

# **Bird Bash Report**

## **September 2021**

*By Dick Tafel, Compiler*

A very abundant Bird Bash for September was conducted by 21 participants over the September 11-12 weekend. They observed 114 birds, much over the 18 year average of 107. The weather was generally good, though there were very strong winds on Saturday, and no doubt that helped the results.

But let's get at it! New birds for the year in roughly the order of the long-standing North Bay and Area seasonal checklist, we start with the Black-backed Woodpecker found by Sheldon McGregor near his cottage in the far west end by Mashkinonje Provincial Park.

Then there were American Pipits found by Fred Pinto off the Marsh Drive landfill.

Orange-crowned Warblers finally showed up and were upon the list of Renee Levesque and yours truly. Blackpoll Warblers were spotted by Sheldon, and Palms by June and Kevin Telford, Brent Turcotte, and also Sheldon.

Now to birds seen previously within this Bird Bash year, following that same checklist order: Common Loons were not as frequent as previously, but they were discovered by Faye Oei, Lloyd and Janet Sparks, the Levesque duo, and Sheldon.

Double-crested Cormorants were on the lists of Laura and Brent Turcotte with Luanne Chowns, Bill and Carol Fleming, Sheldon, and the Levesque duo.

American Bitterns were found by Sheldon and the Levesque duo, the latter getting a very clear view of one at Verner Lagoon. Great Blue Herons were seen by the Flemings and the Levesque duo.

Soaring Turkey Vultures and huge numbers of Canada Geese were watched by many participants.

The regular dabbling ducks were still active in most lagoons and elsewhere - Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Widgeon, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Blue and Green-winged Teal, and Northern Shovelers.

Ring-necked Ducks, Common Mergansers and Hooded Mergansers were found by Gary and Connie Sturge; Common and Hooded Mergansers were found by Sheldon; and Common Mergansers were noted by the Flemings. A few Lesser Scaup and Common Goldeneye were spotted by the Levesque pair.

Now as to hawks: Ospreys seem to have left, as well as most Broad-winged Hawks, though Brent spotted one of the latter. Northern Harriers were still fairly common, noted by Grant and Shirley McKercher, Fred, the Telfords, and the Levesque pair, who also spotted a Sharp-shinned Hawk, as did John Levesque. American Kestrels were numerous, noted by many participants.

Merlins were watched by the Telfords, Sheldon, and the Levesque duo. No Peregrines nor Red-tailed Hawks were discovered, but Bald Eagles were seen by the Levesque pair, Sheldon, the McKerchers, and the Telfords.

Ruffed Grouse were spotted by Butterfly Fields, Faye, the Flemings, and Sheldon. Wild Turkeys were found only by the Sturges.

Two Common Gallinules were seen at Cache Bay, as well as one at Verner Lagoon, by the Levesque duo.

Now how about the Sandhill Cranes, spotted by many? There were more than 700 in various locations, especially in farm fields west of Cache Bay.

As to the shorebirds, they were certainly about in various locations. Semipalmated Plovers and Killdeer were spotted by the Levesque pair on the shores of Lake Nipissing off Tenth Street, along with a very exciting group of nine active Sanderlings. Most other shorebirds found were in various lagoons. The Semiplamated Plover and the Killdeer were also spotted by the Sturges, while the Semipalmated was noted by the Telfords.

Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs were located by the Levesque pair, Fred, and the Telfords, with just the Greater spotted by the Sturges. The latter two pairs also noted the Solitary Sandpiper. The Telfords spotted the Least and Baird's Sandpipers, as did the Sturges and the Levesque pair who spotted the Baird's not only at the lagoons, but one with the Sanderlings on the shores of Lake Nipissing. Pectoral Sandpipers were identified by the Levesque duo and the Telfords, who also found the Least, while it and Semipalmated Sandpipers were noted by Fred and the Levesque duo. The Levesque pair also found the Stilt. Sheldon found the Wilson's Snipe.

Among the many gulls, Ring-billed Gulls were paramount, though a few, including Faye, found Herring Gulls. No one spotted Bonaparte's Gulls. Caspian Terns were still hunting in Cache Bay and found there by the Levesque pair.

Rock Pigeons were very plentiful, while Mourning Doves were spotted only by Faye, Fred, the Turcotte trio, the Sturges, and the Levesque duo.

