

# Bird Bash Report

## July 25 -26, 2020

*By Dick Tafel, Compiler*

A group of 17 participants observed 95 species of birds within 50 miles (80.5 km) of North Bay during the recent July Bird Bash. That is considerably below the average of 110 over the past 16 years, but interestingly (or disturbingly?) in the past 4 years we averaged only 97.

As usual, we start with birds not previously noticed during this year's six months of observations. Following roughly in taxonomic order, we must refer to a few shorebirds already starting their route south. The Solitary, Least and Pectoral Sandpipers fit that description, noted in either Callander or Verner Lagoons by Grant and Shirley Mckercher and Renee Levesque along with yours truly. Then there was the Grasshopper Sparrow discovered by Gary and Connie Sturge in a field west of Powassan.

Now as to birds already on our lists for the year, starting with the Common Loon - it was noted only by Steve Pitt, Lloyd and Janet Sparks and Elsa Tafel.

Double-crested Cormorants were observed by the Sturges, the McKerchers, and the Levesque duo. An American Bittern was found by Steve. Great Blue Herons were noted by all the parties mentioned so far, and by Donna Demarco. The Green Heron was spotted by the Levesque pair.

Turkey Vultures were soaring within much of the district skies and observed by many. Canada Geese were around in large numbers and also noted by many.

Within the lagoons especially were as usual many "puddle" ducks, including Wood, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Ducks, Mallards and Blue winged Teal, the latter noted only by the McKerchers. Amid the "diving ducks", Common Mergansers were spotted solely by David Rooke, and Hooded Mergansers only by the Levesque pair. They also noted a rather early female Bufflehead in Warren Lagoon. Common Goldeneye were spotted by the McKerchers.

Now getting to predators, Osprey were observed by many, often in a nest feeding their young. Broad-winged Hawks were found by the Sturges and by the Sparks, both of whom also saw Bald Eagles, as did the Levesque duo and the McKerchers. The American Kestrel seemed to be the most common hawk and were seen by many. The Merlin was identified by the Levesque pair, Linda Stoner and the Sturges. Northern Harrier were somehow missed by all.

Ruffed Grouse were spotted by Donna, Steve and the Sturges.

Now we get to the balance of the shorebirds, starting with Killdeer. They were noted in large numbers by any who visited Callander Lagoon. While there, the McKerchers identified Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe and Spotted Sandpipers, as did the Levesque pair.

Ring-billed Gulls were spotted by the McKerchers, David Rooke and the Levesque pair, while Herring Gulls were identified by the Sturges, Steve and the Sparks. Caspian Terns were located solely by the Levesque duo. No other terns were noticed.

Rock Doves were, as usual, ubiquitous, while Mourning Doves were spotted by Linda, Peter and Pam Handley, the Sturges, the Levesque pair, the Sparks and Steve. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were upon most lists.

Belted Kingfishers were spotted by Steve, the Sturges and the McKerchers.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers were upon many lists. However, Pileated Woodpeckers were noted only by Steve and the Sturges.

As to flycatchers, the Sturges were the only ones to find the Eastern Wood Pewee. They also saw Alder Flycatchers, Eastern Phoebes, and Eastern Kingbirds, as did the Levesque pair, who also saw the Great Crested Flycatcher, while the Sparks, Steve, and the McKerchers saw only the Eastern Phoebe, and David, the Eastern Kingbird.

The common Red-eyed Vireo should have been heard or seen by almost everyone as it sang so methodically all day long, but the Philadelphia Vireo was noted only by the Sturges.

Blue Jays were seemingly quite quiet, probably tending to young, since they were observed only by the Sparks, the Handleys, the Sturges and Renee. American Crows were commonplace, while the Common Raven only somewhat less so.

Tree Swallows were sighted by Steve and the Levesque pair, who along with the Sturges also saw Barn Swallows.

Black-capped Chickadees were quite common. Red-breasted Nuthatches were discovered by Steve, the Levesque pair and David who also found the White-breasted Nuthatch. Once again, no Brown Creepers were spotted.

The House Wren was on Sturges' list and the Winter Wren upon David's.

As to thrushes, Eastern Bluebirds, Hermit and Wood Thrushes were all enjoyed by the Sturges, along with the Veery, also noted by the Levesque pair, the Handleys, and David. American Robins, were, of course, observed by most participants.

Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers were noticed by the Levesque pair and by the Sturges.

European Starlings seemed to be almost everywhere.

Cedar Waxwings were appreciated by the Levesque pair, the Sturges and David.

Now we get to the warblers. Twelve species were enjoyed by the groups. But, David certainly had the greatest success – with Black and White, American Redstart, Cape May, Blackburnian, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Canada and Northern Waterthrush, mostly noted along the roadway at the south side of Lake Nipissing near Camp Tillicum. The Levesque pair observed six species, which included the additional Nashville, Common Yellow-throat and Chestnut Sided. The Sturges saw Nashville, Chestnut-sided and Common Yellow-throat. Steve had Yellow-rumped on his list, while the McKerchers had Common Yellowthroat. Corinne Urrutia, the Levesque duo and the Sparks saw the American Redstart.

Besides the Grasshopper, earlier noted, five more sparrow species were observed - Chipping,

Savannah, Song, Swamp and White-throated all by the Levesque pair. Corinne had the Chipping, as did John Levesque who also had Song Sparrow, and a White-throated, as did the Handleys. David had three of the species, the McKerchers had two and the Sturges had four.

Renee discovered a beautiful male Indigo Bunting at the end of Marsh Drive, north of town.

Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks were observed only by the Levesque duo and the Sturges.

Red-winged Blackbirds were ubiquitous, as pretty well were Common Grackles.

The Brown-headed Cowbird and the House Sparrow were found solely by the Sturges.

Purple Finches were spotted by the Levesque pair, the Handleys, the Sturges, Donna and Steve.

Late nesting American Goldfinches were noted by many.

And so that concludes the July bird listing for the North Bay area for 2020. It was well done by all participants during a lovely summer weekend, wherein many of the birds were no doubt hiding away, looking after young, rather than making themselves extra expressive for human observers.

Prepare for the August Bird Bash, which will be **over the weekend of August 29-30**. By then many more birds will be heading south.