

# Nipissing Area Bird Bash Report

## January 2018

*By Dick Tafel, Compiler*

First Bird Bash of the year! And frigid weather! But 24 of you managed a great collection of birds – 40 of them within the area! That is well above the average of the past 15 years of just 35.

No need to firstly pursue in taxonomic order the first birds of the season - which becomes the norm as the year progresses - for all are firsts!

And so, will just mention one special one first – a Harris's Sparrow! - a first ever for a Bird Bash in this area and a very great new addition to our area birding experiences. It is performing wonderfully well at the feeder area of Gary and Luanne Chowns on Worthington Street. Some of us have already gone over to enjoy its uniqueness, its perkiness and its beauty.

From there, your compiler will follow rough taxonomic order. First off the mark are the only ducks seen in these parts during the winter – the many Mallards and a few Black Ducks that hang out at the water treatment plant seen by Renee Levesque and your compiler. Mallards are also seen at a few corn-feed places within the city where they were seen by some.

Four predators were discovered: a Rough-legged Hawk was at the Powassan landfill site, observed by Gary and Connie Sturge, and a Red-tailed was at the East Ferris landfill site, seen by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing. Bald Eagles were seen by Steve Pitt near the Ottawa River, by the Levesque pair towards Sturgeon Falls and by the Anderson duo at the East Ferris landfill site.

And then there were Snowy Owls! One was watched a long way out from the government dock on the lake ice by Kaye Edmunds and by the Levesque duo, and one was in a Chisholm Township farm field seen by the Anderson pair.

Ruffed Grouse were seen by a few, but Wild Turkeys were found only by Keith Thornborrow near South River, and two Ring-necked Pheasants graced the view of the Sturges in the area of Chisholm Township.

Rock Pigeons were seen, as usual, by many, but Mourning Doves were just on a few lists, several of them at the Sturges' home near Powassan.

Four species of woodpeckers were observed. The most interesting was the Red-bellied found by Kaye Edmunds, seen briefly at her home within the city. Downy Woodpeckers were probably the most common, followed by the Hairy and then the Pileated, all in many areas.

A very energetic Northern Shrike chasing chickadees was at the home area of Grant and Shirley McKercher, but, according to Grant, was not successful in catching one.

Blue Jays were at almost every home area, while American Crows seemed to be mostly within the more built-up communities. Common Ravens were observed by many.

The Black-capped Chickadee was everywhere, while Red-breasted Nuthatches were almost as common. White-breasted Nuthatches were also fairly prevalent, noted by Elsa Tafel, among others. Mary Young enjoyed the only Brown Creeper near her home in Corbeil.

Somewhat unusually, American Tree Sparrows are about in fair numbers this winter. They were seen by the Levesque duo, Mary Ann Kenrick, Steve, Keith, and Mary. One Chipping Sparrow was observed by John Levesque at his home feeder, while the Chowns had a White-throated Sparrow at their place, also noted there by Brent and Laura Turcotte. Dark-eyed Juncos were at many feeders.

Lapland Longspurs were in Chisholm Township and seen by the Anderson pair who also saw there Snow Buntings in large flocks, as did the Levesque duo not far from Verner.

Three lovely Northern Cardinals were at the home area of Kaye Edmunds, and one Common Grackle was staying around the Sturges' feeders.

Pine Grosbeaks were seen in good numbers by many observers, while Purple Finches were at the feeder of Steve, the McKerchers and Doug Patterson, the latter in the Mattawa vicinity.

White-winged Crossbills were noted by the Sturges, the Anderson pair and Sonje Bols. All were seen in the southerly part of our Bird Bash area. Common Redpolls were seen solely by Sonje, also in the southerly part of our area.

A small number of Pine Siskins were noted by a few - Keith, the Anderson duo, Donna Demarco and the Sturges. American Goldfinches were fairly plentiful at many feeders, including that of Mary Ann. Evening Grosbeaks were at a few places - Doug's, John's and Peter and Pam Handley's.

The Anderson pair was the only one to find House Sparrows.

Perhaps interestingly, no one came upon any Bohemian Waxwings which were in large numbers within Pinewood subdivision the previous week; nor Gray Jays, usually discovered in wintertime within our area.

And so, congratulations to all participants! You did very well despite frigid weather!

Now mark down the date of the February Bird Bash: **the weekend of February 17.**