

Nipissing Area Bird Bash August 2019

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

There were only 17 participants during the August Bird Bash weekend, but results were stimulating just the same, for some 109 species were discovered! That contrasts with last year's August weekend of 112, the average number in August for the past 16 years. The low score was 90 in 2014 and the high score, 127 in 2012.

Several new species were noted, which we will get to first in roughly taxonomic order.

We will start with a cute Ruddy Duck noted among hundreds of other ducks at Warren Lagoon by Chris Sukha and by the pair of Renee Levesque and yours truly.

Then we get to shorebirds finding themselves along the muddy edges of several of the local lagoons - Semipalmated Sandpiper, found by the preceding pair and by Buddy Myles, and the similar Baird's Sandpiper found by the Levesque duo and Fred Pinto with Brent Turcotte at Powassan Lagoon.

Then there was at long last one Great Black-backed Gull disporting itself near the Government Dock, found by the Levesque pair.

The same pair also found the elusive Olive-sided Flycatcher off Riding Stable Road, with Chris coming upon White-winged Crossbills near Field!

Which now gets us to those birds seen previously during this year, starting, as usual, with Common Loons and continuing in rough taxonomic order. This time some loons were noted with little ones (now brown and almost as big as their parents) as seen by yours truly in Trout Lake, and individuals enjoyed by Steve Pitt in Talon Lake, Lloyd and Janet Sparks in Wolf Lake, and Renee in Cache Bay.

No grebes, not even the Pied-billed, were discovered, but Double-crested Cormorants were noted by the Levesque pair at Cache Bay. Great Blue Herons were noted by a few. No Green Herons were discovered, but two rare juvenile Black-crowned Night-Herons were seen by Chris and the Levesque duo at Warren Lagoon. (An adult was seen during April's Bird Bash by Paul Smylie near Eau Claire.) An American Bittern was found only by Steve.

Turkey Vultures were widely dispersed as ever; Canada Geese, even more so.

Now we get to the ducks: the puddle ducks seem to have had a very good breeding season, with almost every local species from Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallards, Blacks (perhaps less so), Blue and Green-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers all being very common within the lagoons. Ring-necked Ducks and Lesser Scaup in small numbers were noted at Warren Lagoon by Chris and the Levesque duo. A few Common Goldeneye, as well as Hooded and Common Mergansers, were observed by different groups, most with many young in tow.

Predators were, as usual, varied in number. Ospreys, now with flying young, were noted by many. Northern Harriers were seen by the Levesque duo, as was the Broad-winged Hawk and American Kestrel. The latter bird was also found by Buddy, Chris, and Grant and Shirley McKercher. Merlins

were discovered only by Gary and Connie Sturge. No one, it seems, saw a Bald Eagle during this Bird Bash.

Ruffed Grouse were located by the Sparks, and Wild Turkey were spotted by Brent from Fred's car while Fred was avoiding other cars. Sandhill Cranes have become more numerous, noted by the Levesque duo, Chris, Steve, Buddy, the Sturges, and the McKerchers.

Now we get into the year's previously seen shorebirds. Buddy saw both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, as well as Least Sandpipers, as did the Levesque pair, who also saw Killdeer, Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers. The Spotted Sandpiper was also noted by David Rooke and by the McKerchers, and the Killdeer by Chris and the Sturges.

Ring-billed Gulls were very common place, but the Herring Gull was identified only by a few, including Buddy, David and the Levesque pair. Caspian and Common Terns were fairly common within Cache Bay.

Rock Pigeons were, as always, very common, but Mourning Doves, though quite widespread, much less so.

Common Nighthawks were watched about 8:00 p.m. by Chris, Greg Jaski, and the Levesque duo.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were numerous at most feeders.

Belted Kingfishers were spotted by the McKerchers, Chris, and the Levesque pair.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Northern Flickers, and Hairy Woodpeckers were fairly commonplace, but Downys were noted only by Peter and Pam Handley and by the Levesque group. The latter also saw Pileated Woodpeckers, as did the Sparks and the Pinto pair.

As to flycatchers, the Eastern Wood-Pewee was spotted solely by the McKerchers, along with the Eastern Kingbird, the latter also noted by Buddy, the Levesque duo, and Chris. The latter three also saw the Least Flycatcher, while David and Chris watched a Great Crested Flycatcher. The Eastern Phoebe was fairly widely observed.

Four vireo species were noted. All of them, including the Blue-headed, Philadelphia and Warbling, were on the Levesque duo list. The Blue-headed was on Chris's list. As usual, many birders heard or saw the Red-eyed.

Tree and Barn Swallows were the only swallows noted, both by the Levesque duo and the Sturges; the Barn was also noted by Chris.

The Black-capped Chickadee was, as always, noted by most observers. The Red-breasted Nuthatch remained widely dispersed, but the White-breasted was not discovered. The Brown Creeper was observed solely by the Levesque duo. The Winter Wren was noted solely by Chris who also found the Ruby-crowned Kinglet, as did the Levesque pair.

As to thrushes, the Eastern Bluebird was enjoyed by the McKerchers, and the Veery was noted by the Pinto pair, Chris, and David who also found the Wood Thrush. American Robins were, as usual, very widely noted. Where were the Swainson Thrushes which were not noted last month either?

Gray Catbirds were discerned by Steve, the Levesque duo and the Sturges, the latter also seeing Brown Thrashers.

European Starlings were around in very large numbers as is common at this time of the year. Cedar Waxwings were less numerous, but were identified by many. Some of the waxwings were flying wildly over open waters and grabbing insects just like swallows.

Now as to warblers, 14 species were identified. Your compiler will indicate by name only those who saw a lone species, starting with John Levesque who identified the only Cape May. The Levesque duo found the only Blackburnian and Pine. Chris saw the only Mourning. The other wonderful warblers identified by many were Tennessee, Nashville, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird and Common Yellowthroat.

Six sparrow species were noted. The Handleys and others saw White-throats; Buddy identified the Lincoln's; and the other species fairly widely noted were Chipping, Savannah, Song and Swamp.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were noted by the Sparks and by Chris.

Red-winged Blackbirds were, of course, widely dispersed, but Eastern Meadowlarks were only discovered by the Sturges and the Levesque duo.

Common Grackles were also fairly widely distributed.

Purple Finches were seen only by Steve and by the Levesque duo. The American Goldfinch was on many lists. No Evening Grosbeaks were discovered this month, but the House Sparrow was, as usual, upon the Sturges' list.

And so that concludes the report about the bird species seen during the weekend of August 24-25. Congrats to all who participated. It was a good list.

Now as to **September's Bird Bash, that will be over the weekend of the 7-8.** There should still be a lot of birds around then, often even more than in August. Mark the date!