

Bird Bash Report

May 30-31, 2020

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

The weather was hardly perfect, but a hardy 34 participants strove to recognize our local birds during last weekend. They were rewarded with 130 species, which perhaps due to the lateness of the season for the search, was one of the lowest number ever for that period. The average for May during the past 16 seasons is 137. Last year, 28 participants identified 141 species!

However, there certainly were lots of good discoveries. Starting with those not previously noted for this year, in rough taxonomic order, we will begin with the Green Heron found by Kaye Edmunds behind Laurier Woods. Then there were a few Blue-winged Teal, late arriving ducks, seen by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing, by Renee Levesque, and by yours truly, the latter two also noting Northern Pintail for the first time during this year's Bird Bash.

Broad-winged Hawks were now on the agenda, spotted by the last foursome.

A Sora Rail was identified by the Anderson duo on Hills Siding Road. Two American Golden Plover were spotted by Buddy Myles at Verner Lagoon. He also noted Lesser Yellowlegs and Spotted Sandpipers there, the latter noted also by the Anderson pair, by Renee, and by yours truly. The latter four also enjoyed a very active Bonaparte's Gull foraging at Callander Lagoon, as well as two local tern species, the Caspian and Common, at Cache Bay. Renee and yours truly also saw the Black Tern there.

A Black-billed Cuckoo was heard by Mary Young near Corbeil.

The Common Nighthawk was spotted by Gary, Connie and Rachel Sturge near their home, and by Spencer McGregor (Sheldon's son) at the far west end. Chimney Swifts were much enjoyed by Grant and Shirley McKercher and by Kaye.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were around in grand numbers, seen by many, including Therez Violette, Donna Demarco, Kelsey Fenerty, Mary Ann Kenrick, Peter and Pam Handley, John Levesque, Ernie Frayle, and Elsa Tafel.

Then we get to the flycatchers. A grand Olive-sided bared his nonchalance at Cache Bay for Renee and for yours truly. Also seen well at Cache Bay was the Great Crested, which was seen elsewhere by the McKerchers. The first two also noted Alders, as did the Anderson duo, Buddy, and Brent and Laura Turcotte. The Least was seen by a few and the Eastern Kingbird, by the Sturges and the Anderson duo.

Vireos had also arrived! Philadelphia and Warbling were enjoyed by Renee and by yours truly, the latter also enjoyed by the Sturges, the Anderson pair, Mary and the McKerchers. The Red-eyed was heard or seen by many. The Blue-headed was enjoyed by the Sturges.

Swallows: Bank Swallows had recently come and were watched by many. Cliff also had arrived, though seen by only the Anderson pair, by Renee, and by yours truly, the latter two also spotting a Rough-winged Swallow at Powassan Lagoon.

As to wrens, the Winter Wren was noted by the Turcottes, the Sturges, and April McCrum; House Wrens, by the Chowns; and Marsh Wrens, by Renee and by yours truly.

Veery Thrushes were noted by many, including John, the Chowns, Mary, the Turcottes, Renee, yours truly, April, the Sturges, and the Anderson pair, the latter three groups also observing Wood Thrush.

As to the mimics, the Gray Catbird was found by Buddy, the Anderson pair, the Chowns, the Sturges, Renee, Mary, yours truly, and April. The Brown Thrasher was noted by Renee, Donna, Ernie, the Chowns, Buddy, Kaye, the Anderson pair, the Sturges, Mary Ann Kenrick, Mary, and the McKerchers. And surprisingly, a Northern Mockingbird was discovered by Renee and by yours truly near the end of Beaucage Park Road.

Now as to the much sought after wood warblers. There were 16 species discovered, 14 for the first time. Eleven groups saw one or more new ones. Your compiler will mention all 14 of them, following the order within the local checklist - Tennessee, Nashville, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Cape May, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat and Canada. Observers of one or more new ones, included Buddy, April, Paul Smylie and Kaye (with four each), John and the McKerchers (with two), the Turcottes (with ten), the Anderson duo (with eight), the Sturges (with nine), Renee and yours truly (with seven), and the Chowns (with three).

No one managed to discover a Scarlet Tanager, but at the opposite end of the exotics, the sparrows, the Chipping Sparrow was noted by many, including, the Sturges, Renee, yours truly, Mary, the Chowns, the Anderson pair, Buddy, the McKerchers, Kelsey, and Mary. Lincoln's Sparrow was only on the list of the Anderson pair.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were surely enjoyed by Steve, Donna, the Handleys, Bill and Carol Fleming, Janet Sparks, Renee, yours truly, the Sturges, Kaye, the Anderson pair, and Mary.

A magnificent Indigo Bunting was marvelled at by Renee and by yours truly at the end of Marsh Drive, north of the city.

Noisy Bobolinks were discovered by Rose, Ernie, the Anderson pair, the Sturges, Renee, and yours truly.

Baltimore Orioles were on the lists only of Renee, yours truly, and the Anderson pair.

And that completes the species of birds seen for the first time at a Bird Bash this year.

We now will get to the birds previously seen, starting - as usual in roughly taxonomic order using our local checklist - with the Common Loon. It was observed by Linda Stoner, Spencer, Kaye, Steve, Janet, the McKerchers, yours truly, and Elsa.

Double-crested Cormorants were noted by the Turcottes, Linda, the Anderson duo, Elsa, the McKerchers, Renee, and yours truly.

American Bitterns were discovered by Spencer, Mary, the Chowns, the Anderson pair, and the Flemings. The latter two groups also noted the Great Blue Heron, along with the McKerchers, the Chowns, Mary, the Sturges, April, Renee, and yours truly.

