

## **Bird Bash Report**

### **June 2017**

*By Dick Tafel, compiler*

Not a particularly nice weekend, weather-wise, but sixteen participants managed to uncover 111 species of birds within the area. This is a bit below average over the past 14 years, but more than last year's 103 species.

As usual, we start with new birds for the year in roughly taxonomic order. That starts off, perhaps surprisingly, with the Pied-billed Grebe, not reported previously, but noted by Chris Suhka and by Fred Pinto at a normally regular location, Cache Bay. Chris also discovered a perhaps somewhat lost migrant, the Short-billed Dowitcher at Verner Lagoon. We do not usually find that bird here in June. Was it going north or already southerly?

Chris noted Black Terns and Marsh Wrens at Cache Bay. Good to observe them in what has become a normal habitat area for them in our area. A couple of Bonaparte Gulls were found by Kaye Edmunds along the waterfront. May is their normal arrival time here, but although the odd one was seen in May, none were reported during the May Bird Bash.

The Black-billed Cuckoo was spotted only by Chris in the Field area and by Renee and John Levesque on one of the North Hwy roads. These birds eat mainly caterpillars, so the seemingly more sightings of them this year – outside Bird Bash dates – may have something to do with the large number of tent caterpillars being seen in our area.

And the Indigo Bunting was unearthed by Gary and Connie Sturges and by the Levesques near Powassan. These beautiful birds have been sighted around our area for awhile but not observed within a Bird Bash until now.

Getting to other birds, we start with the Common Loon, noted by several participants; likewise, the Double-crested Cormorant and Great Blue Heron. But the American Bittern was spotted only by Steve Pitt in the east end. The Green Heron was seen by yours truly at the Callander Lagoon area and by Kaye and Fred in Laurier Woods.

Turkey Vultures remain fairly ubiquitous within our district; likewise, Canada Geese. Ten ducks and mergansers were found, a bit fewer than recent events - some that were recently noted, having moved more northerly.

Among predators, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Broad-winged Hawks and American

Kestrel were fairly abundant, but the Red-tailed Hawk was discovered solely by Chris, and the Merlin, only by the pair of Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing. The Bald Eagle seen in the Callander area was on the list of Grant and Shirley McKercher.

Ruffed Grouse were fairly common, but the Virginia Rail, with young, were noted only by Kaye in Laurier Woods. A few Sandhill Cranes, probably local nesters, were seen by Steve, by the Anderson duo and by Chris.

Yet again, there were not many shorebirds. No migrants were seen, only local Killdeer, found by Chris and the Anderson duo, who also found a Wilson's Snipe, while Spotted Sandpipers were discovered by Kaye, Chris and Fred.

The two main gulls remain very numerous, but Caspian Terns were discovered solely by Fred and Chris. The two dove species were noted by many.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were fairly numerous. The Belted Kingfisher was spotted by Elsa Tafel, the Levesques, Fred and Chris. All five of the common woodpeckers were fairly widely noticed, except for the Pileated which was only upon the Levesque list.

Among the flycatchers, the Eastern Wood Pewee was observed solely by the Sturges, but the Alder, the Least, the Eastern Phoebe and the Eastern Kingbird were widely noted. But – no Great Crested? As to the vireos, four species were discovered - the Red-eyed by almost everyone, the Warbling by Chris and Fred, and the Philadelphia and Blue-headed only by the Levesques to the north, on roads off Hwy 11.

Blue Jays, American Crows and Common Ravens remain common. Tree Swallows seem to be the most widely noticed swallow, with Barn second. Chris was the only one to discover the Rough-winged near the Veuve River. He also found Banks, as did the Anderson pair, who were the only ones to find the Cliff (east of Powassan) which seem to be reducing in numbers.

Black-capped Chickadees and both nuthatches were, as usual, fairly widely observed. The lovely Eastern Bluebird was enjoyed solely by Chris in the west end, while other thrushes, such as the American Robin and Veery were quite common. The Hermit was observed by Chris and the Levesques, who also noted the Swainson's and Wood Thrushes in the north end.

Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers were widely recognized, the latter with young, by Mary Ann Kenrick. Cedar Waxwings, likewise, were fairly wide-spread.

Now the wood-warblers: fifteen species were discovered! Only the Sturges reported the

Bay-breasted and Northern Parula, and only Chris, the Blackburnian and the Mourning. Missed were resident Black-throated Blue and Canada. Cape May, Northern Waterthrush and Wilson's still have not been identified during our Bird Bashes this year.

Unfortunately, no Scarlet Tanagers were seen this month.

As to the sparrows - Chipping, Savannah, Song, Swamp and White-throated were pretty widely observed. Chris found the Dark-eyed Junco, a species that is rather elusive during the summer months.

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak was enjoyed by the Sturges. Bobolinks were seen by the Levesques and by the Anderson duo. Red-winged Blackbirds were, of course, upon many lists. Eastern Meadowlarks were seen by the Sturges and by the Levesques. The lovely Baltimore Oriole was seen solely by Chris.

Common Grackles were common. But no Brown-headed Cowbird was identified. Purple Finches were seen by a few, including Peter Handley near his feeder. Pine Siskins were still at the feeder of Steve Pitt. American Goldfinch seemed to be everywhere, but Evening Grosbeaks were found only by Chris. The "lowly" House Sparrow was observed solely by the Sturges near their home west of Powassan.

And that is the report! Sort of disappointing not to have had any kinglets upon any list nor the "Canadian" Gray Jay, nor a Common Tern, but generally, especially considering the awkward weather, a good effort! Congrats to all!

July's bird bash will be over its last weekend, **July 29-30**. Should be good numbers of southerly migrants by then to make the "bash" interesting and fun! Mark down the date!