

Bird Bash Report

May 2023

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

There was clearly lovely weather, great for the May Bird Bash, without too many bugs (yet). Some 25 participants got out to enjoy finding 139 species of birds, slightly above average for our area over the past 20 May Bird Bashes.

Getting to the nub of things, with new birds noted for the Bird Bash year and generally following the order of listing within the *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds* within North Bay's 50 mile (80.5 km) diameter circle, we start with the Pied-billed Grebe, discovered by Keith Thornborrow near South River.

Then there was the Green Heron found by Mary Young and Diane Deagle.

Finally, we get to some migrating shore-birds! Semipalmated Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plovers were in Verner Lagoon within its lowered waters and found by Renee Levesque with your compiler, along with a number of pretty Dunlin and some Least Sandpipers. At Verner Lagoon, Denise Desmarais also came upon the Semipalmated Plovers, Semipalmated Sandpipers and a Lesser Yellowlegs, the latter also seen by the Levesque duo. June and Kevin Telford saw Semipalmated Plovers. Keith Thornborrow found Least Sandpipers. Diane found a Spotted Sandpiper, as did Grant and Shirley McKercher, Keith, the Telfords, and the Levesque duo.

Bonaparte's Gulls were watched by Denise, also at the Verner Lagoon. Very fortunately, a trio of Black Terns was discovered by the Levesque duo at Warren Lagoon. The Common Tern was spotted by Diane near the government dock.

A Black-billed Cuckoo was sorted out by April McCrum out on Trout Pond Road.

Now for only the second owl of the Bird Bash year, a Great Horned Owl was heard "hooting up a storm" by Denise.

Some forty Chimney Swifts were watched by yours truly at St. Vincent de Paul Church in North Bay. Such were also spotted by the McKerchers.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds had clearly arrived in goodly numbers and were likely enjoyed by all participants.

The flycatchers had arrived for sure, as the Eastern Wood-Pewee was identified by Mary and the Telfords, both of whom also saw the Alder, as did the Levesque duo and Garry Waldram. Garry also identified a Willow. The Telfords and Mary spotted the Least and the Great Crested, the latter also seen by the Renee and John Levesque and by Lori Anderson with Ken Gowing. Denise included the Alder and Great Crested in her list. April saw the Alder. The McKerchers saw the Least, as did Linda Stoner. Eastern Kingbirds were watched by Steve Pitt, Faye Oei, Sue Gratton, Keith, Denise, Garry, Mary and the Levesque duo.

Vireos have definitely arrived, and so starting at the Warbling, it was noticed by Mary, the Telfords, the

Anderson pair, and the Levesque duo. The Philadelphia was identified by Faye, Sue, Diane, and April. The Red-eyed was all over the place, spotted or heard by almost everyone. The Blue-headed was located by the McKerchers and John.

Bank Swallows were noted by the Levesque pair, while Keith and the Anderson duo found Cliffs. Chris watched the Northern Rough-winged.

The House Wren was noticed by Mary.

More thrushes had certainly arrived, with the Eastern Bluebird an exciting life bird for Sue and Faye. Veerys were located by the McKerchers, the Telfords, Diane, the Anderson duo, the Levesque pair, April, Mary, and Denise. Mary also found a Swainson's Thrush and the Telfords, the Hermit Thrush.

Gray Catbirds were discovered by Mary, Denise, Renee, the Telfords, Diane, the Anderson pair, and Garry.

Cedar Waxwings had arrived in small numbers (so far), and spotted by the McKerchers, Garry, Diane, John and Renee.

Wonderful warblers have been arriving in large numbers but are often hard to identify due to their constant movements within the leaves. And so your compiler is only going to note the many new ones identified, and later by total numbers discovered by various participants. And so, besides the three marked in April, new warblers this month were Tennessee, Nashville, Northern Parula, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Black and White, American Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's, and Canada.

Participants with their numbers (which does not include those species seen in April) are: Mary with eleven; John and Renee with five; Garry, with eight; the Telfords and Chris with thirteen; Faye with two; the McKerchers with nine; Keith with two; Denise with nine; Linda with three; the Sparks with one; April with six; the Levesque duo with five; the Anderson pair with six; Steve with one; Diane with two; and Sue with four.

