

BIRD BASH REPORT

MARCH 2019

By Dick Tafel, compiler

Despite the very high snow levels and continuing cold weather, some 24 of us found 46 species of birds over the past weekend. Pretty amazing! Mind you, that is some 6 below the average over the past 16 years, but did exceed last year's 42.

Some 6 of those new birds of the year came from Chris Sukha in Field and West Nipissing.

Starting off, as per usual, with the new birds of the year, in rough taxonomic order, we get to a Turkey Vulture, braving the elements and spotted by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing and by Chris who also saw Trumpeter Swans within the open water of the West Arm of Lake Nipissing.

Canada Geese, Common Goldeneye and Common Mergansers in small numbers were noted by Gary and Connie Sturge, by the pairs of Renee Levesque and yours truly, and by the Anderson duo. Steve Pitt, Keith Thornborrow, Grant and Shirley McKercher, and Lloyd and Janet Sparks saw only the geese, while Chris and Kaye Edmunds saw both the geese and goldeneye. Hooded Mergansers were spotted by the Sturges, by the Anderson pair and by Chris.

Now as to predators, Rough-legged Hawks were spotted soaring over open white fields near Powassan by the Sturges and the Levesque pair. Both those groups also saw an American Kestrel. A Peregrine Falcon was noted by Kaye upon the Pro-Cathedral within the city.

Chris somehow found the unlikely - considering the amount of snow in the fields - Sandhill Cranes and a Killdeer in the west end, while the Anderson duo came surprisingly upon American Woodcocks east of Powassan.

Herring Gulls have appeared in huge numbers (at least 500) within the landfill site of North Bay, with some at the Powassan landfill site, seen there by the Levesque duo; and noted elsewhere by the Sparks, by Keith, Kaye, Steve, Chris, the McKerchers, and the Sturges. The Levesque pair seemed to be the only ones to identify the very few Ring-billed Gulls that had arrived so far.

Chris spotted a Belted Kingfisher in the west end.

Spring-seeking American Robins were enjoyed immensely amidst all the snow still around by Grant and Shirley, Greg and Luanne Chowns, Mary Ann Kenrick, Keith, Steve, the Sturges, and the Anderson and Levesque pairs.

A very few Song Sparrows made their way this far north so far, spotted mostly at feeders by Renee, the Anderson pair, Steve, Brent Turcotte, Keith and Chris, who also spotted a Dark-eyed Junco.

Red-winged Blackbirds have appeared in limited numbers, but were spotted by Ernie Frayle, the Sparks, the McKerchers, the Levesque and Anderson pairs, Keith, Kaye, and Chris.

And so that gets us to birds seen within the previous 2 months: Mallards were observed by the Chowns, Kaye, Chris, the McKerchers and the Anderson pair, but no Black Ducks were noted.

Bald Eagles were seen by the Sturges and 6 of them at the Powassan landfill site by the Levesque duo. The latter pair also saw a couple of Merlins, while Chris and Kaye both noted one.

Ruffed Grouse were spotted by Kaye at Laurier Woods, and by Ernie and by Donna Demarco in the East end of the count area. Wild Turkeys were found by the Anderson pair and also by Keith.

Rock Doves were, of course, ubiquitous, but Mourning Doves were noted only by Buddy Myles in the west end, the Chowns, the Sturges, Ernie, Steve, and the Anderson pair.

No owls were reported.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were at most feeders. Pileated Woodpeckers were also fairly commonplace.

A Northern Shrike was spotted by the Levesque pair, by the Sturges, and by Mary Ann.

Ernie was the only one to note a Canada Jay. Blue Jays were fairly common, as were Common Ravens; American Crows seemed to be almost everywhere, likewise Black-capped Chickadees.

Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, though at many feeders, were certainly not as plentiful as the chickadees.

No Bohemian Waxwings were seen, but European Starlings were seen in growing numbers by many.

American Tree Sparrows were noted by the Anderson duo and by Ernie. A White-throated Sparrow was seen by Chris.

Snow Buntings were spotted by both the Levesque and Anderson pairs. Common Grackles were about in larger numbers than in the previous months, noted by the Sparks, the McKerchers, Keith, Steve, and the Levesque and Anderson pairs.

Red Crossbills were found by Chris and again by the Sturges. Common Redpolls were a major, entertaining bird at many feeders. No Pine Grosbeaks seemed to be about; however, some 30 Evening Grosbeaks were at the feeders of Peter and Pam Handley, with 16 showing up at John Levesque's feeders, and with some noted by Chris and the Anderson and Levesque pairs.

House Sparrows were seen by the Sturges, Chris, and the Anderson and Levesque duos.

And so that is it. It was a pretty amazing collection of birds, considering the continuing winter weather. Congratulations to all who prevailed – and discovered!

Surely the Bird Bash planned for the end of April, **April 27-28**, will be even more exciting. Mark it down!