

Bird Bash Report

February 2019

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

A very tough winter has resulted in fewer birds, but not fewer participants for our area's Great February Bird Bash! (GFBB)

And so, with a long Family Day weekend bringing along 3 days for the up to 24 hour period of observation, some 24 of you saw 31 species of birds. This is 2 more than January, but 4 fewer than the average February for the past consecutive 16 years. Mind you in 2015, we observed only 27 species.

As usual we start off with “new” birds for the year; and that begins with an adult Cooper's Hawk noted well and with some excitement by Renee Levesque and yours truly not far from the North Bay hospital off Hwy 17. Then there was another predator, a Merlin found by Gary, Connie and Rachel Sturge just west of Powassan.

A very out-of-place Brown Thrasher was managing somehow at the home of new participant, Martha Gould, within the city. Martha also saw a good number of Bohemian Waxwings nearby. And then there were the lonesome American Tree Sparrows, one at the feeder of Ernie Frayle, and another at a feeder along Johnson Road, just east of North Bay, discovered by the Levesque duo. This sparrow does often find itself spending winters up here in the north, although usually in larger numbers than two! The Sturges also managed to come upon a small group of Red Crossbills near Stillaway Line, northwest of Powassan.

Moving along now, again in rough taxonomic order, for birds seen previously this year; Mallards were still about in fair numbers, noted by Gary and Luanne Chowns – again at their feeder - and by the Levesque duo near the Green Store on Trout Lake. But no American Blacks were seen, though some did appear later in the week at the tiny bit of open water kept ice-free near the Green Store.

Bald Eagles were about in good numbers, as observed by the Sturge family, by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing near Powassan, and by the Levesque pair south of Verner.

Ruffed Grouse were seen by a few of you, including Linda Stoner, Ernie, and Grant and Shirley McKercher. Wild Turkeys were discovered again by Keith Thornborrow near South River, and by the Anderson duo east of Powassan.

Rock Pigeons were as ubiquitous as ever, but Mourning Doves were spotted only by

Steve Pitt near Lake Talon, by the Chowns, and by the Anderson pair.

A beautiful, pure white adult male Snowy Owl was spotted by the Levesque pair, again just south of Verner.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers seemed to be as common as ever, but the Pileated was noted only by Elsa Tafel at the family feeder, by Keith, by the Anderson duo, and by John Levesque near his home.

Northern Shrikes, imperiously sitting upon the top of the nearest high tree, were spotted by the Sturges west of Powassan, by the Anderson duo, and by the Levesque pair near Verner.

The now-named Canada Jay was on the list of the Levesque duo, seen off Cook's Mills Road. It was also on Ernie's list. Blue Jays were fairly common, as were American Crows and even more so, Common Ravens.

Black-capped Chickadees seemed to be everywhere, while Red and White-breasted Nuthatches were at many feeders. The Brown Creeper has not been seen so far this year.

European Starlings were about in fair numbers.

Snow Buntings were found only by the Anderson pair east of Powassan. A Common Grackle was still at Ernie's feeder area.

Pine Grosbeaks were around in fair numbers, noted by Keith, by Lloyd and Janet Sparks, and by the Levesque pair, while both the Pine and Evening Grosbeaks were at the feeder areas of Donna Demarco, Pete and Pam Handley, the Anderson duo, and Ernie.

Common Redpolls seemed to be in fair numbers around our area this winter, noted by the Handleys, the McKerchers, the Sturges, Keith, and the Levesque duo.

House Sparrows remained in the home vicinities of the Anderson duo and the Sturges.

And so that is it! Congrats to all who once again braved a wild and snowy winter to find our northern birds.

For sure our March Bird Bash at the end of that month (**March 30-31**) should see many more birds as our southern seekers begin their northern sojourns. And so mark that date down and hope to hear from you again then.