

Bird Bash Report November 2018

By Dick Tafel, compiler

Saturday, November 3, was a crummy day with much wet snow, but Sunday was just delightful, the most delightful day we have had so far this month! Accordingly, the total number of species seen by 19 participants was 69, about average over the past 16 years. Interestingly, 69 species were also seen last November.

And so, as per usual, we start in rough taxonomic order with birds not seen at a Bash this year. The Horned Grebe starts off that list with one spotted by Renee Levesque and yours truly off Jocko Point. They also saw Stilt and White-rumped Sandpipers in the westerly cell of Powassan Lagoon. And further seen by them were three Tundra Swans at Lake Bernard, with nine more at the southerly edge of Cache Bay, also noted by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing. Paul Smylie while canoeing – hard to believe today that there still was a day in November that one could canoe - saw a lone Black Scoter in the south bay of Lake Nipissing. The Anderson duo found a stunning flock of Bohemian Waxwings along North Bay's Champlain Park trail.

Now to other birds seen, in similar taxonomic order: Your compiler usually starts with Common Loons, which are, of course, in smaller numbers now, but were still around the major lakes. The Levesque pair saw such, as did Angela Martin -good to have her back after a long absence- and Grant and Shirley McKercher. However, the Great Blue Heron eluded us all.

Canada Geese were still fairly ubiquitous, though in somewhat lessened numbers. Seven Trumpeter Swans were easy to see at the end of Nipissing Street, Sturgeon Falls, noted by the Levesque twosome. Thirteen duck species (including mergansers) were located mostly in the various lagoons. A few Gadwalls were seen by the Levesque pair, while Ring-necks were spotted by the Anderson duo and by Gary and Connie Sturge. They also saw Hooded Mergansers, as did Lloyd and Janet Sparks and the Levesque combo. The latter four pairs also found Commons Mergansers, as did the McKerchers. One Red-breasted Merganser, at the end of Jocko Point, was spotted by the Levesque duo. No Blue-winged Teal, Wood Ducks or American Wigeon were located. Buffleheads seemed to be everywhere.

Now as to predators: a Northern Harrier was spotted by Angela. Red-tails were relatively common, spotted by the Levesque duo, the Anderson pair, Angela and the McKerchers. The latter pair also identified a Rough-legged Hawk, as did the Sturges. Bald Eagles were spotted by the Levesque and Anderson duos, the Sturges, the Sparks

and Angela. The McKerchers found a lingering American Kestrel.

Ruffed Grouse were seen by Angela, the Sparks, and the Sturges. The McKerchers found Wild Turkeys.

Two Common Gallinules were spotted by the Levesque pair at Cache Bay.

Among the shorebirds, Greater Yellowlegs were noted by the Anderson and Levesque pairs. The latter group also observed a large number of Pectoral Sandpipers and four Wilson's Snipe in the south-westerly cell of Powassan Lagoon.

Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were still very plentiful, but Great Black-backed Gulls were noted solely by the McKerchers and the Levesque pair, who also surprisingly observed Common Terns at Cache Bay.

Rock Pigeons, of course, seemed to be everywhere, and Mourning Doves were seen by several, including Ernie Frayle and Mary Young.

Again, no owls were observed, but a Belted Kingfisher was spotted by the McKerchers and by Angela.

The two main woodpeckers were at most feeders, but the Pileated was noted only by Mary Ann Kenrick, the Sturges and the Anderson duo.

No flycatchers, vireos, swallows or warblers were still about, but a Northern Shrike was spotted by Angela and by the Anderson pair.

There were still lots of Blue Jays about, at feeders particularly; American Crows were seen near the city and towns; and Common Ravens were seen by Peter and Pam Handley, among others.

Black-capped Chickadees were everywhere, along with fewer in total number Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches. However, Brown Creepers were seen solely by the McKerchers.

Just a few American Robins were still about, noted by Mary Ann, the Sparks and several others.

European Starlings were not nearly as numerous as they normally are, but were noted by several groups. Regardless, no one spotted American Pipits.

Now as to sparrows, a few were still around. The American Tree Sparrow was found by

the Sturges, Angela and the Levesque pair. The Anderson couple noted the Chipping Sparrow and the Song Sparrow. Fox Sparrows were seen by Angela and by Mary Ann. White-throats were on Mary Young's and the Levesque pair's lists. White-crowns were seen by John Levesque, Ernie and the Sturges.

Dark-eyed Juncos were noted by several groups, but the Snow Bunting reached the attention only of the Anderson pair and Angela.

A few Red-winged Blackbirds were seen by Ernie and Angela, the latter of whom also saw Rusty Blackbirds. Common Grackles were seen only by John and by Ernie.

Pine Grosbeaks were noted by the Sturges and by Ernie. No Purple Finches seemed to be nearby. However, quite a few discovered south-seeking Common Redpolls, including Mary, the Sturges, the Anderson duo and Angela. Pine Siskins were at several feeders, including the feeders of Elsa Tafel, the Anderson duo, the Sturges, Mary Ann and John, the latter two of whom also saw Evening Grosbeaks and a few American Goldfinches. Evening Grosbeaks were making a bit of a splash, being also seen by several others, including the McKerchers, Angela, Ernie and the Sturges.

As to House Sparrows, as usual they were found by the Sturges and the Anderson duo, plus the Levesque pair at the Verner Co-op.

And so that completes quite a successful November Bird Bash, about which a positively lovely Sunday added a grand fillip. Thanks everyone for your participation!

Let's hope the December Bird Bash is almost as good. Birds will be even rarer then, but perhaps more enjoyable. That date will be the **first weekend in December 1 and 2.**