Turkey Vultures were watched by the Sturges, Mary, the Chowns, the McKerchers, Kaye, the Anderson pair, Janet, Kaye, Renee, and yours truly.

Canada Geese were about, some in farm fields in huge numbers.

Trumpeter Swans were spotted by the Turcottes, while a Tundra Swan, still within Verner Lagoon, was noted by the Anderson pair, Buddy, Renee, and yours truly. (Up until the Bird Bash, there were 2 Tundra Swans at Verner Lagoon.)

Wood Ducks, Gadwalls, American Wigeons, Mallards, and Northern Shovelers were still about in fair numbers within the local lagoons and elsewhere. Green-wing Teals were spotted only by Buddy. No American Blacks were noted. However, Lesser Scaup and Common Goldeneye, both diving ducks, were fairly commonplace within the lagoons, while the Hooded Merganser was noted only by Kaye, who also saw Common Mergansers, as did the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, Renee, and yours truly.

Now as to previously seen predators, we start with the wonderful Osprey. Therez Violette observed the Cache Bay baseball field birds, as did the Anderson pair, Renee, and yours truly, with others being noted by the Flemings, the McKerchers, Paul and Kaye. Northern Harriers were spotted by the Anderson pair, the Chowns and the Sturges, who also spied a Cooper's Hawk. A Sharp-shinned Hawk, seemingly attracted,

as were the flycatchers, by the many dragon flies that had hatched at Cache Bay, was seen well by Renee and by yours truly. Bald Eagles were watched by the McKerchers, Kaye, Renee, and yours truly. American Kestrels remained fairly common, being noted by the Anderson pair, Kaye, Ernie, the McKerchers, Renee, and yours truly, the latter two also seeing a Merlin.

Ruffed Grouse were seen by Donna, April, Kaye, the Flemings, Janet, the Turcottes, and the Anderson pair, who also spotted Wild Turkey, as did Ernie.

A few Sandhill Cranes were around and were sighted by Janet, Spencer, Rose McClelland, Ernie, the Anderson pair, and Mary.

Killdeer were noted only by the Sturges and the Anderson duo. A Greater Yellowlegs was discovered by the Anderson duo, by Renee, and by yours truly at Verner Lagoon. Wilson's Snipe was spotted by Mary, the Flemings, and the Anderson duo, who also found the American Woodcock.

As to gulls, the Ring-billed seemed to be everywhere, but only a few Herrings were identified - by the Anderson pair, the Sturges, Buddy, Linda and the McKerchers.

Rock Pigeons were commonplace, but Mourning Doves were much fewer in number, though noted by the Sturges, the McKerchers, Buddy, Mary, the Anderson pair, Kaye, Mary Ann, Steve, Therez, Janet, Renee, and yours truly.

A Barred Owl was noted by Spencer, the second time noted during a Bird Bash this year.

Belted Kingfishers were observed only by Janet and by the Anderson duo.

Now as to woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers have become somewhat more prominent, found by the Turcottes, Kaye, Renee, and yours truly. The Downy, Hairy and Pileated were still present at many feeders, as they have been all winter. Northern Flickers were widely dispersed.

Eastern Phoebes were also widely spread out, being noticed by many - Janet, Rose, the Chowns, the Sturges, the McKerchers, Mary, Renee, and yours truly.

Blue Jays, American Crows and Common Ravens were also widely noted.

Tree Swallows and Barn Swallows were also fairly common.

Of course, Black-capped Chickadees were everywhere, along with somewhat less so Red-breasted Nuthatches. The White-breasted Nuthatch seemed to be "hiding", being

noticed only by the Flemings. The Brown Creeper was spotted only by Paul and Kaye. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were noted by Renee, John, yours truly, Kaye, and the Chowns.

Near their homes, the Eastern Bluebird was enjoyed much by the McKerchers and by Rose. The Hermit Thrush was identified by Donna, April and the Anderson duo. The very expressive American Robins were pleasantly ubiquitous!

Maybe European Starlings have now become our most common passerine.

Cedar Waxwings (which have just been to Paris to get their feathers done so perfectly) were back in pretty good numbers, and were watched and enjoyed by Mary, the McKerchers, Buddy, Therez, Mary Ann, Renee, and yours truly.

And there were two warblers also seen last month, the Yellow-rumped and the Pine, and noted again this month, the first one by Linda and Kaye; the Pine by Janet, Renee, and yours truly, and both of them by the Sturges and the Anderson duo.

Savannah Sparrows were seen again - by Renee, yours truly, the Sturges, Buddy and the Anderson duo. Song and White-throated Sparrows were seen (or heard) again by many participants. Swamp Sparrows were noted only by Mary, the Turcottes, Renee, and yours truly.

Red-winged Blackbirds were in almost every swampy area.

Eastern Meadowlarks were discovered by just a few, notably the Sturges, the Anderson duo, Renee, and yours truly.

Common Grackles remained very common, but Brown-headed cowbirds were noted just by Renee, yours truly, Steve, and the Sturges.

Purple Finches were perhaps still surprisingly common, noted by many; the same with American Goldfinches. But, Pine Siskins were spotted only by Buddy, and Evening Grosbeaks, solely by Mary.

House Sparrows were sighted once again only by the Sturges and the Anderson duo.

And so that concludes probably the most active monthly Bird Bash! Congrats to all participants!

Note that the June Bird Bash will be pretty soon, **June 20-21**. It should be almost as busy as the one just concluded!