

Bird Bash Report

March 2024

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Well despite the very odd weather which surely discomfited some of the birds, if not us, some 28 participants managed to discover 51 species this past Bird Bash weekend! That is less than last year when 54 were found, but two more than in 2022 - and altogether just about average for our efforts over the past 21 consecutive years of March Bird Bash searching!

But let's get to it! Just what did we all see? Starting with new birds for the year, following the *Seasonal Checklist of Birds of the North Bay Area* (within a 50 mile or 80.5 km radius), the first must be the Turkey Vulture watched by Renee Levesque along with yours truly, and also watched by Lori Anderson with Ken Gowing.

Canada Geese had arrived in voluminous numbers, noticed by almost all watchers.

Trumpeter Swans were observed only by Faye Johnson and Donna Demarco, the latter at Smith Lake.

Then there was the first migrating puddle duck – the Wood Duck, found only by the Anderson pair in Restoule.

Hooded Mergansers were discovered by Linda Stoner along with Pat Stack, by Sue Gratton, by the Anderson pair, and by the Levesque duo.

And so, now we get into the previously unobserved hawks: the Northern Harrier was watched by the Stoner pair who also saw the Rough-legged Hawk, both of which were seen by the Levesque duo, while Faye Johnson and the Anderson duo saw only the Rough-legged; the American Kestrel was located by the Stoner duo; and a Peregrine Falcon was found by the Anderson pair on top of St. Vincent de Paul Church on Wyld Street and by Chris Sukha at the Verner Co-op Feed Store.

Five Sandhill Cranes were spotted by the Levesque pair amidst a very large flock of hundreds of geese in a field off Levac Road, West Nipissing.

Gulls had arrived though not yet widely dispersed. Herring Gulls were seen in huge numbers at the North Bay landfill site by the Levesque pair, and seen in smaller numbers by Barbara Lee, Faye Oei, Grant and Shirley McKercher, Mary Young, Sue, and the Anderson pair, while the much fewer Ring-billed Gulls were identified only by Therez Violette, the Levesque duo, Faye Johnson, the McKerchers, and the Stoner pair.

One of the few song birds to have arrived so far was a Golden-crowned Kinglet noticed by Chris. No warblers or flycatchers had braved this far yet!

But the Red-winged Blackbirds and the Common Grackles had come northward and were both seen by Keith Thornborrow, Janet and Lloyd Sparks, Brent Turcotte along with Laura Turcotte and Luanne Chowns (and kids), Steve Pitt, the Levesque duo, the Stoner pair, Donna, Mary, Sue, Faye Oei, Faye Johnson, Chris, Therez, and the Anderson pair. The McKerchers saw only the Common Grackles, as did John Levesque, while Elsa Tafel saw only the Red-wings.

So that concludes the sightings of the “new” birds for the year. We now continue with the balance of the birds noticed. Following the same order, we start with the American Black Ducks, spotted by Mary, the McKerchers, Faye Oei, Sue, and Keith. Mallards were seen by Keith, the Levesque duo, Faye Johnson, the Turcotte group, the Stoner pair, Sue, Faye Oei, the Anderson duo, Chris, the McKerchers, and Mary.

A few diving ducks were around - Common Goldeneye and Common Mergansers, both spotted by Mary, the McKerchers, Chris, the Anderson duo, and the Levesque pair. Therez spotted the Common Merganser, as did the Stoner combo. Sue and Faye Oei saw the Common Goldeneye.

Red-tailed Hawks were watched by the Levesque pair and the Anderson duo, while both groups also saw Bald Eagles, as did Angela Mills, Faye Johnson, the Sparks, Mary, the Stoner pair, Chris, and Keith.

Ruffed Grouse were spotted by Chris, Mary, the Sparks, the Turcotte bunch, and the Anderson duo. Wild Turkeys were located by Barbara Lee, Faye Oei, Sue, Keith, and the Levesque duo – some 8 of them on Hazel Glen Road, including a magnificent fully displaying male.

The Rock Pigeon was once again seen by most participants, and the Mourning Dove seen more than usual by Chris, Mary, Donna, John, the Sparks, the McKerchers, Therez, Keith, Faye Oei, and Sue.

The Great Horned Owl, for the third consecutive month, was noted by the Sparks. They also noted the Barred Owl, an owl also noted by Katherine Byers with Ed Rowley and the Turcotte group.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were noted by the Sparks, Barbara, Steve, the McKerchers, the Anderson duo, Keith, Faye Oei, the Levesque duo, Mary, Faye Johnson, and Chris, who also saw the Pileated, as did Angela, Keith, the Anderson duo, Sue, the

Levesque pair, Mary, and the Turcotte group. The latter group also saw the Hairy, as did Donna, and the Byers pair. John saw both Pileated and Downy Woodpeckers. Elsa viewed only the Downy.

The Northern Shrike was found only by the Levesque pair, Chris, and the Stoner duo.

The Canada Jay was located only by Keith, while Blue Jays were upon almost all lists!

The American Crow, now in very large numbers, and the Common Raven were seen by Therez, the Sparks, Mary, Donna, the Levesque duo, Sue, Chris, Faye Johnson, Faye Oei, the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, Steve, and Keith, while the Turcotte group, the Stoner pair, and Barbara viewed only the Crow, and the Byers only the Raven.

Black-capped Chickadees were wonderfully spotted by almost all participants!

The Red-breasted and the White-breasted Nuthatches were located by the Turcotte group, Keith, the Anderson pair, Faye Oei, Faye Johnson, Chris, Sue, and the Sparks. The Red-breasted only was found by the Levesque pair, Barbara, Mary, and John, while only the White-breasted was noted by the McKerchers and Donna.

The iconic American Robin was finally enjoyed, though so far only in fairly small numbers, by the McKerchers, Mary, the Levesque pair (at least ten or more upon Quae Quae Road), Angela, Therez, the Sparks, Sue, Chris, Faye Oei, Faye Johnson, the Anderson duo, the Byers pair, and the Stoner pair.

European Starlings, abounding in large groups, were seen by most participants.

The American Tree Sparrow seems to be the toughest sparrow, arriving in fairly large numbers already, and spotted by the Turcotte group, Keith, the Anderson pair, Chris, Therez, the Levesque duo, and John.

Dark-eyed Juncos were located only by Donna, John, Renee, Therez, Steve, and Keith.

Some Snow Buntings were still about, watched by Renee and the Anderson duo.

The exotic Northern Cardinal was spotted solely by Angela!

Purple Finches were upon the lists of Faye Oei, the Anderson pair, Sue, the Sparks, Therez, Renee, Keith, Mary, the McKerchers, Donna, and Barbara.

The Red Crossbill was spotted solely by the Anderson pair and Chris.

Common Redpolls were still around and were noted by the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, John, Steve, the Turcotte group, the Levesque pair, Therez, Faye Johnson, and Chris.

Pine Siskins have been especially common this winter and were spotted by Barbara, Chris, Faye Johnson, Faye Oei, Sue, the Sparks, the Levesque pair, Steve, Mary, John, the McKerchers, Donna, and the Anderson duo.

As to the American Goldfinch, around in small numbers, they were noted by the McKerchers, Mary, Steve, the Turcotte group, the Levesque duo, Therez, and Sue.

Now to the still-present Evening Grosbeaks, they were located by Faye Oei, Steve, Donna, and the Anderson pair.

Finally, always the last species within our home area, were House Sparrows, witnessed only by the Anderson duo and Chris.

So that ends a pretty wide-reaching March Bird Bash. Congrats to all participants!

Look forward to a more exciting “Bash” period at the end of April, the weekend of **April 27-28!!**