

Bird Wing Outing

July 26, 2016

By Renee Levesque

Shorebirds at Callander Lagoon:

Our first and only
stop during the July
26th Bird Wing

Outing was Callander Lagoon - a successful stop with five of us seeing seven species of shorebirds!



By far the most numerous shorebirds were the 19 to 22 Killdeer (**photo below right by Lisa Hackett**). The number observed was dependent on the person doing the counting and whether a Killdeer in one location was the same one that flew to another location. Regardless, there were a lot.

Other shorebirds seen were:

2 Pectoral Sandpipers

6 Lesser Yellowlegs (**photo above by Renee Levesque**)

3 Solitary Sandpipers

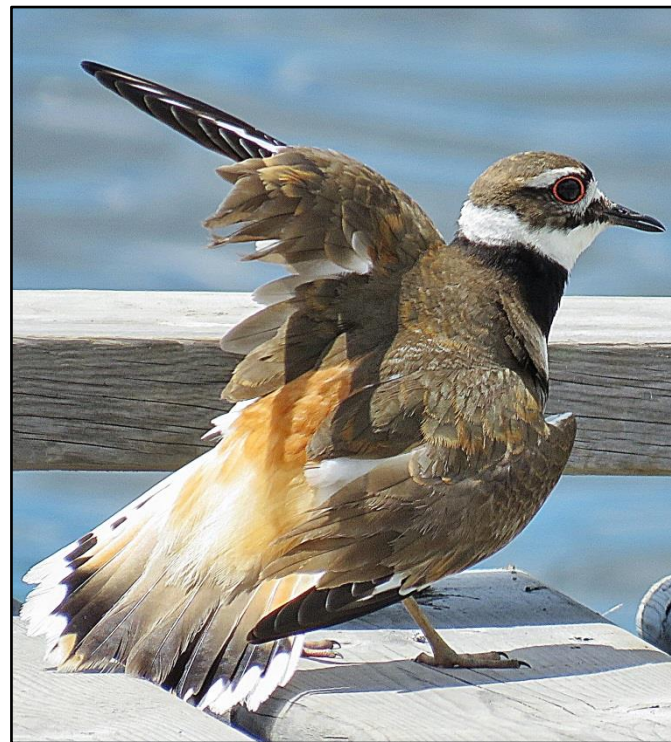
1 Least Sandpiper

5 Spotted Sandpipers

1 Wilson's Snipe (**photo at top of next page by Renee**)

1 Semipalmated Plover

Ducks were also seen: Red-headed, Mallard and Black, and one participant who was at the lagoon before the others joined him saw both Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal.



Other birds seen: a few Ring-billed Gulls; 65 Canada Geese; a Song Sparrow; a Common Yellow-throat; a couple of American Crows; a Turkey Vulture; many Red-winged Blackbirds; and 3 Great Blue Herons (**photo at bottom of next page by Kaye Edmonds**), an adult and two young.

Because shorebird sighting and identification were the goals of this outing, we examined each and every shorebird assiduously. They are not easy birds to identify in their non-breeding plumage and to the untrained eye and even the trained eye, many can look suspiciously alike. It is always prudent to have your guidebook with you.

Shorebirds migrating south can be a challenge or a nightmare depending on whether you see the glass as being half full or half empty. Because shorebirds are not in the same hurry to declare their territory for breeding purposes, they tend to migrate south at a more leisurely pace, often giving us time to go back and observe them a few times.

The southerly migration of shorebirds begins in late June. Usually adults migrate a month or more before the juveniles, and usually female adults migrate before the male adults. Females depart soon after the eggs hatch, while the males stay on to raise the young until they are grown and can manage on their own, usually 2 to 3 weeks after the females depart.

The first to move south in late June are usually adult Lesser Yellowlegs and Least Sandpipers, followed by other adult shorebirds in early July. The numbers and types of species increase as the month wears on, with shorebirding continuing into August, September, and even October. Until freeze-up, there is always a chance of seeing a shorebird and the excitement mounts if a rare one for our area is seen.

Shorebirds are the world's record holders for long distance migrants, many travelling from the Arctic to South America. The long-distance migrants travel more than 8,000 miles; the medium-distance, 3,500 to 7,500 miles; and the short-distance, 3,000 or fewer miles.



Common Loons: In the OFO News of June 2016, there is an article by Jean Iron about Common Loons flying with open bills. She reports there are two possible explanations for this: 1) to increase intake of air to their lungs to power their bodies in flight, and 2) to control their body temperature like dogs or cats that pant when hot – in other words, to cool down their flight engines.

Whatever the reason, this aspect of loon flight is not well-studied and “follow-up observations in the fall, on the breeding grounds and wintering grounds relative to air and water temperatures may give more insights into this behaviour.” Jean asks that you watch for this behaviour and report your results to her at jean.iron@sympatico.ca.

Bird Bash: The next Bird Bash will be held over the weekend of **August 27 and 28**.

Bird Wing Outing: The next Bird Wing outing will take place on **Tuesday, August 23**. Meet at the former Visitors' Centre at **6:30 p.m.** Outing details will be forthcoming from Dick Tafel, but the outing will probably be to Cache Bay (see birders there last year at right in **photo by Kaye Edmonds**) and then to the Sturgeon Falls museum for the Common Nighthawk.



**And
here's to
you Mrs.
Robinson!**

(Photo by
John
Levesque)

