

Bird Bash Report

July 2019

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Ninety-seven species of birds were identified within 50 miles of North Bay by 25 stalwarts during a beautiful weekend at the end of July. This is very similar in number to six other end-of-July weekends during the past sixteen years, but a bit below the overall average of about 110. (In 2008, there were 146 species spotted!)

As per usual, we start off with new birds for the Bird Bash year which is solely the Pectoral Sandpiper. This was spotted by the duo of Renee Levesque and yours truly at a muddy area within Verner Lagoon. Several shorebirds had already commenced their southern migration, but the others had all been noticed during their springtime northern movement and will be mentioned later in this report.

And so we now get to the other species seen, in rough taxonomic order, starting off with the Common Loon, seen by many, though only a few enjoying the little black chicks seen with some of the adults. The Pied-billed Grebe was noted only by the Levesque duo at Cache Bay. Double-crested Cormorants and Canada Geese were widely observed.

Renee briefly saw at Verner Lagoon the only American Bittern; however, Great Blue Herons were noted by many, while the Green Heron was observed only by Kaye Edmunds and by the trio of Grant and Shirley McKercher and Marc Buchanan.

Altogether eleven duck species were spotted, mostly within the various lagoons, and that includes Common Mergansers seen by Kaye, the Levesque pair, the duo of Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing, and the McKercher group which also found Common Goldeneye. (At least 50 Common Mergansers in raft were seen at Sunset Park by the Levesque duo.) Ring-necked Ducks were noted by the McKercher trio and those and Lesser Scaup (just starting to move southerly) were among those spotted at Warren Lagoon by the Levesque duo. The McKercher group also observed Green-winged Teal, the only group to do so, while Buddy Myles was the only one who found Blue-winged Teal. However, Gadwalls, normally common, were not upon any lists.

Turkey Vultures seemed even more numerous than during past Bird Bashes.

Among the predators, the Osprey was the most prominent and noted by many, with Northern Harrier and American Kestrel being right behind. A Broad-winged Hawk was seen only by Janet and Lloyd Sparks. Bald Eagles were observed by Gary and Connie Sturge and the Levesque duo who also found a Merlin, as did Kaye.

Ruffed Grouse were also observed by Kaye, as well as by Steve Pitt, and by the pair of Linda Stoner and Rose McLelland.

The Levesque pair saw an American Coot at Warren Lagoon, while the Anderson duo were the only ones to note Sandhill Cranes, east of Powassan.

Among the shorebirds, Killdeer and Spotted Sandpipers were fairly common in the lagoons. Greater Yellowlegs were discovered by the McKercher gang; Lesser Yellowlegs were noted by the Stoner and the Levesque duos. Solitary and Least Sandpipers were seen by the Levesque pair at Verner Lagoon, and Solitary Sandpipers and a Wilson's Snipe were found there by Buddy.

Ring-billed and Herring gulls were fairly common, but not as many as in recent months, so it seemed by your compiler. Black-backed Gulls still had not been seen this year. Caspian Terns were quite conspicuous at Cache Bay, along with a few Common Terns.

Of course, Rock Pigeons were commonplace, while Mourning Doves were somewhat less so.

A Black-billed Cuckoo was noted by the Sturges and by the Anderson pair.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were fairly common, enjoyed by Elsa Tafel and many others, especially at their home feeders.

Belted Kingfishers were seen by Steve, Kaye and the Levesque duo.

As to woodpeckers and their cousins, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was noted by several including the Sturges, John Levesque, and the Anderson and Levesque pair. Northern Flickers and Downy Woodpeckers seemed to be the most common woodpeckers seen, while Hairy Woodpeckers were seen by Mary Ann Kenrick, the Sparks, and just a few others. Pileated Woodpeckers were noted by Steve and by the Anderson and Levesque duos.

Eastern Wood Pewees were found by the Stoner duo and by the Levesque pair, the latter at Jocko Point. Eastern Phoebes were fairly widespread, as were Eastern Kingbirds. Although the Levesque pair found Alder Flycatchers, no one spotted the Great Crested Flycatcher or the Least Flycatcher.

As to vireos, the Red-eyed seemed to be everywhere, while the Philadelphia was discovered by John and the Sturges. Where was the normally common Warbling Vireo?

Blue Jays were fairly commonplace, with American Crows and Common Ravens more so!

Swallows: Tree and Barn were frequently mentioned in many reports, the Bank, less so; however, Cliff Swallows were spotted only by the Anderson pair. Northern Rough-winged were not noticed.

Black-capped Chickadees remain a regular species, but the Red-breasted Nuthatch was seen only by a few, including Brent and Laura Turcotte during a paddle down South River. The White-breasted Nuthatch did not gather a mention, but the Brown Creeper, three of them, were observed only by the Levesque duo at Jocko Point.

The Winter Wren was found by the Sturges, as was the Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Thrushes: An Eastern Bluebird was watched by the Sturges, and briefly by the Levesque pair. The Veery was observed by the Anderson pair who also heard or saw Hermit Thrushes, as did the Turcottes, the Sturges and the Sparks. Swainson's and Wood Thrushes were overlooked. American Robins were ubiquitous!

The Gray Catbird was noted by the Anderson pair. Brown Thrashers were discovered by several, including Sarah Wheelan, Buddy and Mary Ann.

European Starlings were (surprise?) almost everywhere.

Cedar Waxwings were noted by the Levesque and Anderson duos, the McKercher group, Mary Ann and the Sturges.

Now as to warblers, the Yellow was on the lists of Mary Ann and Kaye who also noted the Chestnut-sided, along with the Anderson pair and the Sturges, who also found Pine. It seems American Redstarts were, along with Common Yellow-throats, the most common warblers and seen by many. The Ovenbird was on the list only of the Anderson pair. The Northern Waterthrush was noted solely by the Turcottes.

As to sparrows, the Chipping, Savannah, Song, and White-throated were observed by many, but the Swamp only by the Turcottes.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak was on the lists of the Sparks, the Anderson duo, and Steve.

Bobolinks were spotted by Kaye, by the Sturges, and by the Anderson pair, the latter two pairs also spotting the Eastern Meadowlark. Red-winged Blackbirds were all over the place, as were Common Grackles.

The Baltimore Oriole was found only by the Levesque pair on Rainville Road near Veuve River.

Purple Finches were noted by many, including Buddy, Mary Ann, and Steve.

American Goldfinches were noted by several, including the Levesque duo, Mary Ann, the Stoner pair, the Anderson duo and the Sturges. The latter two groups were the only ones to find House Sparrows. And, finally, Evening Grosbeaks were noted by Peter and Pam Handley.

And thus ends the July 2019 Bird Bash report for our area. Congrats to all who participated.

Expect even better results at the end of August when many more birds will be returning, along with their young. That outing will be over the weekend of **August 24 and 25**.