

Bird Bash Report

February 2020

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

A rather good turnout of both birds and participants greeted our pleasant weather for our 17th annual February Bird Bash. There were 22 participants and 33 species of birds! That is two more birds than last year and just two below the average for all the years. (The lowest was 27 in 2015; highest, 42 in 2012.)

And just what was seen in roughly taxonomic order, starting with those not seen in the previous month?

Well, three American Black Ducks revealed themselves for the first time –at the open water by the Green Store on Trout Lake – to the duo of Renee Levesque and yours truly. Then comes an exciting ivory white, adult Snowy Owl noted by those two stalwarts along Highway 64 not far from Lavigne.

Now comes a real show-stopper – a lost Hermit Thrush that decided to visit the Levesque back yard and be observed by John, and later by Renee. It seemed very healthy and ate almost anything in sight.

Finally, first of the year, Pine Grosbeak appeared within the view of Keith Thornborrow at South River; and a few Red Crossbills were discovered by Lori Anderson with Ken Gowing.

To get to the rest of the birds, we must start with the Mallards observed by the Levesque duo at the Trout Lake open water, by Kaye Edmunds, by Brent and Laura Turcotte and by Gary and Luanne Chowns, the latter foursome at the Chowns back yard of all places! A very busy male and female Common Goldeneye were spotted by the Levesque duo at some open water on the West Arm Narrows of Lake Nipissing.

As to predators, a Northern Goshawk was spotted by Brent and by the Chowns, right in their yard, and by Sheldon McGregor in the west end. Bald Eagles were observed by Gary and Connie Sturge and by the Levesque duo, all near Powassan.

Ruffed Grouse were noted by Kaye, Pam and Pete Handley, Donna Demarco, Ernie Frayle and Gary and Connie, the latter pair also finding Wild Turkeys, as did

Keith.

Rock Doves were, as usual, ubiquitous, while Mourning Doves were spotted by Bill and Carol Fleming, Keith, the Anderson duo, the Sturges and Ernie.

Downy, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers were very well circulated throughout the area.

Likewise in spades, were Blue Jays, Common Ravens, and within the city areas, American Crows. Black-capped Chickadees were everywhere, with Red-breasted Nuthatches being somewhat fewer in number. White-breasted Nuthatches were found only by Kaye, Corinne Urrutia (Landini), the Flemings and yours truly. To where have the rest gone? And, no discoveries of Canada Jays? One Brown Creeper was spotted by Sheldon near Lavigne.

European Starlings were still about in good numbers, especially near human habitations. But still no waxwings within the area?

American Tree Sparrows are remaining this winter in fair numbers, being noted by many, including the Flemings, Keith, the Anderson pair, the Turcottes, the Chowns, the Sturges, Ernie and the Levesque group (22 at their home).

There were a few Dark-eyed Juncos reported – by Elsa Tafel, the Handleys, the Sturges, the Anderson duo and Ernie.

Snow Buntings were upon the lists of the Sturge and Anderson duos.

A Common Grackle continued to be present at Ernie's place.

Purple Finches were seen solely by the Handleys and the Anderson duo.

White-winged Crossbills were fairly widely distributed, noted most often seeking gravel upon roadways, and seen by the Sturge, the Anderson and the Levesque duos. These groups also saw, as did Laura Turcotte, quite a few Pine Siskins. American Goldfinches were at almost every feeder, taking the place of redpolls, non-existent this year here.

Evening Grosbeaks continued to be few and far between, observed only by the Anderson pair, by Donna and by Ernie.

As to House Sparrows, Buddy Myles spotted them at the Verner Co-op, and the Anderson pair saw many at the Anderson farm east of Powassan.

That was a pretty great Bird Bash, and so lots of congrats to all observers during a tough wintertime observation period.

The next Bird Bash will be over the last weekend in March, March 28 and 29. With temperatures rising and potential migration underway, there will surely be a few more enterprising birds. Mark the date down!