

Bird Bash Report

September 2022

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Well, well! Despite an apparent lack of birds to some observers, the overall number of species found was higher than average – 110. Perhaps it was the lovely weather that we had that helped the 23 participants!

Getting to the new birds for the year, and, as usual, following roughly the order set out in the *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area*, and within 50 miles or 80.5 km of North Bay, we note firstly a Stilt Sandpiper at Warren Lagoon, identified by Renee Levesque and yours truly. They also enjoyed three Red-necked Phalaropes there, as did Chris Sukha. (One other Red-necked Phalarope was at Verner Lagoon.)

Then we have American Pipits discovered by Grant and Shirley McKercher and Diane and Alvin Deagle at Sunset Point, and by Chris at Verner.

Palm Warblers were seen returning south by the Levesque pair, along with Gary and Connie Sturge, young Jeremie Corbeil and the Deagles.

And now to the birds previously identified during the Bird Bash year, following a similar order: That starts with the Common Loon found only by a few, notably Faye Oei, John Levesque (via a “fly-over”), Denise Desmarais, Steve Pitt, the Sturges, and Chris who heard it.

Pied-billed Grebes were found by Chris and by the Levesque pair who saw 9 of them at Cache Bay. Chris, the Levesque pair, and the McKerchers also saw Double-crested Cormorants.

No bitterns were unearthed, but the Great Blue Heron was still around in good numbers and spotted by the preceding three participants and by Steve. Three Green Herons were spotted by the Deagles.

Turkey Vultures were watched by Steve, young Jeremie, Chris, the Levesque duo, the Sturges, Denise, and Faye.

Canada Geese were once again re-establishing themselves in larger and larger numbers.

Dabbling ducks were also in large numbers, although mainly in some of the lagoons, with many of them still in their winter plumage. The Levesque duo and Chris observed Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallards, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, and Green-winged Teal. The McKerchers viewed Wood Ducks, American Blacks, Mallards, Blue-winged Teal and Northern Shovelers. The Sturges saw Mallards, Wood Ducks and American Wigeon. Mary Young saw Wood Ducks. Very many others recognized Mallards. At Warren Lagoon, Chris also found Northern Pintail.

Lesser Scaup were noted by the Levesque duo at Cache Bay. Common Goldeneye were found by Chris, the McKerchers, and the Levesque duo, the latter two pairs also viewing Common Mergansers, as did April McCrum and the Sturges. The McKerchers also found Hooded Mergansers, and Chris also found Ring-necked Ducks.

As to predators, rather disappointingly, no one found any Osprey. But Northern Harriers were spotted by the Levesque duo and by Chris. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was photographed by Steve. A few Broad-winged hawks were still around and noted by John, the Levesque duo, the Sturges, and Chris who also observed a Cooper's Hawk, a Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, a Merlin and a Peregrine Falcon, the latter at Verner as he did during August's Bird Bash. The Sturges also found a Merlin and American Kestrel, as did the Levesque pair. The latter duo also watched a Bald Eagle, as did Faye, April (3 of them near Marten River), and the McKerchers, who also viewed the Merlin, as did April and Mary.

Ruffed Grouse were spotted by Lloyd and Janet Sparks, the Sturges, and Chris. Wild Turkeys were noted only by the Sturges. Sandhill Cranes were found, usually in great abundance, by Steve, Chris, and the Levesque duo.

Now as to shorebirds! Lots were around, on their way south, at special locations, such as Warren Lagoon, where there were shallow bits of water. And so Semipalmated Plovers and Sandpipers, plus Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers, one or two Solitary Sandpipers, and a Spotted Sandpiper were all found by the Levesque duo there. All such birds except the Solitary, but also a Pectoral were noted by Chris. The McKerchers and the Deagles found Spotted, normally here during the full summer. A Wilson's Phalarope was also at Warren Lagoon and observed by the Levesque duo. Faye found a Least Sandpiper.

Ring-billed Gulls and nearby Herring Gulls were still very common, but some new, south-migrating Bonaparte's Gulls were discovered by the McKerchers and by Chris.

Caspian Terns were still present and noted by the Levesque duo and by Chris at Cache Bay.

As usual, Rock Doves were very widely common. Mourning Doves were spotted by the McKerchers, Faye, Chris, the Sturges, and the Levesque pair.

We missed owls this time, and unfortunately Common Nighthawks did not appear - to Jeremie and to the Sturges - after the 24 hour period, and so they are not included in the numbers here.

There were still some Ruby-throated Hummingbirds about, spotted by the Sturges, Faye, the Sparks, Cindy, Steve, John, Mary, and yours truly.

The Belted Kingfisher was still active locally, and was watched by Renee, the McKerchers, Steve, Chris, Mary, and the Sturges.

As to woodpeckers, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, the Downy, the Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers were all found by the Sturges, Chris, and John, and, except for the sapsucker, also by the McKerchers. Hairy and Pileated were noted by Steve. Northern Flickers were seen by Donna Demarco, Jeremie, Denise, Mary, and the Sparks. Hairys and Flickers were found by the Levesque dup and by the Deagles. Downy and Pileated were noted by April. The Downy was spotted by Faye, and the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Hairy were seen by Greg Jaski.

