

Bird Bash Report

August 29 and 30, 2020

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

A very interesting weekend has just elapsed with great results from 26 participants! 120 species were discovered! Upon only 2 other Augusts of the 17 consecutive periods that we have been doing these Bird Bashes have we seen more birds during this period.

And so, starting in rough taxonomic order (mostly following the North Bay area bird checklist), we will mark down the newly noted species first. That commences with the Semipalmated Plover spotted by John Levesque (under wife Renee's guidance) along the Lake Nipissing waterfront by Tenth Avenue.

Then there was the cute pair of Red-necked Phalaropes watched by yours truly within Powassan Lagoon.

A very out of place Iceland Gull turned up at Verner Lagoon to surprise Renee along with yours truly.

A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was identified by Gary and Connie Sturge and by Renee.

The lovely Northern Parula Warbler was spotted by Sheldon McGregor and by Brent Turcotte, and also by John, who saw it, along with the tail-wagging Palm and the pretty Wilson's (both under Renee's tutelage), the latter three discoveries along the waterfront trail at the end of Tenth Avenue. Brent also spotted a Bay-breasted Warbler within Laurier Woods. Most of these warblers were noted during what was a heavy fall-out on Saturday. Lloyd and Janet Sparks, Mary Young and Fred Pinto also spotted the Wilson's.

Gary and Luanne Chowns identified a Field Sparrow.

And so that completes the new birds for the year.

Now for birds noted during previous months, again following the rough taxonomic order of the old checklist of the North Bay area, we commence with the iconic Common Loon. It was noted by seven groups.

The Pied-billed Grebe in Laurier Woods was upon the list of yours truly, Kaye and Fred.

Double-crested Cormorants were noted by the Levesque pair, the Chowns, Buddy Myles, and Sheldon.

No one reported an American Bittern, but the Great Blue Heron was seen by the Sturges and the Chowns. The Green Heron was spotted by the Levesque duo and by Kaye.

Turkey Vultures were observed soaring by many participants; likewise, Canada Geese, often in

very large numbers upon the ground.

Two Trumpeter Swans were located by Buddy just north of Verner.

Many duck species were still within nearby lagoons, and elsewhere, mostly puddle ducks - Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black, Mallards (very much in the majority), Blue-winged Teal and Northern Shovelers. Green-winged Teal were noted solely by Grant and Shirley McKercher, who also came upon the only Lesser Scaup (a diver).

Other divers, such as Common Goldeneye, were identified only by yours truly and the McKerchers, who also came upon Hooded Mergansers, while Kaye and John saw Common Mergansers.

Amidst predators, the Osprey was still near its nests, and noted by, Kaye, the Chowns, the McKerchers, and the Levesque duo. They also spotted the Northern Harrier, as did the Sturges, Lori Anderson, and Ernie Frayle. The Sharp-shinned Hawk was noted by Sheldon; Cooper's Hawk was identified by Kaye. Northern Goshawk was found by Lloyd and Janet Sparks. The latter pair also noted the Broad-winged Hawk, as did the Sturges, the Levesque duo, Mary, and Sheldon. Bald Eagles were spotted by the Chowns, McKerchers, and Kaye. American Kestrel seemed to be all over the open spaces near farmers' fields; but Merlin were noted solely by the Sturges and by Rose McClelland.

Ruffed Grouse were observed by Donna Demarco, the Sturges, Kaye, and the Chowns. The latter pair also spotted Wild Turkeys, as did Ernie.

At least 300 Sandhill Cranes were seen foraging off Levac Road. Very exciting for the Levesque duo. Cranes were also seen elsewhere by Sheldon, Ernie, Buddy, Rose, and the Chowns.

Now as to additional shorebirds, they were in lesser numbers than what may have been hoped - but a Killdeer was spotted by Buddy; Spotted Sandpiper and Wilson's Snipe, by the McKerchers; Semipalmated Sandpiper, by Lori; and Lesser Yellowlegs and Least Sandpipers, by the Levesque duo.

Getting to additional gulls, a group of Bonapartes were spotted by the Levesque pair. Ring-billed were the predominant species, but a few Herring Gulls were identified by the Levesque duo, the McKerchers, Sheldon, John, Brent, Buddy, and the Chowns.

Caspian Terns in Cache Bay were watched by the Levesque pair.

Rock Pigeons remain ubiquitous, but Mourning Doves were noted only by Linda Stoner, Mary Ann Kenrick, the Levesque pair, Kaye, Ernie, the Sturges, and Buddy.

No owls were heard or seen.

Common Nighthawks made another appearance (first since May), enjoyed in number by the Sturges; 14 of them enjoyed by Paul Smylie near the Cranberry Trail parking lot; and, though

only one, enjoyed by the Levesque duo on Levac Road.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were still about at most feeders and seen by many.

