

Bird Bash Report

May 25-26, 2019

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

It proved to be a wonderful weekend for birds despite rain on and off on Saturday, although that certainly did not stop the birds from appearing. Both days resulted in 28 participants seeing a total of 141 species! The limited leaf cover made identifications easier, and the birds were a bit slower than usual arriving in the north.

As usual and in rough taxonomic order, we will start off with birds not seen previously during a Bird Bash this year. That means the first bird on our list must be the Red-necked Grebe discovered at Warren Lagoon by one of the two Great Canadian Birdathon teams competing with one another over a 24-hour period. The team finding this grebe was led by Marc Buchanan and included Grant and Shirley McKercher, Sarah Wheelan and Oriana Pokorny.

Then comes the Green Heron found in Laurier Woods by Gary and Luanne Chowns, as well as by the Buchanan team, a team that also saw a Red-breasted Merganser, again at Warren Lagoon.

The Sharp-shinned Hawk was finally spotted during a Bird Bash near South River by Keith Thornborrow.

Then we get to some very unusual shorebirds for our area: Black-bellied and American Golden Plovers, the Black-bellied in very large numbers in a flooded field alongside the Veuve River. Both plovers were great to see in their breeding plumage. Many Semipalmated Plovers were also seen there. These plovers were observed by yours truly's Birdathon team, a team which included Rene Levesque, Lori Anderson and Jackie Manella. The Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers were also seen by Chris Sukha in the Warren and Field areas.

Next excitement was the rare Hudsonian Godwit found in the same field along the Veuve River. Also seen were Spotted and Least Sandpipers. All were seen by your compiler's team. Solitary Sandpipers were observed by the Buchanan group.

Bonaparte's Gulls and Caspian Terns were also at the Veuve River area and seen by your compiler's group. Chris also saw Caspian Terns at Cache Bay, as well as Black Terns. Very surprisingly and thrilling, a group of about 20 Black Terns were also seen at Warren Lagoon by both Birdathon teams. Common Terns were spotted by your compiler's group at Cache Bay, by the Chowns, and by Gary and Connie Sturge.

A Black-billed Cuckoo was noted by Chris at Field.

We now have reached the Whip-poor-will, heard by Buddy Myles in the west end and by Mary Young and by your compiler's team in the east end, not far from Corbeil. This team also observed Chimney Swifts at Powassan Lagoon.

Almost everyone noted Ruby-throated Hummingbirds which had arrived at many feeders.

Great Crested, Alder and Least Flycatchers were about, all three observed by your compiler's bunch; Great Crested by Lloyd and Janet Sparks; and Least by Chris and Mary Young. Eastern Kingbirds were seen by many.

Vireos: The Warbling was upon Chris's list and that of the Buchanan team. The Red-eyed was spread among very many observers, while the Blue-headed was noted only by your compiler's group and by Chris.

Swallows: They had finally arrived in fairly large numbers, with the Northern Rough-winged being noted astride the Veuve River by both Birdathon teams and by Chris. He and also saw the Cliff, as did your compiler's team, a team which also found Banks at Powassan Lagoon.

Swainson's Thrush was upon Chris's list and your compiler's team list. This team also observed the Wood Thrush.

The Gray Catbird was noted by many, including Therez Violette. The American Pipit was seen solely by the Sturges. They also noted the just-arriving Cedar Waxwings, as did your compiler's team.

Now we get to the wonderful wood warblers: Twenty-four species were seen, twenty-one for the first time this year. Most observers who got out into some wooded areas saw a lot! We will just denote all of the first-seen ones and pick out the few that were seen only by one or two groups.

Warblers seen for the first time were Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Northern Parula seen solely by Chris and by Linda Stoner, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Cape May, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted noted only by your compiler's team, Blackpoll seen well by your compiler's team at Powassan Lagoon, the very rare Cerulean also seen at Powassan Lagoon and noted by three members of your compiler's team, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush noted solely by your compiler's team, Mourning Warbler heard by Mary and seen by

Chris, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's and Canada. What a terrific collection of North America's most exciting birds!

Then there was the Scarlet Tanager. This exotic species was seen well by your compiler's team, and by Mary, the Chowns and Chris.

The Lincoln's Sparrow was the only sparrow seen for the first time during a Bird Bash, spotted by the Chowns.

