

2005 Ontario Field Report

Captive husbandry and field propagation

In April, ten pairs of shrikes were taken to the Dyer's Bay field propagation site. Three pairs did not exhibit breeding activity over the summer, and these pairs are now separated into their respective units. Six pairs are currently raising a total of 26 young from first clutches, and 2 pairs have successfully raised a second brood to branching totalling 8 young. From the first clutches: 7 young will be released on August 12th, 9 young will be released on August 17th, and 10 young will be released in the last week of August (date to be determined). Release dates for the 2nd clutches will be in the first week of September (dates to be determined).

Ten pairs of shrikes are at the Carden Plain field propagation site. Five pairs did not exhibit breeding activity over the summer, and these pairs are now separated into their respective units. Three pairs are currently raising a total of 18 young, 11 of these from first clutches and 7 from second clutches. 7 young will be released on August 21st, and 11 young will be released in the first week of September (date to be determined).

Eight pairs of shrikes are at the Ingersoll facility: 3 pairs have fledged young, 2 pairs are caring for nestlings, and 2 pairs did not exhibit breeding activity. Six nestlings died at Ingersoll during July. The specimens were sent to the University of Guelph Pathology Lab for necropsy, virology, bacteriology, immunohistochemistry and histopathology examination. Primary diagnosis continues to be septicemia from a *Pseudomonas* bacterial species. The extreme heat and humidity this summer have exacerbated the *Pseudomonas* bacteria, which is normally found in the environment in low numbers. Measures have now been taken at Ingersoll (extra sterilization of dishes, foot bath, and antibiotics) to counter this. Six young from Ingersoll will be taken up to Carden for release, pending a negative bacterial swab for *Pseudomonas* and condition assessment.

Five pairs of shrikes are at the Toronto Zoo: 4 pairs did not exhibit breeding signs, and one pair is on its 3rd nesting attempt incubating one egg.

Wild population monitoring

Eleven wild pairs have been found in Napanee; this is down from last year's 12 pairs. Six pairs have produced 27 fledglings. Nest success was high in the early season, but no nests have successfully fledged young after July 6th.

Fourteen wild pairs have been found in the Carden Plain; the same as in 2004. Six pairs in total have now successfully fledged young. Fifteen of these fledglings have been recently observed with their parents. Nest success has been low this year compared to the 2 previous years. Possible reasons for this are: weather conditions (extreme heat), increased predation due to an increase in crow and jay numbers, and possible mite infestation of nests.

On May 30th, a female captive-bred shrike released from the Dyer's Bay site in 2004 was found in Carden tending a nest with 6 young. This captive-raised female successfully fledged 6 young in June, and as of early August all 6 young are 6 weeks out of the nest and doing very well. This is the largest successful brood produced in Carden this season.

by Rina Nichols