

Bird Bash Report

February 2022

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

With a weekend of weather hard to be any worse, 26 participants did pretty well in discovering 30 species of local birds still around! Mind you, we did have an extra day – Monday, Family Day – to utilize for our search time. February is normally the second lowest month for the number of local bird species. The average for that month for counts over the past 19 years has been about 34, although two years saw less and last year, 36 birds were found. And so let's see what was observed this time.

Starting, as per usual, with species not previously seen within an earlier Bird Bash (only January) within the order set out in the *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area*, we come upon the American Black Duck. This was identified by Grant and Shirley McKercher and by Renee Levesque along with yours truly, the latter pair finding four within the open waters behind the Green Store on the southwest end of Trout Lake.

Then there were Horned Larks, a flock of about 25, enjoyed by the last-mentioned pair at the Verner Co-op Grain Store .

And finally, there was the very friendly Lapland Longspur surviving near the North Bay home of April McCrum and spotted there by the previous duo.

Now we get to the balance of birds noted during this Bird Bash, following the order of the Seasonal Checklist.

Mallards were noted by Sue Gratton and Faye Oei near Sundridge, and elsewhere by the McKerchers and by the Levesque pair. No other ducks were apparently around, not even within the Ottawa River, studied by the McKerchers.

Predator species were not common, though several Bald Eagles were observed by the Levesque duo at the two landfill sites, by Gary, Connie and Rachel Sturge, and by June and Kevin Telford. A Northern Shrike, truly a predator, was watched by Mary Young.

Ruffed Grouse were spotted by Lloyd and Janet Sparks, the Sturges, Donna Demarco, Steve Pitt, and Bill and Carol Fleming. Wild Turkeys were found only by Keith Thornborrow.

Rock Pigeons were on the lists of almost everyone, but Mourning Doves were limited to the sights of Keith, the Sturges, Ken Gowing, and Mary.

No owls were discovered.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were very widespread, presumably at the feeders of most of the participants. The Pileated was noted by the Flemings, Elsa Tafel, Mary, the Telfords, the Sturges, Lori Anderson, and Keith.

The Canada Jay was discovered only by Keith, although Blue Jays were very widespread. A few American Crows were noted by Corinne Urrutia, the Levesque duo, Steve, the Sturges, and the Telfords, with Common Ravens, like the Blue Jays, very widespread.

Black-capped Chickadees were enjoyed by almost everyone.

Red-breasted Nuthatches were spotted by Peter and Pam Handley, the Telfords, the Sturges, Elsa, Steve, the Gratton duo, the Flemings, Keith, and the Sparks. The latter five groups also saw the White-breasted Nuthatch, as did Corinne and Mary.

European Starlings were around in large flocks, especially at the landfill sites.

Bohemian Waxwings were much enjoyed by the McKerchers (with lovely photos), the Flemings, and the Telfords (who were not sure whether they might have been Cedar Waxwings, an uncommon winter visitor up here).

American Tree Sparrows were around this winter and seen at the feeders of John and Renee Levesque, Steve, Keith, and the Sturges, who also had about their place a still-energized White-throated Sparrow. And, the latter two groups, as well as John, also had Dark-eyed Juncos nearby their feeders.

Flocks of busy Snow Bunting were on the lists only of Keith, the Levesque duo, and the Flemings.

The latter three groups also observed Pine Grosbeaks, as did Mary, the Handleys (15 of them), Donna, and the Sturges.

Common Redpolls were hereabouts in large numbers this winter and watched by the Gratton duo, the Sturges, Keith, Donna, Elsa, John, the Telfords, Steve, Ken, the Levesque duo, the McKerchers, the Flemings, the Handleys, and Mary.

Several American Goldfinches were about, noted by John, Mary, the McKerchers, the Telfords, Donna, and the Sturges.

Evening Grosbeaks were noted by Donna, the Handleys, John, and the Sturges.

The latter group plus Lori were the only ones to find House Sparrows this month.

And so that concludes a successful February bird count within our area. Congratulations to all who braved a lot of very wild weather to come upon such a varied selection of winter birds.

Be prepared for the next monthly Bird Bash which may even be free of Covid constrictions and which will have very many more species about. It will take place the **last weekend in March - March 26 to 27.**

In the meantime, keep warm!