

## MacIntyre Marsh Bird Banding Demonstration Site Final Report 2009



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The 2009 operation of the MacIntyre Marsh Bird Banding Demonstration Site was made possible due to support from the following organizations.



Environment  
Canada

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Canada

Cover Photo (taken by John Meikle)

A male Rusty Blackbird showing the standard, numbered aluminum and dark green color band.

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## 1.0 Introduction

Building upon the success of the Teslin Lake and Albert Creek Bird Observatories, the station managers of the respective observatories established the MacIntyre Marsh Bird Banding Demonstration Site during the spring of 2009. A number of local, regional and national organizations supported the project including ATCO Electric, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Ta'an Kwachan Council, Yukon Environment, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Trust Fund, Yukon Conservation Society, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Shell Environmental Fund, Yukon Bird Club and Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service).

The goals of the MacIntyre Creek Bird Banding Demonstration Site are to:

- Provide a setting for the public (including school groups) to learn about the Yukon's avifauna and the methods used to monitor songbirds.
- Test the feasibility of operating a bird banding / migration monitoring station at MacIntyre Marsh.
- Provide training opportunities for interested members of the public and students.

The bird banding serves as a method of carrying out research on birds which is shared through an international database. This is due to the possibility of a banded bird being recaptured across international borders. Many of the birds banded at MacIntyre Marsh are highly migratory spending the winter months as far south as Central and South America. In addition to the potential knowledge regarding band recoveries, the demonstration site also serves to continue gathering baseline data of birds (and their migration) in the southern Yukon. Due to the large landmass of the territory, and the relatively few advanced birders in the Yukon, there is still a great deal to be learned regarding the bird life of the Yukon. Bird banding is highly valuable research method and a form of monitoring which serves to better understand the distribution of many of the Yukon's bird species, many of which are considered uncommon or rare.

Due to the close proximity to downtown Whitehorse, the demonstration site also plays a role in education as a place where the public, volunteers and students can take part in a unique, community based research project. Across the Yukon (and the world), there are numerous people who have an interest in birds; however, many find it a daunting task to learn the various species. For such people, a visit to the demonstration site can be extremely rewarding as they often have the opportunity to view a wide variety of bird species up close. Many of these species are very difficult to observe naturally; however, through the use of mist nets, the highly trained individuals working at the demonstration site have the ability to identify these species with ease.

## 2.0 Methods

The primary method of monitoring the movement of birds through the study site was through the use of mist nets for the purpose of capturing and banding birds. The demonstration site operated with 8 to 12 mist nets (depending on timing). The mist netting effort was not standardized; however, the nets were typically opened within 2 hours of official sunrise for approximately 4 to 6 hours.

The demonstration site did not operate with any structured bird observation data collection aside from the mist nets. However, incidental bird observations were collected on a continual basis.



