

Nipissing Area Bird Bash Report

June 9-10, 2018

By Dick Tafel, compiler

A very successful bird outing was experienced by some 22 participants during June's Bird Bash. 125 species were observed, six more than average for June 'bashes' over the past 15 years!

As per usual, we will start in rough taxonomic order with new birds seen for the year at any 'bash'. Keith Thornborrow found the elusive Spruce Grouse near South River.

Next new bird, very surprisingly, was a tardy migrant, a female Black-bellied Plover noted by Renee Levesque and yours truly within the Verner sewage lagoon. Then, just as surprisingly, they came upon a rare for this area, Upland Sandpiper sitting right on top of a telephone pole on Stewart Road in West Nipissing! They also heard for quite a period of time, a Black-billed Cuckoo from the woods near the end of Riding Stable Road. Chris Sukha also discovered one near Field.

A Northern Saw-whet Owl was heard by Mary Young near her home in Corbeil. A Common Nighthawk was discovered by newly-involved Melanie Alkins near the concrete plant off Highway 11. (But once again no Whip-poor-will was heard during our Bird Bash.)

A Blue-headed Vireo was unearthed by Chris in the west end.

A Swainson's Thrush was heard well by John Levesque near his home off Larocque Road.

A lovely Cape May Warbler was at last discovered during a Bird Bash by the Levesque and yours truly duo on Oak Ridge Lane, north of the city. They also found nearby, as did Melanie and Mary Young elsewhere, the exciting, ever-so-pretty Canada Warbler, the last of 21 warblers observed so far in the area within a Bird Bash.

Another new bird for the year observed by the Levesque duo was the elusive, exotic Scarlet Tanager within the tall trees along Jocko Point Road.

And (what an outing they had) the Levesque duo viewed a very red-legged Field Sparrow off Stewart Road; an Indigo Bunting near the Marsh Drive area; and a Brewer's Blackbird off Highway 11 near Warren.

I have now reported upon all first-seen birds for the district ‘bash’. What about other birds re-discovered?

The Common Loon is normally the first bird upon previous lists. And it was seen by many, including Janet and Lloyd Sparks at Wolfe Lake.

Double-crested Cormorants were common in many areas. But the American Bittern was noticed just by a few – Keith Thornborrow in the south end, Chris in the west and Steve Pitt in the east. Great Blue Herons were also seen by many, as were Turkey Vultures.

Canada Geese are clearly still ubiquitous! Five Trumpeter Swans were discovered by Therez Violette at Cache Bay.

There were still lots of ducks about, including 8 “puddle-duck” species, mostly found within the various lagoons. However, only Chris noted Ring-necked and Lesser Scaup at Verner Lagoon. A Common Goldeneye was seen there by the Levesque duo. Red-heads were seen at both western lagoon sites by Chris and the Levesque duo. Only Kaye found Common Mergansers. No one found a Hooded Merganser.

Among predators, Ospreys were fairly widely noted, but Northern Harriers were watched only by the Levesque pair and by Keith. They also saw Broad-winged Hawks, as did Kaye. A Bald Eagle was viewed solely by Melanie.

American Kestrel were fairly widespread, but Merlins were upon the lists only of the Sparks, Melanie and the Levesque pair.

Keith found Wild Turkeys near South River. American Coots were at Warren Lagoon, observed there by the Levesque duo and Chris. Chris also saw Sandhill Cranes, as did Melanie. The latter three groups, as well as Gary and Connie Sturge, Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing all spotted Killdeer. The only other shorebird seen was the Spotted Sandpiper, seen by Brent Turcotte, oddly, at the North River, and also seen by Kaye.

Wilson's Snipe was noted by Steve near Astorville. Unfortunately, no one managed to hear or see the American Woodcock this month.

The two main gulls were fairly commonplace. However, Black and the Common Terns were hard to spot and spotted only by the Levesque pair at Cache Bay, while Caspians were seen by Chris and Kaye.

Rock Pigeons were, as always, very common, with the Mourning Dove a little bit less so.

A Barred Owl was observed in Field by Chris.

Chimney Swifts, still at their favourite chimney on Main Street in North Bay, were watched by Kaye and Melanie.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were very widespread.

Belted Kingfishers were somewhat hard to locate, but were on the lists of Chris, Brent and the Levesque pair.

