

Bird Bash Report

October 3-4, 2020

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Such good bird-discovery results for 30 participants during a pleasant October weekend! Eighty-seven species were observed, just above average over the past 19 years of similar effort.

As per usual, we will start with birds seen for the first time during this year's Bird Bashes, following in rough taxonomic order as set out in the seasonal checklist for our area. This begins with the Horned Grebe discovered by Brent and Laura Turcotte and Luanne Chowns.

This trio also found the season's first local Snow Goose, as did Lori Anderson with Ken Gowing, and Renee Levesque with yours truly.

Two Common Gallinules were enjoyed in their adult plumage in Cache Bay by the Levesque duo. They also thoroughly enjoyed a group of newly-arrived, active Lapland Longspurs, most of them at Sunset Park, as did Fred Pinto, the Turcotte trio, and the Anderson pair.

And so now to bird species seen during this year's previous Bird Bashes: After being around since April that starts with the Common Loon. Although it is now spread out more in the larger lakes, it was still sighted by the Turcotte trio, Grant and Shirley McKercher, Keith Thornborrow, Fred, Steve Pitt, Paul Smylie, and the Levesque duo.

The latter pair also saw the Pied-billed Grebe, as did Keith. The Turcotte trio were the only ones to note Double-crested Cormorants.

Great Blue Heron were on the lists of Marc Buchanan, the Levesque duo, Lloyd and Janet Sparks, and Keith.

Turkey Vultures were still around and watched by the Turcotte trio, Gary and Connie Sturge, Keith, the Sparks, Steve, and the Levesque pair.

Canada Geese were very prominent and seen all over! But the Trumpeter Swan was observed only by Therez Violette near Sturgeon Falls.

Lots of ducks were noted by many. Among the “puddle” family within lagoons (and elsewhere) were Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Black Ducks, Mallards, Blue-winged Teal, and Green-winged Teal. Many diving Ring-necked Ducks, Common Goldeneye, and Lesser Scaup were also within the lagoons and elsewhere.

A few Hooded Mergansers were noted – by yours truly, the Anderson duo, the McKerchers, and the Turcotte trio. The latter group also saw Common Mergansers, as did Fred, the Sparks, Steve, and the Levesque pair.

Now as to hawks: An Osprey was still around in the eastern Powassan vicinity and noted by the Anderson pair who also saw Northern Harrier, as did the Sturges and the Levesque pair; the latter duo also found a Sharp-shinned Hawk, as did the Sparks; the Turcotte trio discovered a Peregrine Falcon; the Levesque duo saw a Red-tailed Hawk; the McKerchers noted a Merlin, as did the Sturges who also observed American Kestrel, as did Steve, Rose McClelland, and the Levesque pair. The latter pair also saw a Bald Eagle, as did the Sturges and Keith.

Ruffed Grouse were spotted by Steve, the Sparks, Keith, Rose, the Turcotte trio, and the Anderson pair. The latter duo also noted Wild Turkeys, as did Keith, Mary Young, and the Sturges.

After the hundreds discovered at the last Bird Bash, and the thousand or so seen thereafter, just a few Sandhill Cranes were still around, and noted by the Sturges and by Steve.

No shorebirds were noted by anyone!

As to gulls, there were myriads of Ring-billed Gulls about, with many Herring Gulls mixed in. Greater Black-backs were along the lakefront, and noted by Fred, the McKerchers, and the Levesque pair.

Rock Pigeons remained as common as ever, but the Mourning Dove was noted only by the Sparks, Steve, Keith, Linda Stoner, and Therez.

No owls were reported again, nor hummingbirds (sort of sad not seeing the latter).

Belted Kingfishers were found by Keith, the McKerchers, Paul, and the Levesque duo.

As to woodpeckers or similar, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was noted only by Steve and the Turcotte trio. Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were very widespread, but Pileated were seen only by Keith, Steve, the Anderson pair, the Sparks, the McKerchers, the Sturges, and John Levesque. Some Northern Flickers were still around and spotted by the Sturges, Linda, the Sparks, and Keith.

