

Bird Bash Report

March 28-30, 2020

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Well, this must clearly be a record - 31 participants! And 54 bird species observed! On only two other occasions during our 17 years of March record-taking has the number of species seen been exceeded. Isn't it great to be discovering spring migrants gracing our long winter with their presence!

To get to the essence of the efforts, as per usual, we start with new birds noted for this year, following rough taxonomic order. First must be Double-crested Cormorants found by Paul Smylie near the Cranberry Trail, Callander.

Then there was a single Turkey Vulture observed by your compiler soaring over Hwy 11 just south of the city. (Soon there will be dozens!)

Canada Goose - it has arrived – already in large numbers and noted by many of you, from Buddy Myles in the west end, Marc and Irene Buchanan in the Sturgeon River, Ernie Frayle and Steve Pitt in the east end, Lloyd and Janet Sparks in the south-west area, Sarah Wheelan near Callander, and “everywhere” for Gary and Connie Sturge, John and Renee Levesque, Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing, Kaye Edmunds, Chris Suhka, Keith Thornborrow, and yours truly. (Hope I did not miss anyone).

The Trumpeter Swan was found by Chris, Renee, and yours truly.

Getting to the new ducks, beautiful Wood Ducks were enjoyed by the preceding three, as well as by the Sturges. And then there were the diving ducks, including the Common Mergansers, discovered by Kaye, the Anderson duo, and the Sturges. Hooded Mergansers were found by the Anderson duo, the Sturges, Renee, Keith, and Chris. Keith and Chris also found Ring-necked Ducks, and Renee observed a male Bufflehead. Yours truly luckily found all of these ducks. Most were about the Sturgeon River and the West Arm Narrows, with the Sturges seeing them in the South River.

Now as to predators: the Northern Harrier was seen by Renee, the Sturges, the Anderson duo, Chris and yours truly. A Cooper's Hawk (near Bonfield) and a Merlin were noted by Kaye, the Merlin seen also by John, the Sturges, and by

yours truly, who also found two Red-tailed Hawks perched adjacent to Hwy 11. A Rough-legged Hawk was seen by Renee who also saw American Kestrels along Hwy 64. A Peregrine Falcon was discovered by the Anderson duo at the Chisholm landfill site.

Sandhill Cranes are arriving, noted by the Sparks and by the Anderson pair.

American Woodcock were observed/heard by the Anderson pair and by Jackie Manella.

The gulls have clearly arrived and were noted by many. The Herring Gull was seen by Steve Pitt, Keith, Renee, the Sturges, and the Anderson duo; Ring-billed Gulls were seen by yours truly, the Levesques, Chris, and Kaye.

An Eastern Phoebe was spotted by the Sturges and a Golden-crowned Kinglet was found by Paul.

Now we get to the wonderful American Robin. It has just arrived in pretty good numbers, and noted by Mary Ann Kenrick, Ernie, Steve, the Sparks, Gary and Luanne Chowns, Grant and Shirley McKercher, Peter and Pam Handley, Paul, Buddy, the Levesques, the Anderson duo, Kaye, the Sturges, Chris, Keith, Mary Young, Jackie, and yours truly. Such a pleasure to have it around!

Cedar Waxwings! In goodly numbers they were discovered by Renee at her place; and yet, no Bohemians were noted in our area this winter despite lots of berries.

A few Song Sparrows were detected - by Mary Ann, the Buchanans, Buddy, Chris, Kaye, Keith, the Levesques, the Anderson pair, Jackie, and yours truly.

A female Northern Cardinal showed up at Mary Ann's home area.

Red-winged Blackbirds - yes, they have arrived and spotted by Buddy, Paul, Ernie, the Buchanans, the Chowns, the Sturges, Steve, the Sparks, Mary, John, Chris, Kaye, the Anderson pair, the Sturges, Jackie, and yours truly.

And, so now we get to birds seen previously this year: We start with the American Black Duck. Not a common bird here at any time, it is often seen together with Mallards, and during this March Bird Bash was seen by Mary Ann, the Sturges, yours truly, the Anderson duo and Chris. Mallards were seen by the latter four, plus the Levesques, Kaye, the Chowns, and Keith.

Then there is the Common Goldeneye. It had been seen sporadically during the winter, but now with much northern migration, it is becoming fairly common wherever there is open water. So many have seen it now, including Renee, Keith, Chris, the Anderson duo, and yours truly.

Next, we come to the Bald Eagle. Around nowadays in fair numbers during the winter, it was seen during the March Bird Bash by the McKerchers, Ernie, the Sparks, the Anderson pair, Keith, the Sturges, and yours truly who saw 5 of them upon one tree near the Powassan landfill site.

Ruffed Grouse were found by the Handleys, Ernie, Donna Demarco, the Sparks, Steve, Keith, and the Sturges. Wild Turkeys did not show up this month?

Rock Pigeons, as always, were common, but Mourning Doves less so, but being noted by Mary, Buddy, the Buchanans, the Anderson pair, Chris, the Sturges, Keith, yours truly, and Renee.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers seemed to be at almost every feeder, while the Pileated Woodpecker was noted by Mary, Corinne Urrutia, Jackie, the Buchanans, the Chowns, Chris, the Anderson pair, Renee, Keith, the Sturges, and yours truly.

Canada Jays were seen only by Kaye. Blue Jays seemed to be almost everywhere, while American Crows had increased their numbers. The Common Raven seemed to be maintaining a steady presence.

Black-capped Chickadees were likewise at every feeder it seemed, along with Red-breasted Nuthatches. White-breasted Nuthatches were seen only at the feeders of the McKerchers, Mary, and Elsa Tafel. Brown Creepers did not show up this month.

American Tree Sparrows were still around, mostly at the feeder areas of Steve, Mary, the Handleys, the Sturges, the Anderson duo, Keith, Paul, and the Levesques. Dark-eyed Juncos were noted by Elsa, Donna, Ernie, Steve, Mary, Paul, Chris, Keith, the Handleys, and the Levesques.

Snow Buntings were spotted solely by Kaye near Rutherglen.

Common Grackles had suddenly become immensely common, noted by almost everyone. Spring must clearly be upon us!

Purple Finches were seen only by Chris and the Anderson pair.

White-winged Crossbills were spotted only by the Sturges and Kaye.

Pine Siskins were upon a few more lists, including those of Paul, Elsa, Chris, Mary, the Anderson pair, and the Sturges.

American Goldfinches seemed to be the bird of this winter, being seen at very many feeders, taking the place of the Common Redpolls. But are not the males now becoming especially lovely in their golden and black feathers.

Evening Grosbeaks were counted only by Mary, Kaye, the Anderson duo, and John.

House Sparrows were noted by the Anderson pair, the Sturges, and Chris.

And so that concludes a very busy March Bird Bash. Congrats to everyone for sticking to it!

And note that April's Bird Bash will be **over the weekend of April 25**. There will be even more lovelies appearing then. Be prepared for it!

I hope you can continue to enjoy the birds, as they happily come northwards, while you are worrying about the global Covid-19 virus, keeping most of us so much indoors!