Then there was the thrilling Rose-breasted Grosbeak, enjoyed by many, including Peter and Pam Handley, and the equally exciting Indigo Bunting noted solely by your compiler's team along Alsace Road, and by Keith at his spot in South River.

Bobolinks were clearly around and noted by several, including Steve Pitt in the east end.

Beautiful Baltimore Orioles had arrived in small numbers and much enjoyed by Buddy, Keith, Linda Stoner, by both Birdathon teams, and by the Sturges who had quite a little collection in their yard.

And so that concludes the birds not previously seen during a Bird Bash so far this year. We must now get to those seen upon previous Bird Bashes this year.

Again, in rough taxonomic order, this starts with the Common Loon. Most who have lake views found this iconic species. The Pied-billed Grebe was noted solely by your compiler's team. Double-crested Cormorants were widely observed.

The American Bittern was observed by Keith, Mary, Steve, the Sparks, and the Buchanan team. Great Blue Herons were sighted by Mary, Chris and both Birdathon teams.

Turkey Vultures were quite ubiquitous, as were Canada Geese.

As to ducks, most of the "puddle ducks" (eight species of them) were widely about, and likewise some divers, like the Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye and Common Merganser. Bufflehead were seen only by the Buchanan team and by Chris. Hooded Mergansers were only upon Chris's list.

As to predators, they were not widely discovered, except for Osprey, Northern Harrier and American Kestrel. The Broad-winged Hawk was found only by the Buchanan team, the Sparks, and the Sturges who, along with Keith, also saw the Bald Eagle. A Merlin was sighted solely by Mary Ann Kenrick in town, and by Ernie in the east end.

Ruffed Grouse were petty commonplace, but the Wild Turkey was spotted yet again only by Keith. For the third consecutive month, Sandhill Cranes were surprisingly common.

Killdeer came up on many lists, also for the third consecutive month. But yellowleg species were not discovered, although normally common.

Wilson's Snipe was noted by Mary. American Woodcock were observed by Chris and your compiler's group.

Rock Pigeons were very common as usual, while Mourning Doves somewhat less so.

No owls were noted.

Belted Kingfishers were fairly widespread, being noted by both Birdathon groups and by Keith, Chris and Mary.

As to woodpeckers and sapsuckers, the Downy, the Hairy, the Northern Flicker and the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were widespread and seen by many, but the Pileated was only upon the Buchanan team list, as well as the lists of the Chowns, Mary and Keith.

Eastern Phoebes were quite common.

The Canada Jay was once again noted only by Ernie. Blue Jays were pretty well everywhere, as were American Crows and Common Ravens.

Tree and Barn Swallows were our major swallow groups.

Black-capped Chickadees and Red and White -breasted Nuthatches were fairly widespread, but the Brown Creeper was noted solely by the Chowns.

Just a few Winter Wrens were noted - by your compiler's group and by Chris.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets were seen by the two Birdathon teams, while the Golden-crowned was seen only by your compiler's team.

Eastern Bluebirds were enjoyed solely by the Sturges. The Veery and the Hermit Thrush were rather more widely spotted, as was the American Robin.

Brown Thrashers were noted by Therez, Donna Demarco, and both teams, among others.

European Starlings were, as usual, almost everywhere.

The Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen again by many participants, while the Pine only by the Sturges. The beautiful Wilson's was surprisingly widespread.

As to sparrows: Chipping, Savannah, Song, Swamp and White-throated were all fairly common. For the most part, the White-crowned had gone north, but your compiler's team did spot a couple, as did the Sturges, the Chowns, the Sparks and John Levesque. Dark-eyed Juncos were noted by Mary Ann and by Steve.

Of course, Red-winged Blackbirds seemed to be at all wet areas, of which there were certainly many this spring; Common Grackles, likewise.

Eastern Meadowlarks were not very common, being noted only by the two Birdathon teams.

Brown-headed Cowbirds were seen solely by the Chowns.

Purple Finches were observed by many, as were Pine Siskins and American Goldfinch.

Evening Grosbeaks were not quite as common as in previous months, but as many as 50 visited the Sturge's feeders, with a few visiting John's yard in the north end.

House Sparrows were noted by the two Birdathon groups and by the Sturges.

And so that ends the very grand May 2019 count compilation. Congrats to all for your involvements.

The June count will be held over the weekend of June 22.