Which gets us to the passerines: Starting with flycatchers, there were just a few Eastern Phoebes still about, noted only by the Sturges and Rose.

The only vireo still hereabouts was the Blue-headed spotted by the Sturges.

Still no Canada Jays which have not been seen at a Bird Bash since March. But Blue Jays were very plentiful, as were the American Crows, many of them accumulating prior to southern migration. Common Ravens were identified by the Levesque pair, the Sturges, Cindy Lafleur, the McKerchers, Fred, the Anderson duo, Steve, Keith, Donna Demarco, and the Turcotte trio.

Black-capped Chickadees were as widespread as ever, as were Red-breasted Nuthatches. As usual, White-breasted were somewhat less common, but were noted by Elsa Tafel, the Turcotte trio, Therez, Marc, Keith, Steve, the Sparks, the McKerchers, and the Sturges. Brown Creepers were spotted only by the Sturges and the Turcotte trio.

Very active Ruby-crowned Kinglets were fairly common throughout the area and seen by many, but the Golden-crowned Kinglet was noted solely by the Turcotte trio and Mary.

American Robins were still very widespread, but the only other thrush seen were Eastern Bluebirds discovered by the Sparks near their home.

Gray Catbirds were on the lists only of Fred and Steve. A few Brown Thrashers were still about, noted by the Levesque duo, the Sparks, and the Anderson pair.

European Starlings remained ubiquitous.

American Pipits were spotted by the Anderson pair, Fred, Paul, the Sturges, and the Levesque duo.

Cedar Waxwings did not seem to be around.

There were surprisingly many warblers still present, seven species altogether. The Orange-crowned was spotted by the Anderson pair. They also saw the Nashville, Yellow-rumped and Palm, as did the Turcottes and the McKerchers, who also saw the Black-throated Green and the American Redstart. The Sparks saw the Wilson's Warbler along with the Yellow-rumped. The Palm was also spotted by the Sturges, John, Steve, and the Levesque pair, who also saw Yellow-rumped, as did Fred.

Now for sparrows: There were ten species altogether that were recognized, more than your compiler can recall at any other Bird Bash this year. The White-crowned had just arrived in massive, uncountable numbers. The White-throat was still widely about, and to a lesser extent, the Song. The Lincoln's was identified only by the Levesque pair; the Chipping was on Marc's, Linda's, Mary Ann's, and Fred's lists; the Savannah was noted by the Sturges, the Anderson pair, and the Levesque duo; the latter also noted Fox, as did the Turcotte trio, who also found Swamp Sparrows. Donna Demarco identified a Field Sparrow and the Stuges, American Tree Sparrows.

The Sturges also enjoyed Dark-eyed Juncos, after their absence since the April Bird Bash, as did the Sparks, the Turcotte trio, John, Corinne Urrutia, Linda, Marc, and Peter and Pam Handley.

Red-winged Blackbirds had joined together in some large flocks, and seen by Mary Ann, Therez, the Anderson pair, Cindy Lafleur, Steve, Fred, and the Sturges.

Eastern Meadowlarks had not been upon our last two Bird Bash lists, but this time were noted, probably on their way south, by the Levesque and the Anderson pairs.

Rusty Blackbirds put in an appearance and were observed by Rose, the Levesque duo, the Sparks, the Anderson duo, the Turcotte trio, and the Sturges.

Common Grackles were still widespread. But the Sturges were the only ones to find the Brown-headed Cowbird, not seen on a Bird Bash since July.

Purple Finches were noted by Mary Ann, the Levesque duo, Steve, the McKerchers and the Sturges.

American Goldfinches seemed to be more numerous than earlier and were noted by Corinne, the Sturges, the Turcotte trio, the Sparks, Cindy, and Steve.

Finally, House Sparrows, were located, as so often is the case, by the Anderson pair and the Sturges.

Congrats to all for your fortitude and effort. It was an altogether successful result! You can look forward to the next Bird Bash over the weekend of **November 7 to 8**. Mark the date down!