

# Bird Bash Report

## August 2023

*By Dick Tafel, Compiler*

Wow! What a weekend - not just beautiful weather, but 25 enthusiasts discovered 130 birds, a record by three over 20 years of August Bird Bash counting! No doubt, the birds were taking time to get ready for their big southern migrations!

There were quite a few new birds for the Bird Bash year and, as usual, we start with such, following the order of our *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area*. That starts with yet another discovery of a Great Egret just like last August, only this time it was discovered by Dan Burton in a wetland on Boundary Spur Road by Hwy. 124. Amazing the duplication of August discoveries of this rare bird in our area!

And then we have the Northern Pintail, seen at Callander Lagoon by Renee Levesque with yours truly, both accompanied at times during the Bird Bash by Ty Brunner, your compiler's Australian grandson, and seen also at Verner Lagoon by Chris Sukha.

Then there were the migrating shorebirds - Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper and Stilt Sandpipers found by the Levesque threesome, with the Stilt Sandpiper also noted by Chris, all seen within the various lagoons. Baird's was also identified by June and Kevin Telford. Three very interesting Red-necked Phalaropes were enjoyed at Warren Lagoon by the Levesque duo and by Chris.

The newly-arriving American Pipit was spotted by Diane and Alvin Deagle, as well as by Linda Stoner with Rose McClelland.

The Cape May Warbler was finally recognized during the Bird Bash year by Faye Oei, Sue Gratton, Garry Waldrum, Sheldon McGregor, Chris, and the Deagles, while the elusive Palm Warbler was back and discovered by Steve Pitt and by Chris.

Now we get to the rest of the birds in the same order, and that starts with the Common Loon. It was recognized by Lloyd and Janet Sparks, Bill and Carol Fleming, Denise Desmarais, Steve, Sheldon, and Chris.

Pied-billed Grebes were spotted by Chris.

Double-crested Cormorants were noted by Chris, Sheldon, Steve, the Deagles, Denise, and the Levesque duo.

The American Bittern, seemingly elusive this year, was spotted only by the Flemings.

The Flemings also watched the Great Blue Heron, as did the Sparks, Steve, the Deagles, Garry, Dan, and the Levesque duo. The Green Heron was found by Garry, the Deagles, and the Telfords.

Turkey Vultures were seen - mostly circling - by young Jeremie Corbeil, the Flemings, the Telfords, the Sparks, Denise, Steve, Faye, Sue, Garry, the Stoner pair, Chris, Dan, the Deagles, and the Levesque trio.

Canada Geese were about in very large numbers and seen by most.

Wood Ducks were on the lists of Chris, the Levesque trio, the Deagles, Sheldon, Garry, Dan, the Telfords, and the Flemings. Except for myriads of Mallards seen by most, the rest of the “puddle” ducks were often hard to identify in their eclipse plumage. Gadwalls were noted by Chris and by the Levesque duo who also saw Blacks, as did Garry and Chris. Both Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal were recognized by Chris and the Levesque trio, the latter also identifying the Northern Shoveler and Chris identifying the American Wigeon.

Among diving ducks, the Deagles spotted Common Mergansers (about 50 near Sunset Park), as did Sue, Faye, and the Telfords, who also saw Common Goldeneye, as did the Levesque trio. The latter group also watched the Hooded Merganser, as did Chris.

We now get into the predators, starting with the Osprey. It was enjoyed by Chris, the Levesque pair, Sue, Faye, the Stoner duo, and the Flemings. The Northern Harrier was noted by the Stoner duo, the Telfords, Garry, and the Levesque pair. Renee saw a Broad-winged Hawk, as did Chris, Garry, Faye, Dan, the Deagles, and the Telfords. The latter pair saw the Bald Eagle, as did Garry, the Levesque group, Chris, and the Sparks. The latter pair also watched the Sharp-shinned Hawk, while the Flemings, Dan, and Jeremie saw the Cooper's Hawk. American Kestrels were spotted by the Sparks, Dan, Garry, Steve, the Levesque duo, and Chris, with the latter two groups also identifying the Merlin.

