

Bird Bash Report

February 2021

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Rather pleasant weather provided 25 participants with some good birding discoveries during a snow-filled February weekend. Thirty-six (36) species were identified, about an average number during the 18 years that we have followed this 50- mile (80.5 km) diameter analysis.

Proceeding firstly, as usual, with new birds for the year, along the rough taxonomic order of our North Bay and Area checklist, we come to the always exciting Barred Owl. It was found by June and Kevin Telford on Cranberry Trail.

Then we have a Horned Lark on Millrand Road just southeast of Verner identified by Renee Levesque and yours truly, amidst a flock of Snow Buntings.

But perhaps the most exciting new discovery was that of a Boreal Chickadee spotted by Gary and Connie Sturge in a “boreal” forest near South River. That bird has only rarely (if ever) been added to a Bird Bash report, despite its alleged proclivity within northern forests.

Four American Tree Sparrows were rather luckily spotted by the Levesque pair under a feeder on Veuve River Road.

And finally, there were three White-winged Crossbills making a magical appearance in this year of crossbill shortages, found by the Sturges, also near South River.

Now to birds seen already this year during January’s Bird Bash, again following the order of our seasonal checklist, we start with the American Black Duck and the Mallard. Some 11 Blacks were carefully separating themselves from about 15 Mallards in the Ottawa River at Mattawa, spotted there by yours truly; and both species, within North Bay, were also seen by Gary and Luanne Chowns. The Telfords and Fred Pinto also noted Mallards. Yours truly watched a couple of dozen of the tough wintering diver, the Common Goldeneye, within Mattawa’s partly open lagoon.

As to predators, it seems only the Bald Eagle was discovered by the Sturges, the Telfords, and by Grant and Shirley McKercher.

The latter two pairs also spotted Ruffed Grouse, as did Donna Demarco, Peter and Pam Handley, Bill and Carol Fleming, and also Renee. Wild Turkeys were upon Keith

Thornborrow's list and that of the Sturges.

Rock Doves were among the most common of our local birds, while Mourning Doves were seen only by the McKerchers, the Sturges, and Keith.

Among the woodpeckers, both the Downy and Hairy remained very popular, while the Pileated was observed only by Sarah Wheelan, Keith, the Chowns, April McCrum, the Flemings, and Renee.

An exciting Northern Shrike was located by the McKerchers and by Denise Desmarais who spotted one near Verner.

The seemingly fewer-in-number Canada Jay was found only by Keith near South River.

Blue Jays were pretty numerous, along with Common Ravens, spotted, among others, by Corinne Urrutia. But American Crows were noted only by John Levesque, Fred, the Chowns, April, the Telfords, and the Levesque duo, generally close to urban North Bay.

Black-capped Chickadees were everyone's favourite, with Red-breasted Nuthatches being just a little bit less so. White-breasted Nuthatches were enjoyed by the Telfords, the McKerchers, Donna, the Sturges, Ken Gowing, the Flemings, the Chowns, and Elsa Tafel, mostly at feeders.

Bohemian Waxwings were closely watched by yours truly in Mattawa, and also by the Levesques in North Bay, about 20 within each flock.

A White-throated Sparrow was again discovered by April at her home in North Bay, along with a Dark-eyed Junco, also spotted by the Levesques at their place.

Flocks of about 50 Snow Buntings were watched by Denise and the Levesque duo at Verner Lagoon, with about the same number spotted on Millrand Road by the Levesque duo.

April again saw a lovely Northern Cardinal at her feeder.

Pine Grosbeaks were relatively common, noticed by John, Keith, Donna, the Sturges, the Levesque duo, the Handleys, Denise, Ken and the Flemings.

Common Redpolls were widespread this winter, noted by the Telfords, (who also saw Hoarys), Fred, the McKerchers, Keith (also with Hoarys), John and Renee (plus a Hoary), the Handleys, the Levesque duo, and the Flemings.

Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks were found solely by Keith near South River.

American Goldfinches were spotted by Fred beside Laurier Woods and by Sarah in Callander.

House Sparrows were only upon Lori Anderson's list - warm within her barn, east of Powassan

And so that ends a pleasant, fairly productive winter weekend Bird Bash outing despite the sanctions placed upon us by the pandemic. Congrats to all!

Clearly our next monthly Bird Bash, over the weekend of **March 27-28**, should be even more productive and more exciting. Mark the date down now!