

Bird Bash Report

December 2017

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

A very good turnout of birders (25) enjoying a weekend of pleasant, early winter weather found 53 species of birds within the district. That is not quite as good as last year's record of 57, but 5 above the average for the past 15 years.

As per usual, we start with new birds for the year within a rough taxonomic order. That involves a White-winged Scoter found by Grant and Shirley McKercher along the Lake Nipissing shore, and rare for the area, a Harlequin Duck, sometimes found at this late season. The latter was discovered briefly on Sunday off Sunset Park by Renee Levesque and identified by your compiler. They also found Glaucous Gulls at the North Bay landfill site. An unobtrusive Snowy Owl was discovered by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing near the government dock. (By the way, it was still in that vicinity on Monday.)

And so to the rest of the birds, starting with the Common Loon. A few are still around, two observed by Elsa Tafel within Trout Lake; one also seen on Trout Lake by the Anderson and Levesque pair; and one seen in Callander Bay by the McKerchers and by Gary, Connie and Rachel Sturge.

American Black Ducks were noticed in small numbers by the Anderson pair, Marc Buchanan and Sarah Wheelan, as well as the Levesque duo, while Mallards seemed to be everywhere there was a bit of open water, and seen by many. Lesser Scaup were noticed by the Sturge trio in Callander Bay. Three cute Long-tailed Ducks were still around Lake Nipissing and were observed by the Levesque duo and by Grant and Shirley.

A few Bufflehead were seen by the Buchanan duo, by Elsa and by Brent and Laura Turcotte, all within Trout Lake. Common Goldeneye and Common Mergansers were still fairly abundant, while Hooded Mergansers were found only by the Turcottes, Elsa, and the Buchanan and Levesque duos. The Red-breasted Merganser was identified by the McKerchers at Callander Bay and by the Levesque duo near the Lake Nipissing government dock.

Now we get to the predators. At least ten Bald Eagles were at the North Bay landfill site seen by the Levesque duo, while the Sturges spotted some west of

Powassan, and Ernie Frayle saw one east of North Bay. Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks were found by the Anderson pair east of Powassan.

Ruffed Grouse were fairly widespread, seen by the Buchanan duo, Donna Demarco and the Anderson pair. But Keith Thornborrow and Steve Pitt were the only ones to spy Wild Turkeys.

As to gulls, several Ring-bills were still about Lake Nipissing, and Herrings were omnipresent up at the landfill site, as well as at the lakefront. A Great Black-backed was spotted by the Anderson duo along the lakefront, while several of them were observed at the landfill site. There, also found by the Levesque duo, were a few Iceland Gulls.

Of course, Rock Pigeons were all over, but Mourning Doves were found only by a few, including the Sturges, Steve Pitt and the Anderson duo.

As to woodpeckers, Mary Ann Kenrick had a Red-bellied briefly at her feeder; the Downy and Hairy were very widespread; and the Pileated was at a few locations, spotted by Paul Smylie, Mary Ann, Elsa, Steve and the Sturges.

A Gray Jay was discovered by Keith, and Blue Jays were upon almost every list, as were American Crows (mostly within more urban areas) and Common Ravens.

Did anyone not see Black-capped Chickadees? Energetic Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches were almost as commonplace. But the Brown Creeper – it was viewed only by the McKerchers and the Anderson duo. A Golden-crowned Kinglet was found by the Sturges near Powassan and by Chris Sukha near Field.

The American Robin was spotted by the McKerchers near Callander and by Ernie in the east end. European Starlings were around, sometimes in very large flocks. The Sturges found some Cedar Waxwings west of Powassan.

The only North American sparrow seen was the American Tree Sparrow noted by Ernie, the Turcottes, Keith, Chris, Renee, the Anderson duo and Pam and Peter Handley. Generally these sightings were at local feeders. The only Dark-eyed Juncos were found by the Sturges.

Snow Buntings were discovered solely by Keith near Sundridge.

A Red-winged Blackbird was upon both the Anderson and the Levesque duos' lists.

The latter pair also saw the Common Grackle, as did Ernie.

Chris saw Pine Grosbeaks, last seen here in February, as did the Turcottes. Purple Finches were noted by Doug Patterson in Mattawa and by the Handleys in the north end of the city. The only Common Redpolls (so far), last seen in March, were noted by Chris. He also saw Pine Siskins, as did the Turcottes, and the Sturges.

American Goldfinches were observed by a few including the Levesque duo, Mary Ann, and John Levesque. Doug has Evening Grosbeaks at his feeder. The Anderson pair and Chris were the only ones to note any House Sparrows.

And so that is it! Congrats to all!

Note that the first Bird Bash for 2018 is coming up – soon?– over the **weekend of January 13**. Prepare for it!