A bird which might be deemed the most brilliant, and which might even overwhelm most birds from Central America, is the Scarlet Tanager. It was watched with wonder by Faye and Sue.

Another wonderful bird is the Indigo Bunting, spotted by yours truly (at Trout Pond Road). It was also spotted by Garry and April.

Many Bobolinks were found within farm fields and by the lagoons and seen by the Anderson duo, Denise, the Levesque duo, the Telfords, April, Keith, and Garry.

Baltimore Orioles have become slightly more common and were much enjoyed by Steve, the Anderson pair, Renee, and Linda.

And so that finishes the compilation of all the previously unseen bird species by Bird Bash participants for 2023.

We must now get onto those birds seen earlier this year within the same order as before, starting with

the Common Loon. This icon of our lakes was discovered by Janet and Lloyd Sparks, Linda, Denise, Keith, the Telfords, and Steve.

Then there were Double-crested Cormorants found by Steve, the Telfords, Denise, Diane, and the Sparks.

The American Bittern was noticed solely by Mary, Denise, Diane, and Keith, while the Great Blue Heron was watched by Sue, the Telfords, Faye, the McKerchers, Keith, the Sparks, and Mary.

Turkey Vultures were spotted by Mary, the Sparks, the Levesque pair, John, Denise, Keith, the McKerchers, Faye, the Telfords, Steve, and the Anderson duo.

Canada Geese were noticed by almost all participants. Two Trumpeter Swans were spotted only by the Levesque pair, strangely at Warren Lagoon.

Now among the dabbling ducks, the Mallards were, as usual, seen by almost all, while Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon and Northern Shovelers were found by the lagoon viewers, the Levesque pair and Denise. Wood Ducks were also discovered by Diane, Steve, Keith, and the Telfords, who also spotted Green-winged Teal. Blue-winged Teal were noted by the Levesque pair. Blacks were noticed by yours truly (in Powassan Lagoon), Keith, and Garry.

Among the diving ducks, the Ring-necked was seen by Keith and Garry, and Lesser Scaup and Common Goldeneye by the Levesque pair. Keith also spotted Hooded Mergansers near South River, while the McKerchers noted Common Mergansers, as did the Telfords. The Red-breasted Merganser, surprisingly seen during January's Bird Bash, was identified by Diane.

Getting to the hawks, the Osprey was enjoyed by Therez Violette, the Levesque pair, Denise, the McKerchers, and Keith, and the American Kestrel by Denise, the Telfords, Steve, Garry, and the Levesque pair. The latter two groups, as well as the Sparks and John, also found Broad-winged Hawks. The Red-tailed Hawk was identified by the Levesque pair and the McKerchers, with the latter group and Denise also found the Merlin. Bald Eagles were spotted by Mary, the Sparks, the Telfords, Diane, and Steve.

Ruffed Grouse were in the view of Denise, the Telfords, Steve, April, the Anderson pair, Garry, and Keith. Wild Turkeys were watched by Faye, Sue, and Keith.

Chris Sukha came upon an American Coot and a Greater Yellowlegs.

A couple of Sandhill Cranes were spotted by Denise, the Telfords, and the Anderson pair, and a couple with young were watched by Therez.

The only preceding month shorebirds were Killdeer seen by the Levesque duo, Garry, and Diane, and Wilson's Snipe noted by Keith, April, and watched while "winnowing" by the Telfords.

Ring-billed Gulls or Herring Gulls were widely spread about and noted by many participants. Caspian Terns were noted again by the Levesque pair, Denise, and the Sparks.

Rock Doves were spread all over, while Mourning Doves were spotted by the McKerchers, Sue, the Sparks, Diane, Keith, Therez, the Anderson duo, the Levesque pair, Garry, and the Telfords.

Two Barred Owls were heard by the Anderson pair and one by Steve.

Belted Kingfishers were observed this month by Garry, Mary, Steve, the Sparks, and Sue.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were noted this month by the Telfords, the Sparks, Denise, John, Steve, Mary, the Anderson duo, and the Levesque pair. Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers were listed again by most participants. The Pileated was still not that obtrusive and noted only by John, Renee, the Anderson pair, Steve, and the Telfords.

