	77	30	74	48	33	31	106	30	64	288
Yellow-rumped Warbler	16	28	30	96	96	23	175	87	45	56	251
Black-capped Chickadee	457	73	46	290	1082	48	1668	48	68	189	237
Gray Catbird	112	35	75	86	135	83	128	160	163	102	175
Magnolia Warbler	66	66	57	127	276	265	341	214	220	188	170
Swainson's Thrush	77	25	65	40	167	119	147	94	150	159	165

A special thanks to Dick and Mary Beth O'Hara, Bob and Charlene Reed, and Doug Smith for housing and to Bill Kaiser and The Genesee Land Trust for permission to band on their land. Thanks to Tom Muller, Chita McKinney, Dave McKinney, and Jim Gillette for mowing paths and the field; and to Doug Smith for his assistance with building management. We appreciate the following individuals who helped scribe, tended net lanes, or assisted with other aspects of our educational or banding operation: Jake Barnett, Nancy Chevalier, Sara DeLeon, Kevin Dockery, Melanie Driscoll, Jesse Ellis, Judy Engerman, Sue Evans, Cricket Fegan, Marilyn Guenther, Michelle Hall, Mike Harvey, Donna Hilborn, Wes Hochachka, Anya Illes, Peggy Keller, Mari Kimura, Ben Kopec, John Lehr, Pat Leonard, Chita McKinney, Shirley Meston, Jane Miller, Harold Mills, Dan Niven, Jill Pearce, Jesse Roberts, Michelle Rogne, Lee Schofield, Micky Scilingo, Glenn Seeholzer, Jeanne Skelly, Lois Smith, Greta Stephany, Ruth Stork, Rob van der Stricht, Maiken Winter, and Scott and Teresa Wolcott.

Visit Braddock Bay this spring for an up-close view of American Redstarts and an amazing diversity of other birds. Detailed weekly summaries from each banding season are available online.

www.bbbo.org

American Redstart photo by Charley Eiseman.

Licensed banders Tom Bartlett, David Bonter, Elizabeth Brooks, Mark Deutschlander, Kelly Dockery, Jon Dombrowski, David Holmes, Erin Karnatz, Cindy Marino, Robert McKinney, Hannah Suthers, John Waud, and Robert Yunick conducted banding. Banding assistants were Linda Boutwell, Mike Burkett, Sharon Dehn, Peter Doherty, Virginia Duffy, Ryan Kayhart, Pat Lovallo, Doug Smith, and Barb Wagner. Our autumn Field Assistant was Ryan Kayhart.

- Betsy Brooks ♦

BIRDS BANDED AT BRADDOCK BAY AUTUMN 2005



Five Fox Sparrows were banded at Braddock Bay during their journeys between northern Canada and the southern United States in autumn 2005. Photo by Charley Eiseman.

Autumn 2005

6,450 birds banded

92 species

12,374 net hours

Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Orange-crowned Warbler	3
Cooper's Hawk	1	Nashville Warbler	38
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	Northern Parula	5
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	5	Yellow Warbler	123
Downy Woodpecker	21	Chestnut-sided Warbler	13
Hairy Woodpecker	5	Magnolia Warbler	170
Northern Flicker	6	Cape May Warbler	5
Eastern Wood-Pewee	3	Black-throated Blue Warbler	85
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	19	Yellow-rumped Warbler	251
Traill's Flycatcher*	21	Black-throated Green Warbler	8
Least Flycatcher	24	Blackburnian Warbler	2
Eastern Phoebe	37	Western Palm Warbler	6
Great Crested Flycatcher	8	Bay-breasted Warbler	12
Northern Shrike	1	Blackpoll Warbler	78
Blue-headed Vireo	21	Black-and-white Warbler	8
Warbling Vireo	9	American Redstart	42
Philadelphia Vireo	16	Ovenbird	14
Red-eyed Vireo	109	Northern Waterthrush	18
Blue Jay	6	Connecticut Warbler	3
Barn Swallow	1	Mourning Warbler	1
Black-capped Chickadee	237	Common Yellowthroat	125
Tufted Titmouse	16	Hooded Warbler	4
Red-breasted Nuthatch	8	Wilson's Warbler	39
White-breasted Nuthatch	8	Canada Warbler	8
Brown Creeper	163	Yellow-breasted Chat	3
Carolina Wren	4	Scarlet Tanager	3
House Wren	23	Eastern Towhee	3
Winter Wren	141	American Tree Sparrow	7
Marsh Wren	1	Chipping Sparrow	3
Golden-crowned Kinglet	502	Field Sparrow	3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	722	Fox Sparrow	5
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1	Song Sparrow	116
Veery	27	Lincoln's Sparrow	14
Gray-cheeked Thrush	105	Swamp Sparrow	42
Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush	43	White-throated Sparrow	1516
Bicknell's Thrush	1	White-crowned Sparrow	30
Swainson's Thrush	165	Dark-eyed Junco	125
Hermit Thrush	450	Northern Cardinal	30
Wood Thrush	6	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5
American Robin	13	Indigo Bunting	1
Gray Catbird	175	Rusty Blackbird	2
Brown Thrasher	3	Baltimore Oriole	8
Cedar Waxwing	36	Purple Finch	25
Blue-winged Warbler	5	House Finch	2
Brewster's Warbler	1	American Goldfinch	288
Tennessee Warbler	6	House Sparrow	1

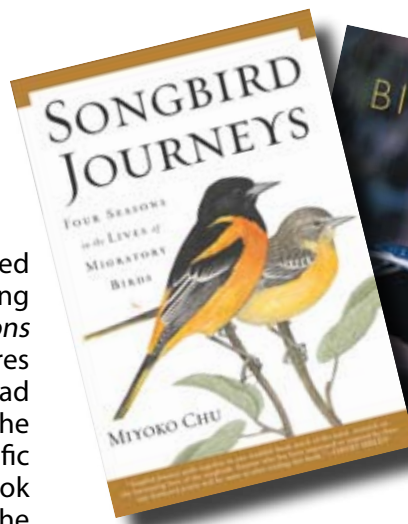
Species in blue were banded in record high numbers during autumn 2005.

