

# Bird Bash Report

## December 2022

*By Dick Tafel, Compiler*

The weather was not especially pleasant, but some 21 participants still managed to unearth 42 species of birds this first weekend of December, a number rather below the average of about 48 during the past 19 years of our Bird Bash existence. It is similar to the number of 40 species we saw in 2018; above the 36 we saw in 2019; and less than the 50 we managed to find last year.

And so, let's get at it. What birds did we come upon that had not been noticed previously within the Bird Bash year?

Following the usual order of the *Seasonal Checklist of Birds of North Bay and Area*, we must begin first with the Glaucous Gull. This bird on its way south from the Arctic often stops here for a while late in the year. One was spotted by Lori Anderson along with Ken Gowing and by Grant and Shirley McKercher near the Government Dock, and three were spotted by Renee Levesque and yours truly amidst hundreds of other gulls at the North Bay landfill site. Somehow the Great Black-backed Gull had not been previously seen during this Bird Bash year; however, this time the latter two groups came upon that impressive bird.

Now to other birds in the same general order. There were still some Common Loons about, one in Trout Lake discovered by the Levesque pair.

Those hordes of Canada Geese that we had previously been finding were now limited to just a few and found by Steve Pitt.

The only puddle ducks noted (with all sewage lagoons being frozen) were Mallards spotted by young Jeremie Corbeil, Diane and Al Deagle, Gary and Connie Sturge, Elsa Tafel, the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, and the Levesque duo, who also spotted a couple of American Black Ducks behind the Green Store on Trout Lake Road.

Many diving ducks were still about. Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, and Common Mergansers were noticed by the McKerchers. Hooded and Common Mergansers and the Common Goldeneye were spotted by the Levesque duo, all in Trout Lake. Both mergansers were found by Steve, while the Anderson pair and

Elsa found just the Common Merganser.

Predators were mostly absent, with just the Bald Eagle being upon any lists, namely that of Lloyd and Janet Sparks, the Levesque pair, the Anderson duo, the McKerchers, and the Sturges. (There were at least 7 at the North Bay landfill site and 2 at Cache Bay.)

Ruffed Grouse were discovered by Denise Desmarais, Donna Demarco, Mary Young, the Sparks, Steve, the Anderson duo, and the Levesque pair. Nowadays, Wild Turkeys are being found by almost as many as are finding grouse, with the latter pair, the Anderson duo, and the Sturges all coming up with such sightings.

No shorebirds at all were spotted. Although Ring-billed Gulls were much diminished in number, there were some still around and identified by the Levesque duo, the Sturges, the McKerchers, and the Deagles. Vast numbers of Herring Gulls had taken over the gull industry, with several hundred at the landfill sites, seen there and elsewhere, by the Levesque duo. Herring Gulls were also seen by the Deagles, the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, the Sparks, and the Sturges. Two Iceland Gulls were seen by the Levesque pair at North Bay's landfill site and one was seen by the Anderson pair near the Government Dock.

Rock Pigeons were almost everywhere and seen by most. Mourning Doves were discovered only by Mary and the Sturges.

A Barred Owl was observed by young Jeremie near a neighbour's home in East Ferris.

Red-bellied Woodpeckers seem to be coming more common in our parts, being spotted this Bird Bash by the Levesque duo on Veuve River Road and by Mary at her East Ferris home feeder. Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers seemed to have found lots of food at many feeders. The Pileated was found only by Steve, the Anderson duo, and Denise.

Denise was the only one to find the elusive Canada Jay. Blue Jays were fairly widely dispersed, being noted by Faye Oei, John Levesque, the Anderson pair, the Sturges, Jeremie, Mary, the Sparks, and the Levesque duo.

American Crows were noted by the Sparks, the Deagles, the Sturges, the Anderson duo, Steve, the McKerchers, and the Levesque duo. The latter five groups also saw many Common Ravens, as did John, Jeremie, Faye, and Mary.

Black-capped Chickadees remained one of the most popular and common birds within our northern district, likely continuing throughout the winter.

Red-breasted Nuthatches were watched by Donna, Therez, John, Faye, the Anderson duo, Steve, the Levesque duo, and Elsa. The latter six groups also saw White-breasted Nuthatches, as did the McKerchers, the Deagles, the Sparks, and Mary.

A Brown Thrasher was still about Mary's residence.

European Starlings were not as prominent as they often are, being noted only by the Levesque duo, the Sturges, the Deagles, and the McKerchers.

American Tree Sparrows were identified by Steve, Mary, John, and Renee. Dark-eyed Juncos were spotted by the Deagles and the Anderson duo.

Snow Buntings were found only by the McKerchers.

Beautiful Northern Cardinals were much more common than in recent years, exciting the Deagles, Steve, and Therez.

Common Grackles were still here in a few numbers being discovered by the Anderson duo, Mary, and Donna.

Pine and Evening Grosbeaks were spotted by John, the Levesque duo, Mary, and Steve. Evenings were also noted by the Sturges, Donna, and the Sparks, while Denise also saw Pines.

Pine Siskins were spotted, surprisingly, only at the Tafel feeder. American Goldfinches were also there, and noted further by John, Renee, the McKerchers, Therez, and the Anderson duo.

Finally, House Sparrows were upon the list only of the Anderson duo.

And so that concludes a difficult, but fruitful bird-spotting effort. Congrats to all!

And so be prepared for a New Year's effort over **the weekend of January 14-15** when all birds spotted will be new for the Bird Bash year. It is not likely the weather will be better, but one never knows about the birds!