**Photo 1.** Mist netted erected within the MacIntyre Marsh study site.

### 2.1 Study Site

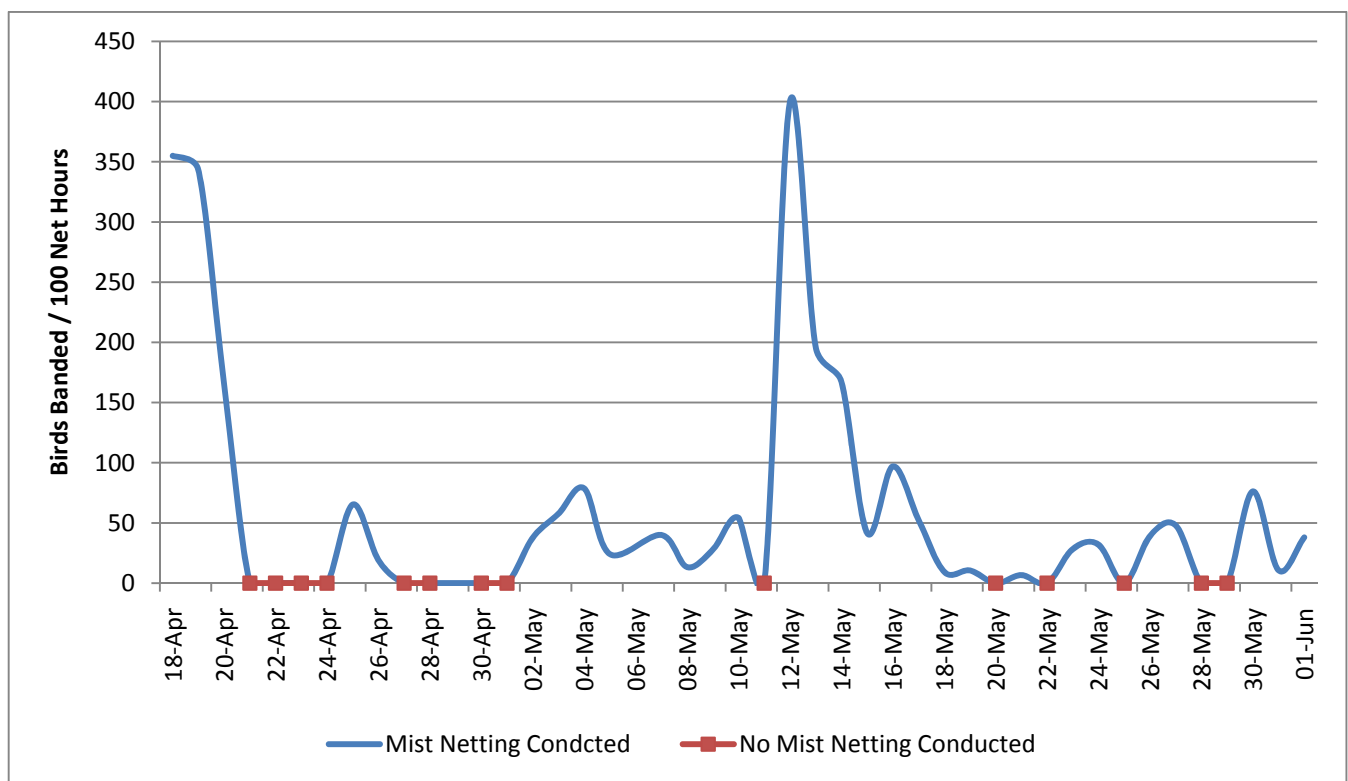
The MacIntyre Marsh study site is located on the Fish Lake Road, downstream of the Icy Waters Arctic Char fish farm. MacIntyre Creek flows through the site which is comprised of a mixture of shallow open water and wet ground. The dominant vegetative species include willow (*Salix* sp.), alder (*Alnus* sp.) and various grasses. Small white spruce (*Picea glauca*) and small diameter standing dead snags are scattered throughout.

### 3.0 Results & Discussion

A total of 892 birds of 36 species were banded during 2009 as summarized in Tables 1 – 2 and Figures 1.

**Table 1.** Summary statistics of the 2009 spring season.

Season	Start Date	End Date	# of Days Operated	Species Banded	Individuals Banded	Net Hrs.	Birds Banded / 100 Net Hrs	Species Observed
Spring	18 April	1 June	30	36	892	1401	63.68	78



**Figure 1.** Summary of birds banded per 100 net hours during the spring of 2009.

Table 2. Summary of birds banded during the spring 2009 season.

Common Name	Latin Name	# Banded	Common Name	Latin Name	# Banded
American Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	4	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	72
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	1	Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>	8
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	1	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	26
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	7	Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	57
Wilson's Snipe	<i>Gallinago delicata</i>	5	American Tree Sparrow	<i>Spizella arborea</i>	63
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>	1	Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	58
Hammond's Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax hammondi</i>	6	Fox Sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>	6
Northern Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	25
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	89	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	113
Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	103	Golden-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i>	18
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	8	Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	77
Mountain Chickadee	<i>Poecile gambeli</i>	2	Lapland Longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	39
Boreal Chickadee	<i>Poecile hudsonicus</i>	9	Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	5
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	5	Rusty Blackbird	<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>	25
Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catbarus ustulatus</i>	1	Purple Finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>	1
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	6	Common Redpoll	<i>Cardelis flamma</i>	31
American Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>	4	Pine Siskin	<i>Carduelis pinus</i>	3
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>	9	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS		892
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	3	TOTAL SPECIES		36

### 3.1 *Band Recoveries / Returns*

As 2009 constituted the first season of banding at MacIntyre Marsh, there were no band returns from past years. There was a single band recovery of a foreign banded bird. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, an ASY-M Yellow-rumped Warbler with band number 2510-46161 was recaptured. After reporting the band, it was found that the bird was originally banded in late March 2008 in Portland, Oregon, USA.

### 3.2 *Visitors and Volunteers*

All activities at the MacIntyre Marsh Demonstration Site were completed on a volunteer basis. The individuals responsible for the capture and banding of birds were the station managers of the Teslin Lake and Albert Creek Bird Observatories, Ben Schonewille and Ted Murphy-Kelly. The demo site was extremely successful in attracting members of the public, a total of 150 different individuals visited the site for a total of 310 hours onsite. Included in the list of visitors were three separate school groups (all from Whitehorse schools).



