

Bird Bash Report

June 2019

By Dick Tafel, complier

Though only 19 participated, the June Bird Bash did turn out surprisingly well. The weather was great and the birds more plentiful than might have been expected. 110 species were detected, somewhat below the average of 117 over the past 16 years; but, considering our strange spring, all in all a good total.

A few new birds were discovered for the year. In rough taxonomic order, we must start with Grant McKercher's find of a Sora while kayaking within Callander Bay. Then there was the Common Nighthawk heard by Paul Smylie within the city limits. An Eastern Wood Pewee was noted by Gary and Connie Sturge, who also found a Black-throated Blue Warber, as did April McCrum. The Sturges also noted a Philadelphia Vireo, also identified by John Levesque. Grant also found Marsh Wrens during his kayak sojourn.

Now we get to birds seen during previous Bird Bashes, again in rough taxonomic order. The Common Loon was seen on most lakes by several observers often as a result of hearing their iconic calls, as was the case with Elsa Tafel. The Pied-billed Grebe was found in Cache Bay by the combo of Renee Levesque and yours truly.

Double-crested Cormorants, often in huge numbers, were observed by many. American Bitterns were discovered by Buddy Myles and Ernie Frayle. Great Blue Herons were on several lists, but the Green Heron was noted only by Kaye Edmunds – in Laurier Woods.

Turkey Vultures were very predominant, circling the skies seemingly everywhere. Canada Geese, along with their numerous goslings, were observed in many watering holes.

“Puddle Ducks” like the Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue and Green-winged Teal and Northern Shoveler were still in fair numbers in many pools or lagoons. However, only a few “divers” were discovered - the Common Goldeneye found by Grant and by David Rooke; a Common Merganser by Kaye; and a Hooded Merganser by the Levesque pair.

Now to predators: Osprey were observed by Therez Violette and the Levesque combo at its baseball field lair in Cache Bay, while others were seen by Lloyd and Janet Sparks with a fish in its talons, by Kaye, by David, and by Gary and Connie Sturge. Northern Harrier were observed by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing east of Powassan and by the Sturges. Three Broad-winged Hawks were noted by the Levesque combo along the

north highway, while others were noted by the Anderson pair and by the Sturges. The Sturges also spotted the Bald Eagle, as did the Levesque pair. American Kestrel were fairly widely distributed.

Ruffed Grouse were found by the Sparks and by Kaye. Sandhill Cranes were noted solely by Ernie.

Killdeer were on the lists of Kaye, the Sturges, and the Levesque pair, the latter the only ones to spot a second shorebird, the Spotted Sandpiper.

As usual, Ring-billed Gulls were pretty widespread - over 600 were in a field east of Powassan observed by the Anderson combo - but Herring Gulls were noted only by David, the Sturges, the Sparks, and the Levesque pair who also noted Black Terns and Caspian Terns at Cache Bay, with Caspian Terns spotted also by Grant and by Kaye.

Rock Doves were ubiquitous as always, though, as observed by the Levesque duo, all had disappeared for the night by about 8:00 p.m. Mourning Doves were upon many lists.

A Black-billed Cuckoo was well observed by the Levesque pair on Cook Mills Road off Hwy 11 North.

A Barred Owl was noted by Pam and Pete Handley and by the Anderson duo.

Whip-poor-wills were heard by yours truly not far from his home. No Chimney Swifts were observed.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were upon many lists, as were Belted Kingfishers.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were noted by David, the Sparks and the Sturges. The Hairy Woodpecker was quite widespread, but the Downy found only by a few, including John. Pileated Woodpeckers were noted by the Handleys and by the Sturges. Northern Flickers were fairly common.

Getting now to the flycatchers: the Alder was on the Levesque pair's and David's lists, as was the Great Crested, seen also by the Sparks and by Grant and Shirley McKercher. Eastern Phoebes and Eastern Kingbirds were upon many lists. However, no Least Flycatchers were noted.

Warbling Vireos were identified by the McKerchers, while Red-eyed Vireos were everywhere. Blue-headed Vireos were observed by the Levesque pair.

A Canada Jay was spotted by the Levesque combo on Riding Stable Road. Blue Jays were all over the place, as were American Crows and Common Ravens.

Tree and Barn Swallows were by far the most common swallows, but Bank and Northern Rough-winged in small numbers were noted by the Levesque pair, who, along with the Anderson duo, also identified Cliff Swallows.

Black-capped Chickadees were very common, as were Red-breasted Nuthatches, but White-breasted Nuthatches were discovered only by Therez, by David and by the McKerchers.

Singing Winter Wrens were noted by April, the Levesque duo and by the Sturges. The latter pair also found the Ruby-crowned Kinglet, as did Kaye.

Now for thrushes: Eastern Bluebirds were enjoyed by the Sturges, the Sparks, the Anderson duo and by Ernie. Other than the American Robin, the Veery seemed to be the most common thrush. Both were noted by many. Swainson's, Hermit and Wood Thrushes were all noted by the Levesque duo. The Hermit Thrush was also noted by David, as was the Wood Thrush, which was also on the list of the Sturges.

Gray Catbirds were found by many, as were Brown Thrashers. European Starlings were among the most common of all our birds.

Cedar Waxwings had certainly arrived, though somewhat later than usual, and were observed by many.

Now to the lovely warblers which were harder to find in the thicker foliage, but still noted in fairly large numbers. Enjoyed by many participants were Nashville, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Pine, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird (everywhere), Northern Waterthrush, Mourning, Yellow-rumped and Common Yellow-throat.

Scarlet Tanager – this exotic species was noted solely by the Sturges.

As to sparrows: Chipping, Savannah, Song, and White-throated were all quite common. But no one identified a Swamp or a Vesper, both of which were somewhere around.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were identified by the Levesque duo, the Sparks, and the Sturges. An Indigo Bunting was noted by the Levesque pair on Marsh Drive.

Bobolinks were spotted by Ernie, David, the Sturges and the Levesque duo.

Red-winged Blackbirds were everywhere, as were Common Grackles, but Eastern Meadowlarks were noted only by the Sturges, the Anderson pair, and the Levesque duo. The latter group identified a Rusty Blackbird. Brown-headed Cowbirds were noted only by the Sturges. They also found Baltimore Orioles and Purple Finches, both also found by the Levesque pair.

American Goldfinch were upon quite a few lists, while the House Sparrow appeared solely upon the lists of the Anderson duo, Buddy, and the Sturges.

Thus endeth the Nipissing area June 2019 Bird Bash report! Congrats to all participants!

Plan ahead for the July Bird Bash scheduled for **the weekend of July 27**. Some south-moving migrants should be appearing by then – and summer has just begun!