

February, 2016 Bird Bash Report:

The weather was fair, but it was February in the north. And so , though there were 28 participants , only 35 bird species were discovered. Actually, it was not bad for February – the average up here over the past 13 years has been – but 35.5 birds.

We normally start with the “new” birds observed for the year. And taxonomically first would be the Northern Goshawk photoed by Ernie Frayle in the east end. Then there were the 20 or so Horned Larks enjoyed by Chris Sukha, and by Renee Levesque and yours truly up at the Verner grain co-op. Also there, were a similar collection of not easy to find in our community - House Sparrows. The latter was also found by Gary Sturge west of Powassan.

Lovely Bohemian Waxwings were observed this month – by the Levesque duo in North Bay, Chris near Field, and Kevin Cowcill in West Ferris, while one Lapland Longspur was spotted by Gary Martin at their feeder area near Lavigne.

As to other birds , and continuing roughly taxonomically, we should start with 3 Black Ducks seen at the open water on the north shore of Trout Lake near the Green Store. Innumerable Mallards plus Blacks were noted by Marc Buchanan and others. With those at Trout Lake was one Common Goldeneye, also observed by Barb Stewart near Magnetawan.

Bald Eagles were seen by a few, including Gary Sturge near Powassan, Luanne Chowns and Laura Turcotte, and the Levesque pair. But other than the earlier mentioned Goshawk no more predators were noted.

Ruffed Grouse were discovered by several, but the Wild Turkey was noted only by Keith Thornborrow down near South River. Mourning Doves were seen by a few including Peter and Pam Handley. No owls were observed this month. Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were upon very many lists, the latter upon that of Brent Turcotte, while the Pileated was also pretty common, noted by Mary Ann Kenrick, and Kevin among others.

The Gray Jay was observed by Angela and Gary Martin near Lavigne., and by Keith at South River. Of course Blue Jays were enjoyed by many, including Lise Moore Asselin, in Mattawa, as were American Crows within the city, and Common Ravens.

Chickadees remain very popular, the Red-breasted Nuthatch seen by almost as many observers, but the White-breasted Nuthatch was not as often seen. They were only found by a few including Grant and Shirley McKercher near Callander, and Linda Stoner. The Brown Creeper was seen only by Mary Young.

American Tree Sparrows were seen again this month, by the Martins, by Ernie, and by Chris near Field. The Dark-eyed Junco was on two lists – Keith's, and Matt Walter, the latter at his city feeder. Snow Buntings were found by Lori Anderson near Powassan, the Martins, and by the Levesque duo up at the Verner Co-op.

The Northern Cardinal was at Kaye Edmunds feeder area, and was also noted by the Chown duo. Pine Grosbeaks were enjoyed by Linda Stoner, Donna Demarco in the east end, Kevin, and by the Levesque pair. Purple Finches seem to be more common than during some winters, at the households of the Handleys, and Craig and Elaine Hurst, among many others.

Of course the Common Redpoll has become the very popular bird this winter at most feeders, while the Pine Siskin has been seen at fewer – such as at the Sturges, and the Hursts.

The American Goldfinch has been even rarer this February. Chris saw them up in Field, while Mary Ann, and Mary Young also had them. Evening Grosbeaks, however, have been relatively commonplace, - in large numbers where seen, such as at Lori's, Ernies, Donna's and Mary's. And, that covers all of Feb!

So, - congratulations to all participants!

Note that the next Nipissing area bird bash will be over the week-end of March 26. It should be much more active then!

And soon, copies of this, and previous year's bird bashes will be on the Nipissing Naturalists Club web site (again).

Dick Tafel, Compiler

