

## **Bird Bash, Nipissing Area November 2016**

*By Dick Tafel, Compiler*

The nice weather during November's Bird Bash yielded some pretty good results: **76 species discovered by 29 participants!** That is 8 above the average of the past 14 years (3 were even higher); and 21 above last November's (was that the frigid one?).

Starting taxonomically with birds not seen previously during the Bird Bashes this year, we must show excitement for the almost 30 Tundra Swans on Lake Nipissing off Nipissing Street in Sturgeon Falls, noted by Therez Violette, by Kaye Edmunds and by Renee Levesque and your compiler.

Then there was the Canvasback Duck (only rarely seen in this area,) identified among hundreds of other diving ducks by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing within Callander Lagoon. There was also the rare Long-tailed Duck spotted on Clear Lake, near Field, by Chris Sukha.

There were the two grebe species off Sunset Park: Red-necked observed by Grant and Shirley McKercher, and the Horned, as well as the Red-necked, observed by the Levesque duo.

Chris spotted White-winged Crossbills, first of the year, at Field.

Now continuing with other birds seen, in rough taxonomic order, we start, of course, with the Common Loon. Not as common as it had been, but still about, and noted by a few, including Elsa Tafel who saw it on Trout Lake.

What about Double-crested Cormorants? In much profusion during the summer, but, in November, only one was noted by the Levesque duo, all alone at the North Bay government dock.

Great Blue Herons were still about, discovered by a few including Therez. Canada Geese were sure around in very large numbers and observed by many. Two Trumpeter Swans on the south side of Lake Nipissing were enjoyed by Katherine Byers, and by Stewart Greig and Steve Morin.

Sixteen duck species were identified. Huge numbers of diving Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup and Ring-necked Ducks were within Callander Lagoon, along with Mallards and several Blacks. A pair of American Wigeon and a few Green-winged Teal were also there, noted by the Levesque duo. Greater Scaup were also found by the Levesque pair near Lavigne, and by Keith Thornborrow at South River. Common and Hooded Mergansers were both quite common, the Hooded a bit less so, but noted by Brent Turcotte and Fred Pinto, among others. The rarer Red-breasted Mergansers were discovered by the Levesque pair near Jocko Point. They also saw Surf and White-winged Scoters in the unusually calm waters off Sunset Park.

Now as to predators, there were just a few: A Cooper's Hawk was observed by Kaye near her home in North Bay. Red-tailed Hawks were seen by some, but Rough-legs were noted only by the McKerchers, and also by Gary and Connie Sturge, near Powassan. The McKerchers and the Sturges also saw Bald Eagles, as did the Greig combo and Steve Pitt, among others.

Ruffed Grouse were noted only by Steve, Fred and the Anderson pair. The latter duo also found a number of Wild Turkeys near the farm in Powassan, while Keith saw some near South River.

American Coots were discovered by the Anderson duo within Graham Lake east of Powassan, and by the McKerchers.

No shorebirds were found. The two main gull species were still very numerous, while the Greater Black-backed was much less so, though discovered by the McKerchers, and the Anderson and the Levesque duos, all off Sunset Park.

Mourning Doves were observed by a few, including Donna Demarco and Mary Young. The Belted Kingfisher was still around, noted by Mary and by Gary and Luanne Chowns.

The rare, in our area, Red-bellied Woodpecker was spotted by Mary near her home in Corbeil. Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers remain quite common, though only a few, like Peter and Pam Handley and Mary Ann Kenrick saw both of them. Pileated Woodpeckers were also noted by quite a few, including Fred, Brent, the McKerchers, Mary Ann, and the Levesque duo. A lonely Northern Flicker was noted by Ernie Frayle in the east end.

Of course, no flycatchers, vireos or warblers were about. The first observed (taxonomically) of the songbirds or perching birds (or more properly, Passeriformes) was the Northern Shrike found by the Anderson pair. Then there were the jays: the Gray Jay found by Keith, Renee and Chris; and the ubiquitous Blue Jay spotted by many. American Crows and Common Ravens were still very numerous, as was the Black-capped Chickadee and both nuthatches. But the Brown Creeper was seen only by the Greig combo, near the south bay of Lake Nipissing.

The American Robin was still about in small numbers, found by just a few, including Chris, Kaye and Mary Ann Kenrick. European Starlings remain very numerous, especially within the farm fields where they seem to find silos especially comfortable.

No American Pipits were seen, but Bohemian Waxwings certainly were plentiful and seen in large flocks, by Therez in Sturgeon; Fred near Laurier Woods; and Kaye and the Levesque duo along Highway 17.

Now as to sparrows, none were very common. One, seemingly-all-alone Tree Sparrow was found by the Levesque pair, and one was also noted by the Anderson duo and by the Greig combo, with more than one seen by Steve. A White-throat was in Renee's yard and the White-crown was at Keith's. Dark-eyed Juncos were in Helen McCombie's, Steve's, Keith's, Elsa's, the Chowns' and Chris's areas.

Snow Buntings are back, spotted by Ernie, Kaye, Chris, and the Anderson, Greig and Levesque pairs.

Red-winged Blackbirds have almost deserted our area, but some were seen by Steve, Mary Ann, Ernie, the Chowns, and the Sturges. Common Grackles seem to have likewise disappeared, being spotted only by Ernie, Therez, and the Levesque duo.

Winter finches are beginning to find their way here, with Pine Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls and a Pine Siskin being spotted by Chris in Field. The Purple Finch was fairly widespread, also noted by Chris, the Sturges and the Anderson pair. American Goldfinches will likely be the common "finch" this winter in this area, being noted by many this month, while Evening Grosbeaks may also make it, currently having been seen by Mary Ann, Kaye, and Chris.

House Sparrows still, thankfully, exist up here, again noted by the Sturges and by the Anderson duo.

And so that is it - a bountiful bird bash. Congrats to all!

And put aside some time over the weekend of **December 3-4** for the next “romp”.