

Bird Bash Report for Nipissing April 2017

By Dick Tafel, compiler

A very commendable effort by 23 participants within the region last weekend despite a terrible bit of weather on Sunday. There were 99 species discovered, 4 above the average of the past 14 years!

As usual, we start with new species for the year in roughly taxonomic order. The Common Loon has to be first – seen by almost all who went beyond their feeder areas.

The Double-crested Cormorant was noted by those visiting the Lake Nipissing area - Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing; Renee Levesque with yours truly; Kaye Edmunds; and Grant and Shirley McKercher.

Then there were the American Bittern and the Green Heron both discovered in Laurier Woods by your compiler. The Great Blue Heron was seen by Kaye, by Donna Demarco, and by Steve Pitt in the east end, by Gary and Connie Sturge near Powassan, and by Keith Thornborrow near South River.

Turkey Vultures were fairly commonly, seen soaring overhead by Janelle Courchesne and others. Two Trumpeter Swans were in Cache Bay and noted by the Levesque duo and by Therez Violette.

Some 15 species of ducks were found by many, especially those who visited the various lagoons. But the couple of Northern Pintail and Redhead Ducks found by the Anderson duo at the Warren area were clearly the rarest new ones for our area.

Osprey are now around, noted by many, as were Northern Harrier, while Mary Ann Kenrick and the Sturges saw a Broad-winged Hawk.

A Virginia Rail was heard and unusually seen flying in Laurier Woods by your compiler.

American Coot are now at Warren Lagoon and seen by the Anderson pair.

Sandhill Cranes were still about, observed by Kaye, and by Doug Paterson near Mattawa.

Just four species of shorebirds were found – Greater Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpipers and Wilson's Snipe were on the Anderson duo list, while your reporter observed four Lesser Yellowlegs upon the Osprey Links golf course. The American Woodcock was noted by

the Anderson pair.

Exciting Caspian Terns were enjoyed by the McKerchers and the Levesque duo, while Common Terns were seen by Keith.

Belted Kingfishers are now about and seen by many; likewise, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and Northern Flickers.

Getting to the song-birds (or passerines): Eastern Phoebes have joyfully arrived and were found by the McKerchers, by the Sturges, by Kaye and by Keith. A singing Blue-headed Vireo was noted by Brent Turcotte.

All five swallows were identified. Hundreds, mostly Tree, were seen soaring above the Osprey Links golf course, all of which your reporter was able to discern there, with Renee Levesque and the Anderson duo seeing the Tree, Bank and Barn. Some 12 Barn Swallows were also observed by April McCrum, and Tree Swallows were also seen Therez, Kaye, Keith, the McKerchers, and Elsa Tafel.

A Brown Creeper was discovered by the Anderson duo, while it and the Winter Wren were noted by Brent. A Winter Wren was also heard by the McKerchers and by April.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets were seen by the Anderson pair who also enjoyed Eastern Bluebirds, as did Steve. Hermit Thrush were spotted by April, Kaye, and Doug.

The American Robin is now firmly ensconced within the area and seen by almost everybody. Brown Thrashers were enjoyed by the Sturges near Powassan, Mary Ann Kenrick and Kaye, within the city, Donna in the east end, and by the Levesque duo and the Anderson pair at Cache Bay.

Four just-arriving, lovely warbler species were identified: the Northern Parula with about eight Yellow-rumped by the Levesque duo during a sudden warbler eruption at Cache Bay - your compiler also saw a Chestnut-sided during this eruption. Yellow-rumped were also seen by Kaye, the Sturges, Doug, and the Anderson duo who also found a Palm.

New sparrows for the year included the lively, little Chipping, observed by many, including Elsa and Donna; a late Fox spotted by Kaye in her yard; Savannah and Swamp identified by the Levesque and Anderson pairs; White-throated by many, including Steve; White-crowned by Peter and Pam Handley, Mary Ann, and Brent.

Eastern Meadowlarks were spotted only by the Sturges.

Now we get to those birds seen earlier in the year – also in rough taxonomic order. Canada Geese and Mallards are still around in large numbers, seen of course by many; likewise, the Common Goldeneye and Common Merganser, the latter in very large numbers at Cache Bay and easterly Lake Nipissing. Hooded Mergansers were discovered by the Levesque pair and by Keith.

Keith also observed a Sharp-shinned Hawk, as did John Levesque. A Red-tailed Hawk was found by the Anderson duo. Bald Eagles were seen by several, as was the American Kestrel.

The Ruffed Grouse was seen by many, and Wild Turkeys were seen again by Keith and by the Anderson duo.

The major local gulls, Ring-billed and Herring, were seen by several.

Rock and Mourning Doves were also seen by many.

A Barred Owl was located by Steve.

The three main, local woodpeckers, Downy, Hairy and Pileated, were on several lists.

Gray Jays were observed solely by Keith, but Blue Jays, American Crows and Common Ravens were noted by many participants; likewise, the Black-capped Chickadee.

Red-breasted Nuthatches were not seen by many, but the Handleys had them at their feeders, as did Steve. White-breasted seemed to be more common, noted by the McKerchers and Tafels, among others.

Golden-crowned Kinglets were spotted solely by Brent and the Anderson pair.

European Starlings were, of course, seen by many.

American Tree Sparrows were still about – albeit in lesser numbers as they head further north, and were noted by Marc Buchanan, among others. Song Sparrows were very common, but the Dark-eyed Junco was beginning to disappear, after a very large, local fall-out.

Your compiler enjoyed two Lapland Longspurs upon the Osprey Links golf fairway in their somewhat more gaudy spring plumage.

Red-winged Blackbirds had become ubiquitous, along with Common Grackles. Brown-headed Cowbirds were discovered by the Anderson duo and by Mary Ann.

Purple Finches were fairly common, noted by the Anderson and by the Levesque pair, among many others; likewise with Pine Siskins and American Goldfinch. Evening Grosbeaks were upon fewer lists, but were upon Kaye's, Keith's, Mary Ann's and the McKerchers'. House Sparrows were spotted only by the Sturges and the Anderson duo.

Some birds that weren't seen during the Bird Bash, although had been seen prior to it, were the American Black Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Killdeer and Merlin.

And so, another successful Bird Bash outing. Congrats to all!

Put aside the **last week-end in May** for the biggest and most exciting Bird Bash number for the year.