*"Traill's" Flycatcher includes both Willow Flycatcher and Alder Flycatcher. These species are difficult to distinguish from one another except by their calls.



BBBO FEATURED IN TWO NEW BOOKS

BBBO has been featured in two recently published books that will be available for purchase at the banding station this spring. In *Songbird Journeys: Four Seasons in the Lives of Migratory Birds*, Miyoko Chu captures the wonders of songbird migration in an easy to read narrative that features intriguing stories about the remarkable lives of migratory birds and the scientific quest to learn more about them. This fantastic book takes the reader on a journey with the birds from the tropical forests of South America to the boreal forests of Canada—stopping near the shores of the Great Lakes along the way. BBBO is featured as a “songbird migration hot spot” in the book. Dr. Chu is a science writer and editor of *BirdScope* at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



In *Birds of the Genesee*, Bob Marcotte examines many questions about the birds of the Genesee region. How is Lake Ontario both a magnet and barrier for migrating birds? How have habitat changes affected the birds we see? Did you know that many species we now take for granted, like Northern Cardinals, are fairly recent arrivals in the region? The book features various bird monitoring projects including the work at BBBO, suggests some priorities for preservation, talks about how people can get started in birding, and provides instructions on how readers can landscape their yards to attract birds. Bob Marcotte is a well-known birder in the Rochester area and a reporter at the Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle*.

BBBO ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2005

Income

Memberships & Contribution	\$4,920
Merchandise Sales	\$822
Bander Training Courses	\$1,930
Blues for the Birds Concert	\$1,100
Interest on Investments	\$98
Educational Programs	\$200
Capital Campaign Fund	\$19,655
Total	\$28,725

Expenses

Merchandise for sale	\$786
Personnel	\$3,525
Equipment - mist nets etc.	\$1,398
Utilities	\$759
Printing and Mailings	\$2,200
Insurance	\$237
Education & Training	\$433
Administrative & web site	\$877
Portable toilet rental	\$296
Land acquisition	\$5,000
Total	\$15,512

Thanks to the generosity and support of our members and friends and our continued reliance on a volunteer workforce, BBBO ended another year with a positive financial balance. The Observatory’s only personnel expenses are for a seasonal intern—all other banders, net checkers, data recorders, and all-around handy-people volunteer their time! Expenditures were kept at a minimum in anticipation of the house acquisition. Transactions related to the house will be reflected in the 2006 financial statement.

The Board extends its gratitude for the response to our request for capital campaign funds. More than \$10,000 was donated in a few short weeks to match the \$10,000 pledge of an anonymous donor.

January to December 2005	
Total Income	\$28,725
Total Expenses	\$15,512
2005 Balance	\$13,213
Balance on Hand (12/31/2005)	\$31,804



Bird ageing techniques, continued from page 2.

Many species complete the pneumatization process during their first fall, but in some species the process takes longer. To evaluate the extent of pneumatization, banders moisten the top of the skull with water and visually examine the skull, frequently under magnification. This process is known as "skulling." In a bird with an unpneumatized skull, the top of the skull usually appears uniformly pink. In a bird with a fully pneumatized skull the top of the skull appears grayish and speckled, because you are looking down on top of the numerous columns of bone. In a bird that is part way through the process, some of the skull appears pink and the pneumatized part appears grayish with white speckles.

The purpose of Bob's paper is to give the date, in table form, after which a bird with a completely pneumatized skull may not be reliably aged. After this date, a bird with a completely pneumatized skull may be either a young bird (Hatch Year) that has recently completed the process or an older bird (After Hatch Year). During autumn migration, skulling is a primary and very reliable method of ageing songbirds. By spring, most species have completed the process so banders must rely on other criteria for ageing birds.

BRADDOCK BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY

A non-profit (501(c)(3)) organization dedicated to ornithological research, education, and conservation. The organization is operated entirely by volunteers, and financially supported by our members.

BBBO Officers and Advisers:

President Mark Deutschlander; *Vice-President* David Bonter; *Treasurer* Robert McKinney; *Secretary* Linda Boutwell; *Directors* Elizabeth Brooks, Cindy Marino, Richard Marx, and Rob van der Stricht; *Development Committee* Richard Marx and Rob van der Stricht; *Membership Advisor* Chita McKinney; *Education Committee* Liz Britton-Barry, Patricia Lovallo, and Cindy Marino; *Research Committee* David Bonter, Elizabeth Brooks, Mark Deutschlander, Kristi Hannam, Sara Morris, Chris Norment, and John Waud.

Front page image of Marsh Wren © Robert Royse. Newsletter editing and design by David Bonter.

Has your membership expired?

If so, this may be your last issue of *The Marsh Wren*. Please check your membership status by finding the expiration date printed on the mailing label below. Memberships expire at the end of the year printed. To join BBBO, please mail a check to:

Braddock Bay Bird Observatory
PO Box 12876
Rochester, NY 14612

Membership categories are: Student \$10,
Individual \$20, Family \$25, Contributing \$100,
Corporate \$250. Thank you for your support!



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