

Bird Bash Report

September 2018

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

For 21 bird-watching stalwarts, it was a lovely weekend for birding. Altogether we found 107 species, just 5 less than in August and about average for September over the past 15 years. Last year the number spotted in September was one less than this year. So we did very well indeed!

As usual we start off in roughly taxonomic order with the birds seen for the first time on this year's Bash.

And so that begins with the Snow Goose spotted by Ernie Frayle in the east end. Then there comes the Red-necked Phalarope, much enjoyed by Kaye Edmunds and the duo of Renee Levesque and yours truly at Callander Lagoon. The latter pair also spotted an American Pipit at the beach near Sunset Park. They also came upon a Blackpoll Warbler in the park.

Now as to the rest of the number seen in similar order: Common Loons, of course, were still about and noted by several, including Steve Pitt on Lake Talon and Janet and Lloyd Sparks on Wolfe Lake. A Pied-billed Grebe was seen by the Levesque duo at Cache Bay and at Warren Lagoon.

Double-crested Cormorants were still very noticeable on Lake Nipissing. An American Bittern was seen near Chisholm by new participants, Anne and Dolf Wynia, and at Cache Bay by the Levesque pair. The latter group and Therez Violette saw at Cache Bay a Green Heron and a Great Blue Heron, the latter seen by Steve.

As they prepare to migrate, Turkey Vultures were even more commonplace than earlier in the year. The same can be said for Canada Geese. But no Trumpeter Swans this time.

Ducks were still very widespread. Some 11 species were observed, most of them in various lagoons. Though no one identified any Gadwalls, one Northern Pintail, rather rare for around here, was noted by the Levesque pair at the Callander Lagoon. They also saw a flock of about 50 Common Mergansers at Sunset Park, such species seen also by Kaye Edmunds. A Lesser Scaup was identified by David Rooke at Powassan Lagoon.

Among predators, Osprey were somewhat more commonly noticed, with various successful young being about now. Northern Harrier were observed by Gary and Connie Sturge near Powassan and by the Levesque duo at Verner. They also saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk at Cache Bay, noted further by the Sparks. Broad-winged Hawks were widely observed as they head south in large numbers. Paul Smylie saw a Red-tailed Hawk while within an area of Algonquin Park that was within the mileage limit. A Bald Eagle was noticed by Kaye, by the Sturges and by the Levesque pair. Both latter groups also saw a Merlin. American Kestrel were still quite numerous within farming areas. Fred Pinto noticed a Peregrine Falcon upon the steeple of the Pro-cathedral.

Ruffed Grouse were on Ernie's and Kaye's lists. The Sturges saw Wild Turkey. American Coots were plentiful at Warren Lagoon, observed by the Levesque duo. They also saw Sandhill Cranes, as did the Wynias, the Sturges, Ernie and Kaye.

Now we get to the shorebirds. Seven species (other than the earlier first of the year one) were identified. David saw Semipalmated Sandpipers, Least Sandpipers and Lesser Yellowlegs at Powassan Lagoon. The Levesque pair also saw Lesser Yellowlegs, as well as Greater Yellowlegs, the latter at Callander Lagoon. They also saw a Spotted Sandpiper at Sunset Park. Kaye saw a Semipalmated Plover there. The Sturges noted Killdeer.

Bonaparte's Gulls were at Sunset Park, noted by Kaye and the Levesque duo. Of course, both Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were numerous. Two Common Terns were noted by the Levesque pair at Sunset Park. They also noted Caspian Terns at Cache Bay, seen also by Therez and Kaye.

Rock Pigeons were very numerous, with Mourning Doves less so.

A Barred Owl, the first since June, was heard by Paul.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds had not quite all left and were still at Peter and Pam Handley's, the Sturges', Ernie's and the Sparks' feeders.

A Belted Kingfisher was seen by Steve, by Kaye and by Ernie.

The five main woodpecker species, including the sapsucker and the flicker, were noted by many observers, including John Levesque who saw both the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and the Downy Woodpecker.

A Least Flycatcher was identified by the Sparks and Steve. Eastern Phoebes were spotted by the Levesque duos and the Sturges, who also observed Eastern Kingbirds.

The Levesque pair found both Philadelphia and Red-eyed Vireos, the latter also seen by the Sparks.

Many Blue Jays, American Crows and to a lesser extent, Common Ravens, were around.

Tree Swallows were discovered solely by Kaye. It seems no other swallows were still about.

Black-capped Chickadees were as numerous as ever, with both nuthatches, though less numerous, still quite widespread. A Brown Creeper was discovered by the Levesque pair at Cache Bay.

Both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets were found by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing east of Powassan.

The Eastern Bluebird was spotted by the Levesque duo on Stewart's Road, by Ernie in the east end, and a flock of a dozen by the Sturges near Powassan. The latter pair also found a Veery.

Swainson's Thrush was noted by Paul, and Wood Thrush by the Sparks. American Robins were still widely about, though not, it seemed, in quite the numbers of recent weeks.

The Gray Catbird was observed by the Levesque pair and by Steve. He also saw the Brown Thrasher, as did Therez and the Sparks.

Huge numbers of European Starlings were about, especially in the west end.

Therez discovered a large flock of Cedar Waxwings in Sturgeon Falls.

Now as to warblers, eleven species were observed (counting the new one for the year). The Tennessee was on David's list, as well as the Yellow-rumped, the latter also noted by Kaye and the Levesque duo who also saw Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Pine, (noted also by the Anderson pair), Palm, Black and White, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat and Wilson's at either Sunset Park or at Cache Bay. The Sparks also found Black and White, and David and Kaye also saw the Palm.

A Scarlet Tanager (in fall colours) was noted by Renee and David.

Now as to sparrows: Chipping, Song, Savannah and White-throated were noted by the Levesque duo. White-throated were also noted by the Handleys, and Savannahs were also seen by the Sturges and David, who also saw the Swamp Sparrow.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were on Ernie's, the Anderson duo's and the Sturges' lists. The Sparks were the only ones to see an Evening Grosbeak.

No Bobolinks were found, but Red-winged Blackbirds were very numerous, especially in swamp areas. The Eastern Meadowlark was discovered by the Anderson pair. Common Grackles were fairly numerous, noted by many, including Donna Demarco.

Purple Finches were fairly common, noted by several. But Pine Siskin were seen solely by David. American Goldfinch were also noted by several, but the House Sparrow was only upon the lists of the Sturges and the Anderson pair.

And that concludes a very successful September Bird Bash. Congrats to all participants!

And now as to the October effort, mark down the first weekend, which should be the best one in October for birds, namely **October 6 and 7**.