Eastern Phoebes were the only flycatcher noted in April and were seen again by the Telfords, the McKerchers, the Sparks, Keith, Denise, the Anderson and the Levesque duos.

No Canada Jays this month. But most spotted Blue Jays and the many American Crows. Common Ravens are sometimes hard to identify, and were clearly not as common as summertime crows, but they were identified by Steve, the Levesque duo, Keith, Sue, the Sparks, Faye, Diane, April, Therez, Denise, Mary, Garry, and the McKerchers.

Tree Swallows had certainly appeared in big ways and were followed by the Sparks, Garry, Steve, Sue, the Telfords, Faye, Keith, Denise, the Levesque duo, and the McKerchers. Barn Swallows were also spotted by the Telfords, the Levesque duo, Garry, Sue, Faye, April, and Keith. The Anderson pair saw both Barn and Tree Swallows, as did Diane.

Black-capped Chickadees were noted and enjoyed by almost all participants.

Red-breasted Nuthatches were spotted by the Telfords, Steve, Denise, and John and Renee, who also saw a White-breasted Nuthatch, the latter spotted also by the Anderson pair, Steve, and the Telfords.

No Brown Creepers were located, but the Winter Wren was identified by the Telfords.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets remained in short supply, although found by Garry, April, Diane, and Renee.

Of course, the friendly American Robins were all over the place and no doubt enjoyed by all participants. Brown Thrashers were on the list of the Anderson pair, the Levesque duo, Keith, Diane, and the McKerchers.

European Starlings were almost everywhere.

The three warblers observed in April were Yellow-rumped, Pine and Ovenbird. One or more of them were spotted this month by the McKerchers (Pine and Ovenbird); Garry, Mary, Denise, April, Faye, and the Levesque duo (Yellow-rumped, and Ovenbird); Diane and the Anderson pair (Ovenbird); the Telfords, (Pine and Ovenbird); and Steve (Yellow-rumped).

American Tree Sparrows had pretty well gone northwards, but were noted by Keith and Steve, along with the White-crowned, the latter also spotted by the Telfords. More local nesting sparrows, such as the Chipping (the McKerchers, Denise, the Anderson pair, the Telfords, and John and Renee, Sue, Faye, the Sparks, Diane, and Garry); Savannahs, (Denise, the Anderson duo, and the Levesque pair); Songs, (the McKerchers, Sue, Linda, Faye, Denise, Diane, April, the Telfords, the Levesque pair and Mary);

Swamps, (Mary, the Telfords, the Levesque pair, Denise, the Anderson duo, and Linda); and White-throats (McKerchers, Steve, the Anderson pair, John, Denise, Sue, Therez, April, the Levesque duo, the Telfords, and Mary) were all fairly common nesters throughout the area.

The wonderful Northern Cardinal, becoming slightly more common here, was spotted by Diane within Sweetman's Gardens.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were spotted once more by April, Mary, Garry, the Sparks, Sue, the Telfords, the Anderson duo, Denise, and Keith.

Red-winged Blackbirds were almost everywhere.

Eastern Meadowlarks were located only by the Anderson duo.

Common Grackles had become almost as common as Redwings.

The Brown-headed Cowbird was spotted only by the Telfords and Keith.

Purple Finches were watched by the Levesque duo, Keith, Mary, Garry, Sue, Diane, Steve, Therez, and the Telfords.

Some Pine Siskins were still around and were spotted by the Anderson pair, Keith, John and Renee.

American Goldfinches seem to have become somewhat less common this year, but were spotted by the Levesque duo, Keith, Mary, the Anderson pair, Therez, John, the Telfords, and Steve.

Evening Grosbeaks were still around and noted by Donna Demarco, John, Renee, Steve, Sue, the McKerchers, Garry, and Keith.

Finally, we get to the often-maligned House Sparrow, spotted by the Levesque duo and Denise at the Verner feed store, and by the Anderson duo.

And so at last, we reach the end of a 140 species Bird Bash. Congrats to all for your perseverance and intrepidity!

June's Bird Bash will be over the **weekend of June 17**. There should be almost as many birds here then as in May. And so, plan again for it!