Just a few flycatchers seemed still to be around, with the Eastern Phoebe being spotted by Jeremie and by Chris, who also managed to find the Least Flycatcher and the Eastern Kingbird.

A few vireos remained and so the Red-eyed was found by Chris, Renee, Faye, and the Sturges, who also discovered a Blue-headed.

Blue Jays and American Crows seemed to be everywhere! Common Ravens were identified by Faye, the Levesque duo, the Sparks, Jeremie, Steve, the McKerchers, Cindy, the Sturges, Mary, and Chris.

Only Faye found a swallow, most having moved south, namely the Barn Swallow.

A bird which virtually all see with enthusiasm and enjoyment is the Black-capped Chickadee. Nuthatches were often close company, especially when feeders are up. The Red-breasted and White-breasted were found by the Sturges, Chris, Faye, the McKerchers, Steve, and Jeremie. The Red-breasted was noted by the Deagles, the Levesque duo, Denise, Donna, and April, while y the White-breasted was discovered by John, Greg, and Cindy.

Brown Creepers were observed by the McKerchers, Faye, the Sturges, and Chris who also found the House Wren. The Winter Wren was on the list of John and the McKerchers, who also noted the Golden-crowned Kinglet, as did the Sturges, and Faye. The Ruby-crowned was noted by yours truly and by Chris.

Thrushes were few and far between, even the robins. However, some robins were seen by Peter and Pam Handley, Chris, Cindy, the Deagles, April, the Sparks, Jeremie, the McKerchers, John, Renee, the Sturges, Denise, and Mary. The Eastern Bluebird was spotted by Jeremie and by the Sturges, who were the only ones to find a Hermit Thrush.

The Gray Catbird was discovered by the Sturges, Chris, and the McKerchers. No Brown Thrashers seemed to be around?

Cedar Waxwings were still about, being noted by the Sparks, April, Faye, and the Sturges.

Now we get to the warblers. One participant was very fortunate, finding many, but generally they eluded most of us, the majority having found their way south, presumably during the recent good weather.

And so, some 16 species were identified, (including the Palm mentioned earlier), twelve of them, amazingly by Chris, mostly in the Cache Bay area. They were the Nashville, Tennessee, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided, Cape May, Black-throated Blue (which has still eluded yours truly everywhere this year), Yellow-rumped, Bay-breasted, Black and White, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, and Wilson's.

The Sturges found the Cape May, the Ovenbird, and the Common Yellowthroat. The Mckerchers spotted the Chestnut-sided, Yellow-rumped, Blackburnian, American Redstart, and the Common Yellowthroat. Faye listed the Yellow-

rumped, as did John who also saw the American Redstart and the Black-throated Green. Renee found the Tennessee, while the Levesque pair found Yellow-rumped, as did Greg. Cindy Lafleur and Mary had the American Redstart upon their lists. The Handleys identified the lovely Canada Warbler.

After all that one must now mention the unpopular European Starlings which were spread all over in very large numbers!

Now to the sparrows – always difficult to identify at any time, but particularly in the early fall – with lots of young ones not looking just like their parents.

We start with the American Tree not seen since May, and normally not reaching here till October, being identified by Cindy. Then we get to the Chipping Sparrow, still a few about, and spotted by the Deagles, Cindy, Jeremie, the Sturges, Chris, and the Levesque duo.

Savannahs seemed to be the most common field area sparrow, being identified by the latter duo, Chris, and the Sturges.

Songs, the most common sparrow close to habitations, have been listed on our Bird Bashes since March, and were this month spotted by the Deagles, the Sparks, Jeremie, the McKerchers, the Sturges, Chris, the Levesque pair, Mary, and the Handleys.

Swamps were identified by Chris, the Sturges, and the McKerchers.

Some White-throats, upon every month's list this year but one, were still here, and were identified by the Deagles, Jeremie, John, the Sturges, Chris, Greg, and the Levesque duo.

An early, south-moving White-crowned reached our area and was found by the Deagles.

Which get us to the much prettier families and species – the Indigo Bunting and the Eastern Meadowlark, both found by the Sturges.

Red-winged Blackbirds, some in huge flocks, were noted by the Levesque duo, Chris, the McKerchers, Cindy, and Steve.

Common Grackles were very widespread and seen by many.

Purple Finches were discovered by the Deagles, the McKerchers, and Chris. American Goldfinch were in the midst of their late-arriving fledglings, and were spotted by the Levesque duo, Jeremie, Cindy, the Deagles, and the Sturges.

Evening Grosbeaks were spotted only by the Sturges.

Finally, the much maligned House Sparrow was enjoyed by the Sturges, Chris, and the Levesque duo.

This gets us to the end of a surprisingly widely recognized list of early Fall birds. Congrats to all participants!

October's Bird Bash is over the weekend of October 1. There should still be lots of birds around then, including some new ones, especially shorebirds, and so be prepared for another interesting weekend at that time!