

# Bird Bash Report

## August 2018

*By Dick Tafel, compiler*

Very pleasing, the number of birds observed this month – 112 species - just about average during the last 15 years of counting. Last year only 97 were counted during our August “bash” and in July this year, only 95. Saturday was a rather wet day for sure, but Sunday was rather nice. We had a good number of participants – 23! Some had thought that the birds had migrated south early (after such a hot June, July and August), but obviously not quite yet. At any event, we found a lot of interesting birds.

We always start with those seen for the first time at a “bash” during the year, and so that gets us to the Northern Goshawk, three of which were observed by Gary and Connie Sturge, west of Powassan, and one seen by Wolfe Lake’s Janet Sparks near her feeder.

Then there were two species of dowitchers - Short-billed identified by Kaye Edmunds, and Long-billed by yours truly, at Callander Lagoon. These two are difficult to distinguish. The Short-billed is more common around here. However, the Long-billed, still in its summery plumage, was clarified by its very different call as it flitted across the cell from one spot to another. Furthermore, it did have a longer than normal bill length.

Another first for this year during a “bash” was a Bonaparte’s Gull, seen along the waterfront by Renee Levesque and yours truly and also by Grant and Shirley McKercher.

And then there was a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher noted by the Sturges, and a Bay-breasted Warbler found by a newcomer to the “bash”, Dave Rooke.

Now for the rest of the birds: During the warmer months, we usually start off with the Common Loon and continue in rough taxonomic order. As to the wonderful loons, they were seen by several, including Grant and Shirley, Elsa Tafel, Steve Pitt and Therez Violette.

Pied-billed Grebes were located by the pair of Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing at Cache Bay. Double-crested Cormorants were very common on the lakes.

Great Blue Herons were on many lists, including those of Steve and of Ernie Frayle in the east end, and Therez in the west. Green Herons were found by both the Anderson and Levesque duos.

Turkey Vultures were seen by many on Sunday when the air was fairly clear. Some

huge flocks of Canada Geese were noted, especially within fields in the west end. Trumpeter Swans were observed at Cache Bay by Therez and by the Anderson and Levesque duos.

Ducks were not found in the numbers sometimes noted, but 9 species altogether were seen, including Northern Shovelers and Black Ducks by the Anderson pair; Common Goldeneye by Kaye Edmunds and the McKerchers; and Common Mergansers by Kaye, the McKerchers and Sheldon McGregor.

Osprey were on many lists, including the four at the Cache Bay baseball field, noted by Therez and others. Northern Harrier were observed by the Levesque duo and the Anderson pair who also saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk, as did Janet. Fred Pinto observed a Broad-winged Hawk. Bald Eagles were seen by Sheldon and by the McKerchers. American Kestrel were seen by many. A Peregrine Falcon was at Verner Lagoon, spotted by the Levesque pair.

Ruffed Grouse were discovered by the McKerchers and by Fred and Janet, and Wild Turkeys by the Anderson duo. The latter also found American Coots at Warren Lagoon.

Sandhill Cranes were noted by several, including Ernie.

Now as to shorebirds: Lots were around, including Semipalmated Plover seen by the Levesque duo. A hiding Killdeer was spotted by yours truly. Lesser Yellowlegs were noted by the McKerchers and by the Anderson and Levesque pairs. The latter two pairs also saw Greater Yellowlegs, as well as Semipalmated, Least and Pectoral Sandpipers. Dave and the Levesque duo spotted the Spotted, and the Levesque pair also saw Solitary, Least, Baird's and Semipalmated Sandpipers. Kaye found the latter as well. Most of these interesting shorebirds could be watched in the low water cells of Verner and Callander Lagoons, and some along the Lake Nipissing shoreline near the Government Dock and at Sunset Park.

Of course, Ring-billed Gulls could be spotted in immense numbers, often within farmers' fields, while Herring Gulls were fewer, but noted by many.

Caspian Terns were enjoyed by Sheldon, Therez, the Levesque and Anderson duos, while the latter pair also found Common Terns.

Rock Pigeons and Mourning Doves were seen by many, including the latter by Donna Demarco.

No owls were discovered. Common Nighthawks were spotted by several, including Mary Young near Corbeil; by the Anderson duo who saw 8 along Levac Road, west of

Cache Bay; by the Sturges near their home; and by Kaye.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were upon many lists.

Belted Kingfishers were seen by just a few, including the Levesque duo, Kaye, the McKerchers and Sheldon.

As to woodpeckers, the main five (including Downy this month) were noted by many, with the rarer Pileated being upon Peter and Pam Handley's list, among others', and the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker being upon John Levesque's list, as well as others'.

Flycatchers were fairly numerous. Sheldon found the Great Crested and the Eastern Wood- Pewee, the latter also on the Sturges' list. The Sturges also identified the Yellow-bellied. Janet saw the Least. Several saw the Eastern Phoebe, while the Eastern Kingbird was very plentiful, often seen on overhead wires.

Red-eyed Vireos were still about in large numbers, but Sheldon was the only one to note a Blue-headed Vireo in his westerly lake area. Fred saw a Warbling Vireo in Laurier Woods.

Blue Jays were all over, as were American Crows and to a lesser extent, the Common Raven.

Swallows were less numerous than they had been, but Tree and Barn Swallows were still fairly widespread. Bank and Cliff were identified only by the Levesque pair, at Verner Lagoon.

Black-capped Chickadees were very often discovered, with both nuthatches slightly less so. A Brown Creeper and Golden-crowned Kinglet were noted only by Sheldon. No wrens were observed.

As to thrushes: The Eastern Bluebird was found by the Sturges and by the McKerchers. The Anderson and Levesque duos saw the Veery, while the latter pair and Sheldon also found Hermit Thrushes. Of course, American Robins were ubiquitous, perhaps a holdover from an early fall-out during the late April snow and ice debacle.

Two groups, the Sturges and the Levesque duo, observed Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers. Kaye and Mary Ann Kenrick also saw the Brown Thrasher.

Cedar Waxwings were seen by the McKerchers and by the Sturges.

Now as to warblers: There was still a good group of them around - 13 species.

Dave saw the American Redstart, Magnolia and Yellow-rumped, some of them also seen by others; Fred had the Ovenbird, as did Sheldon who also saw the Black and White, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green, in addition to other warblers; the Levesque pair added Blackburnian, as did John Levesque. Chestnut-sided, Nashville, Yellow and Common Yellow-throat were seen by several. Those not seen were the Tennessee, Northern Parula, Cape May, Pine, Palm, Blackpoll, Northern Waterthrush and Canada.

A female Scarlet Tanager was found by the Levesque duo at Cache Bay.

Now to sparrows: The Chipping, Song, Savannah and White-throated were fairly spread out, but only Fred identified a Swamp, in Laurier woods.

Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks were found by the Anderson duo, the Eastern Meadowlarks also seen by the Sturges. Red-winged Blackbirds were still widespread, as were Common Grackles.

Purple Finches were appearing in fairly large numbers at Steve's, at the Handley's, at Mary Ann's and at others'. Mary Ann also noted the Pine Siskin, as did Dave.

American Goldfinch were fairly widely spread out, while the "lowly" House Sparrow (at the bottom of most lists) was noted by the Sturges and by the Anderson duo.

And so that concludes a fairly busy August listing. Congrats to all!

Note that **September's Bird Bash is slated for the second weekend of September, September 8 and 9** – not long away. There should still be lots of birds around then. Plan for it!