Some 28 Common Nighthawks, soaring back and forth over Powassan Lagoon, delighted the Levesque duo during a beautiful Sunday evening sunset.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were still about during their final few days up north, sighted by Pam and Peter Handley, the Levesque duo, the Sturges, John, the Flemings, the McKerchers, Brent, Faye, the Sparks, and Elsa Tafel.

The Belted Kingfisher was spotted solely by Sheldon.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were noted by the Telfords, Fred, the Flemings, and Sheldon. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers were noted by many, while the Pileated was observed only by Sheldon, the Levesque duo, the McKerchers, and the Flemings.

A few flycatchers were still about. The Alder, Least, and Eastern Phoebes were spotted by the Levesque pair, and Eastern Kingbirds by the Sturges.

As to vireos, the Red-eyed Vireo was found by John, the Levesque pair, Fred, the Telfords, and Sheldon, who also spotted the Blue-headed Vireo. The Telfords and the Levesque pair also saw the Philadelphia Vireo.

Blue Jays seemed to be even more ubiquitous, as were American Crows, with the Common Raven seeming to be just a little bit less so. Swallows did not show up, nor once again any Canada Jays.

Popular Black-capped Chickadees were very commonplace. Red-breasted Nuthatches were noted by the Handleys, the Turcotte trio, the Telfords, Renee, Faye, Sheldon, the Flemings, and the Sturges. The latter three pairs also spotted the White-breasted Nuthatch. Brown Creepers were seen by John, Brent, the Levesque pair, Fred, and Sheldon, who along with John were the only ones to spy the Golden-crowned Kinglet. Ruby-crowned Kinglets remained undiscovered.

As to thrushes, the Eastern Bluebird also went undiscovered, while American Robins were much less common than recently, being noted in small numbers only by Faye, the Flemings, Butterfly, the Sturges, Brent, John, Sheldon, Fred, the Levesque pair (only three all day), the Telfords, and the Sturges. The latter group spotted the Wood Thrush, while the Levesque pair noted a Swainson's Thrush; Fred, a Veery; and Sheldon, a Hermit Thrush.

The Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher were noted only by Fred - in Laurier Woods.

European Starlings were seemingly everywhere.

Cedar Waxwings were spotted solely by John, Faye, Fred, and the Sturges.

Once again there were a great number of wood warblers discovered – some 21 species! Following the order of the North Bay and Area checklist, those previously seen included Tennessee, Nashville, Northern Parula, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Pine, Bay-breasted, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning, and Common Yellowthroat. The only locally seeable ones not noted upon this Bird Bash were the Cape May and Wilson's, and as a long-shot, the Golden-winged and Cerulean.

Of those previously seen during the year, Sheldon saw 15 species; the Levesque pair 10; Fred and the Telfords 7; John 4; the Sturges and Brent 2; Luanne, the Flemings, and the Sparks 1. A wonderful surge of fall warblers!

No Scarlet Tanagers have been noted since June.

As to sparrows: the Chipping was spotted by Fred and the Telfords, both of whom also noted Savannahs, as did the Levesque duo and the Sturges. The latter two pairs also saw Song and White-throated Sparrows, as did Fred and John. The Telfords also observed White-throats, as did Sheldon, the Flemings, Brent and Luanne. Faye and Sheldon also saw Song, with only Sheldon observing Swamp. White-crowned Sparrows were spotted only by the Sparks and the Sturges, the latter pair also noting Dark-eyed Juncos.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were seen by Faye, Luanne, and the Telfords.

One lonely Bobolink was spotted by the Levesque pair. Some very large Red-wing Blackbird flocks were located by Sheldon, Faye, the Telfords, the Levesque pair, the Sturges, and Fred. The Eastern Meadowlark was seen only by the Sturges. Common Grackles were very widely circulating. The Brown-headed Cowbird was spotted solely by the Telfords.

Purple Finch were found by the Sturges, John, and the Flemings. American Goldfinch were spotted by Faye, the Telfords, the Sturges, Brent, Fred, and the Levesque duo. The latter pair were the only ones to find the lowly (?) House Sparrow – some 25 or so quite vigorously active at the Co-op Grain Store in Verner.

And so that concludes a very successful September Bird Bash. Congrats to all for great results! The October Bird Bash will take place during its first weekend, **October 2-3**. Prepare for it!