The Belted Kingfisher was spotted by yours truly, the McKerchers, Sheldon, the Chowns, and Kaye.

Now as to woodpeckers; Downy, Hairy, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Northern Flicker were fairly widespread. And although the Black-backed is not, it was spotted by Sheldon in the west end. The Pileated was also not wide-spread and noted only by the Sturges and Kaye.

Flycatchers were still about in goodly numbers: The Eastern Wood Pewee and Least were noted by yours truly in Laurier Woods, the latter also seen by Renee at her home area. The Sturges saw Eastern Kingbirds, as did the Levesque pair and the Chowns. The Sturges also saw Alders. Eastern Phoebes were on the Levesque duo's list, as well as that of the Chowns, Rose, and the Sparks. Paul identified a Great Crested.

Vireos: The Warbling Vireo was noted by Brent and by the Levesque duo; the Philadelphia by Kaye; the amazingly vocal Red-eyed, by Brent, Mary, John, Fred, the Levesque duo, the McKerchers, the Chowns, Elsa Tafel, and Sheldon, who also had the Blue-headed upon his list.

Once again no one viewed the Canada Jay. It has not been seen on a Bird Bash since March. But Blue Jays have certainly been almost everywhere, along with huge numbers of American Crows. The Common Raven was also upon the lists of many.

Swallows had begun to disappear south, but there were many Barns still about, seen by the Sturges and the Levesque duo. Yours truly also had good views of many Bank Swallows at Powassan Lagoon.

Black-capped Chickadees remain as one of the most popular species within the area. The Red-breasted Nuthatch was almost as common, but once again the White-breasted was seen only by a few, including Ernie, the Sparks, and Linda. Once again, Brown Creepers were seen only by Sheldon in the west end.

No wrens were noted!

The Golden-crowned Kinglet was spotted only by Sheldon. He also saw Ruby-crowns, as did John and yours truly.

Thrushes: Eastern Bluebirds were seen in profusion by the Sturges and also by Lori. Veerys were observed by Mary, John, Brent, yours truly, and Fred. Hermit Thrushes were noted by Brent and the Sparks. Swainson's was noted by yours truly. Wonderful American Robins were still very wide-spread!

The Gray Catbird was noted by Mary, the Levesque duo, Fred, Kaye, the Sturges, Brent, and the Chowns. Brown Thrashers were seen by Kaye and Fred.

European Starlings were still all over the place.

Cedar Waxwings were quite plentiful, often pretending to be swallows, swooping over lagoons. They were seen by the Levesque duo, Mary, the Sturges, Kaye, Fred, and the Chowns.

Now we get to the beautiful warblers: Eighteen species were seen altogether, thanks to Saturday's fall-out. I will list those not previously mentioned at the beginning of this report as first Bird Bash discoveries, after which I will list the numbers noted by different participants, followed by special mentions for sole discoveries: Tennessee, Nashville, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Pine, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Canada.

John saw 12 species; yours truly and Fred, 8; Sheldon and Mary, 7; Brent and Renee, 6; the McKerchers, 5; the Sturges, 3; Kaye, 2; the Sparks and Cindy Lafleur, 1.

Mary was the only one to discover a Canada Warbler; Fred, the Ovenbird; Brent, the Black-throated Blue; John, the Pine.

Saturday's fall-out helped make this month the best monthly count of warblers for the year. Such a treasure!

Now we get to the Sparrows: Kaye identified a Tree Sparrow, very rare for this area at this time of year. Chipping Sparrows were widespread. Savannah and Song Sparrows were also pretty common throughout the vicinity. Renee had a Lincoln's Sparrow on her list. White-throats were found by Peter and Pam Handley, Paul, Mary Ann, John, Mary, and the Levesque duo. Swamp Sparrows were noted by Fred, Sheldon, and Kaye.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were surprisingly widespread, noted by the Handleys, Mary, Kaye, Renee, John, Brent, the Sturges, and yours truly.

Some Bobolinks were still around, noted by yours truly in the Powassan Lagoon area.

Red-winged Blackbirds were still in wide numbers, as were Common Grackles.

Purple Finches were fairly numerous, seen by the Sturges, yours truly, Brent, Kaye, the Sparks, Buddy, the Handleys, Mary Ann, Donna, Renee and Ernie.

American Goldfinches were very numerous, seen by most observers.

Pine Siskins were spotted solely by Mary Ann.

The Evening Grosbeak was hereabouts, spotted solely by Kaye.

And House Sparrows were once again noted by the Sturges and Lori.

A pretty amazing list of birds as I am sure you would all agree, thanks to the number of participants and Saturday's warbler fall-out. Congratulations to all who participated.

September's Bird Bash is over the weekend of **September 19 and 20**. Mark it on your calendars!