Now as to woodpeckers and similar: the Yellow-bellied, Northern Flicker and Hairy were fairly widespread. The Pileated was noted only by Renee, by the Anderson pair and by Chris. But where were the Downys? No one apparently spotted one of these usually quite common woodpeckers.

Now as to flycatchers: the Eastern Wood-Pewee was noted by Melanie and by the Sturges; Alder Flycatchers were spotted by the Levesque pair, Chris and Melanie; the Eastern Phoebe was widely noted; the Great Crested Flycatcher was observed only by Chris and Renee; and the Eastern Kingbird was on many lists.

Getting to vireos, I must first mention the Red-eyed, for it seemed to be everywhere, while Warbling Vireos were noted only by the Levesque pair, by Chris and by Melanie.

The Gray Jay was spotted solely by Keith, but Blue Jays were on almost every list. Crows and ravens seemed to be everywhere.

All five local swallows were seen again, though the Northern Rough-winged was identified only by Chris, by Melanie and by the Levesque pair. The latter identified the Bank Swallow, as did Chris. Cliff Swallows were spotted only by the Levesque pair near the Veuve River bridge, where the Rough-winged also hang out.

Black-capped Chickadees were everywhere, as per usual, and the Red-breasted Nuthatches, also. But where were the White-breasted Nuthatches – another normally common bird that was overlooked? Brown Creepers were noted by Chris.

As to wrens, the only one apparently seen was the Winter Wren – by Chris and Melanie, who also noted the Golden-crowned Kinglet. No Ruby-crowned were identified.

As to thrushes: Only Kaye spotted an Eastern Bluebird; the Veery was rather widespread; the Hermit Thrush was observed by Chris and by April McCrum; and the Wood Thrush heard by Kevan Cowcill. American Robins seemed to be almost everywhere, possibly partly due to their huge fallout during that unexpected snow fall in

late April.

Gray Catbirds were seen only by Melanie and the Anderson pair. Brown Thrashers were on several lists. European Starlings were all over, as usual. Cedar Waxwings were also widespread, appearing upon many lists and often in large numbers.

Now to the wonderful North American boreal forest wood warblers: Some 16 of the 18 species, the largest number upon any recent Bird Bash month, were seen again.

I am sure to miss someone's warbler discovery, but will try hard to mention just who saw what (of those noted already in a previous month): Nashville - by Chris, and Mary; Northern Parula – by Brent; Yellow – by many; Chestnut-sided – by Peter and Pam Handley, as well as several others; Magnolia - by the Levesque pair; Black-throated Blue and Green - by Chris and Melanie, the latter species also seen by the Sparks; Yellow-rumped - by Chris; Blackburnian and Pine – by Chris and Melanie; Black and White – by Chris, Brent and Melanie; Mourning Warbler – by the Levesque pair, John and Chris; American Redstart, Ovenbird and Common Yellowthroat - by many; and the Northern Waterthrush - by the Levesque pair.

Sparrows: Five sparrow species were fairly widely noted – Chipping, Song, White-throat, Savannah and Swamp. The Dark-eyed Junco, normally lumped in with sparrows upon check lists, was observed only by April.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were enjoyed by Brent and Melanie. Bobolinks were watched by Kaye and the Anderson and Levesque pairs. Red-winged Blackbirds were very widespread, as were Common Grackles.

Eastern Meadowlarks were discovered by the Anderson and Levesque duos, as well as by Melanie. Brown-headed Cowbirds were noted only by Kaye and Keith.

Baltimore Orioles were solely on the Levesque pair's list.

Purple Finches were fairly widely noted, but Red Crossbills were only upon the lists of Chris and Melanie. Pine Siskins were still about – at least where feeders were being kept up, such as at Mary Ann Kenrick's and at the Sparks'.

American Goldfinches were quite widely distributed. But no Evening Grosbeaks this month? First month blank for this species since the count began in January.

House Sparrows were noted by the Sturges, the Anderson pair and Kaye.

And so that ends the detailed results of June's Bird Bash. Congrats to all the

participants. It was an especially busy month for birds and birders!

The July Bird Bash may not be quite as productive, but by then some unseen earlier migrants will already be returning. So note its date – **the weekend of July 21**, a week earlier than usual due to the absence of the compiler the following weekend.