School Group (OPES 11 – Wood Street School), MacIntyre Marsh, Photo John Meikle.



*3.3 Photos*



**Green-winged Teal (female)** – Photo Jukka Jantunen



**Green-winged Teal (male)** – Photo Ben Schonewille



**Lesser Yellowlegs** - Photo Ben Schonewille



**Wilson's Snipe** – Photo Ben Schonewille



**Northern Shrike** – Photo John Meikle



**Boreal Chickadee** – Photo John Meikle



**American Pipit** – Photo Ben Schonewille



**Swainson's Thrush**– Photo Ben Schonewille



**American Robin**– Photo Ben Schonewille



**Orange-crowned Warbler**– Photo Ben Schonewille



**Yellow-rumped Warbler (male)** – Photo John Meikle



**Yellow Warbler (male)** – Photo Ben Schonewille

**MacIntyre Marsh Bird Banding Demonstration Site – Final Report 2009**



**Northern Waterthrush**– Photo Ben Schonewille



**Common Yellowthroat (male)**– Photo Ben Schonewille



**Wilson's Warbler (male)**– Photo Ben Schonewille



**American Tree Sparrow** – Photo John Meikle



**Lincoln's Sparrow** – Photo John Meikle



**White-crowned Sparrow** – Photo John Meikle



Golden-crowned Sparrow – Photo John Meikle



Fox Sparrow – Photo Ben Schonewille



Lapland Longspur (male) – Photo Ben Schonewille  
Schonewille



Red-winged Blackbird (female) – Photo Ben



Rusty Blackbird (female) – Photo John Meikle



Rusty Blackbird (male) – Photo John Meikle

### ***3.4 Future Plans***

Although the number and diversity of birds banded was not exceptional, the very public nature of the field activities cannot be understated. There is a massive potential for attracting a wide variety of visitors (including school groups) to the site. Educating the public about the Yukon's bird life and the challenges facing many species is extremely valuable. Visiting the site and seeing birds up close not only allows for an increased understanding of our natural surroundings, but also an appreciation for our bird species.

There are plans to operate the demonstration site once again during the spring 2010 season. Efforts will once again be made to attract members of the public with a focus on school groups from the Whitehorse area.

### **4.0 Acknowledgements**

Station management and logistical planning was completed by Master Permit holder Ben Schonewille with assistance from Ted Murphy-Kelly. Bander In Charge duties were split between Ben Schonewille and Ted Murphy-Kelly. Data entry, analysis and reporting was completed by Ben Schonewille with assistance from Ted Murphy-Kelly. Numerous members of the public visited the site and assisted with day to day activities.

Individuals from the Canadian Wildlife Service (Pam Sinclair), Yukon Environment (Cameron Eckert) and the Yukon Bird Club Board of Directors provided logistical support and advice for the project. Jukka Jantunen, John Meikle and Phil Hoffman provided numerous digital photographs. ATCO Electric (Richard Ker) provided access to the property to allow for the operation of the demonstration site.

Thank you to all who collaborated on this project and contributed to its success.

**Appendix A. Estimated Total Data Summary**

**MacIntyre Marsh Bird Banding Demonstration Site – Final Report 2009 Appendix A – Estimated Total Data Summary**

Species	# Days Recorded	Sum of Ets	First Date Recorded	Last Date Recorded	High Count	
					#	Date
Greater White-fronted Goose	1	38	29-Apr	NA	38	NA
Canada Goose	2	7	29-Apr	14-May	6	NA
Trumpeter Swan	4	80	18-Apr	26-Apr	38	25-Apr
Tundra Swan	5	386	19-Apr	04-May	153	25-Apr
Gadwall	1	2	02-May	NA	2	NA
American Wigeon	15	78	29-Apr	31-May	49	05-May
Mallard	28	363	18-Apr	01-Jun	35	20-Apr
Northern Pintail	1	28	09-May	NA	28	NA
Green-winged Teal	21	176	03-May	01-Jun	28	13-May
Bufflehead	1	2	02-May	NA	2	NA
Common Goldeneye	7	20	03-May	30-May	6	03-May
Barrow's Goldeneye	19	49	03-May	01-Jun	5	23-May
Osprey	2	3	05-May	15-May	2	15-May
Bald Eagle	25	63	18-Apr	01-Jun	6	25-Apr
Northern Goshawk	1	1	24-May	NA	1	NA
Northern Harrier	9	10	19-Apr	17-May	2	25-Apr
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	4	18-Apr	17-May	1	NA
Red-tailed Hawk	3	4	20-Apr	03-May	2	25-Apr
Merlin	2	2	25-Apr	02-May	1	NA
Semi-palmated Plover	2	2	16-May	17-May	1	NA
Semi-palmated Sandpiper	1	6	16-May	NA	6	NA
Pectoral Sandpiper	2	7	17-May	18-May	4	18-May
Lesser Yellowlegs	21	117	03-May	01-Jun	16	10-May
Solitary Sandpiper	15	60	09-May	01-Jun	10	17-May
Wilson's Snipe	21	149	02-May	01-Jun	18	12-May
Bonaparte's Gull	4	10	05-May	12-May	4	10-May
Mew Gull	19	76	04-May	01-Jun	8	16-May
Herring Gull	27	72	18-Apr	01-Jun	6	05-May
Great Horned Owl	1	1	25-Apr	NA	1	NA
Belted Kingfisher	22	39	18-Apr	01-Jun	4	18-May
Hairy Woodpecker	1	1	19-May	NA	1	NA
Northern Flicker	21	43	03-May	01-Jun	3	many
Olive-sided Flycatcher	1	1	16-May	NA	1	NA
Western Wood-Pewee	1	1	01-Jun	NA	1	NA
Say's Phoebe	1	1	16-May	NA	1	NA
Hammond's Flycatcher	13	21	02-May	30-May	6	17-May
Northern Shrike	1	1	02-May	NA	1	NA
Gray Jay	8	11	03-May	24-May	3	03-May
Black-billed Magpie	2	2	09-May	26-May	1	NA
Common Raven	27	85	18-Apr	01-Jun	10	19-Apr
Tree Swallow	21	552	03-May	01-Jun	150	10-May
Violet-green Swallow	24	579	18-Apr	01-Jun	125	16-May
Cliff Swallow	3	9	24-May	31-May	6	30-May
Bank Swallow	2	40	30-May	01-Jun	28	30-May
Barn Swallow	4	5	23-May	30-May	2	30-May
Black-capped Chickadee	26	52	18-Apr	01-Jun	4	09-May
Mountain Chickadee	1	2	19-Apr	NA	2	NA
Boreal Chickadee	25	44	19-Apr	01-Jun	6	04-May

Species	# Days Recorded	Sum of Ets	First Date Recorded	Last Date Recorded	High Count	
					#	Date
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	26	64	18-Apr	01-Jun	7	18-Apr
Swainson's Thrush	4	10	27-May	01-Jun	5	01-Jun
American Robin	25	142	18-Apr	01-Jun	13	05-May
Varied Thrush	20	24	19-Apr	31-May	2	many
American Pipit	16	61	18-Apr	30-May	12	12-May
Bohemian Waxwing	9	35	25-Apr	17-May	6	12-May
Orange-crowned Warbler	10	24	12-May	31-May	6	14-May
Yellow Warbler	4	7	24-May	01-Jun	2	many
Blackpoll Warbler	4	7	27-May	01-Jun	2	many
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	22	224	02-May	01-Jun	24	03-May
Yellow-rumped (integrate) Warbler	2	2	05-May	15-May	1	NA
Northern Waterthrush	9	20	13-May	01-Jun	3	many
Common Yellowthroat	7	59	23-May	01-Jun	15	26-May
Wilson's Warbler	14	111	03-May	01-Jun	45	30-May
American Tree Sparrow	14	141	18-Apr	23-May	45	18-Apr
Savannah Sparrow	17	142	02-May	01-Jun	25	13-May
Fox Sparrow	6	15	03-May	18-May	5	03-May
Lincoln's Sparrow	22	97	02-May	01-Jun	10	many
Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow	14	284	02-May	24-May	55	03-May
Golden-crowned Sparrow	12	41	02-May	17-May	11	12-May
Lapland Longspur	11	351	18-Apr	17-May	250	12-May
Slate-colored Junco	26	197	18-Apr	01-Jun	34	18-Apr
Red-winged Blackbird	15	45	02-May	01-Jun	6	24-May
Rusty Blackbird	20	97	02-May	01-Jun	12	03-May
Purple Finch	13	17	05-May	01-Jun	2	many
Red Crossbill	2	4	25-Apr	26-Apr	2	both days
White-winged Crossbill	2	5	02-May	24-May	4	02-May
Common Redpoll	11	125	18-Apr	13-May	35	19-Apr
Pine Siskin	16	37	04-May	01-Jun	6	16-May