Ruffed Grouse were found only by Garry. Wild Turkeys were on the lists of the Sparks, the Flemings, and Faye, who also saw Sandhill Cranes, as did Sue, Dan, the Stoner pair, the Deagles (some 35 of them), Chris, Garry, Steve, the Flemings, and the Levesque duo.

Now to the shorebirds found mostly within the four lagoons: we start with the Killdeer and Semipalmated Plover both found by the Levesque trio, the latter bird being noted also by the Telfords and Chris; Semipalmated Sandpipers and similar Least Sandpipers were identified by the Levesque trio, Chris, and the Deagles; the Solitary Sandpiper, the Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs were all seen by the Deagles and the Levesque trio, with the Lesser Yellowlegs and Solitary Sandpiper seen by Chris; the Short-billed Dowitcher was seen by the Levesque duo; the Spotted Sandpiper was spotted by Garry and the Levesque duo; and the Lesser Yellowlegs was seen by Denise.

As to gulls, just three were identified - Ring-billed by almost everyone, Herrings by the Levesque duo, Denise, Garry, Sheldon, Faye, Sue, and Chris who also noted Bonaparte's.

Caspian Terns were seen by Chris and the Levesque duo in Cache Bay, with the Levesque duo also seeing Common Terns there. Sheldon also saw both tern species.

Rock Doves were, as ever, just about everywhere. Mourning Doves were spotted by Sue, Faye, Jeremie, the Flemings, the Telfords, Garry, the Levesque trio, and Chris.

The only owl was a Barred Owl, heard by Sheldon.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were very common and noted at feeders and at succulent flowers.

The Belted Kingfisher was observed by the Stoner duo, Sue, Steve, Garry, Sheldon, the Levesque trio, the Deagles, and Chris.

Now as to woodpeckers: the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was noted by John Levesque, the Deagles, Sheldon, Garry, Steve, the Sparks, and Jeremie; Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were noted by John, Renee, the Flemings, Steve, Chris, and the Deagles; the Hairy Woodpecker and the Northern Flicker were seen by Garry; the Northern Flicker solely was seen by Sue, Denise, and the Stoner duo, with the Northern Flicker also seen by the Deagles, the Levesque duo, the Sparks, the Telfords, Jeremie, Faye, Steve, and Chris; and finally the Pileated was seen by the Telfords, Steve, and Chris.

We now get to the Passerines or “song-birds”. The first within that large group are the flycatchers. The Eastern Wood-Pewee was observed by Sheldon and by Garry, and by the Levesque trio who heard it first with the aid of Merlin before seeing it. Then there was the very similar Eastern Phoebe, noted by Garry, Jeremie, Denise, the Levesque duo, and the Stoner pair. Eastern Kingbirds were identified by Steve, the Levesque duo, and Garry. Least Flycatchers were on the lists of Chris, John, the Telfords, the Levesque pair, and the Deagles, with the Alder also being seen by Chris and the Great Crested by the Telfords.

Vireos are another group that can be difficult to tell apart. The Telfords managed three - Warbling, Philadelphia and Red-eyed; Chris, Garry, Denise, and Sue viewed the Red-eyed; John, the Sparks, and the Levesque duo observed the Red-eyed and the Philadelphia; Sheldon spotted the Red-eyed and the Blue-headed.

Blue Jays were common, as were American Crows. Common Ravens were identified by Sheldon, the Levesque trio, the Sparks, John, Chris, Sue, Garry, the Flemings, Faye, Jeremie, the Stoner duo, Steve, and the Telfords.

There were still a few swallows around. The Tree Swallow was noticed by Jeremie, and the Barn Swallows by Lori Anderson, Faye, Garry, Sue, and the Flemings.

As usual, the wonderful Black-capped Chickadees were almost everywhere.

Both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches were spotted by Sheldon, Garry, Steve, and Chris; Red-breasted was on the list of Sue, John, Faye, Denise, the Telfords, and the Deagles, while the White-breasted was upon the lists of Ken Gowing, the Levesque duo and the Flemings. The Brown Creeper was noticed only by Garry.

The House Wren was discovered by Steve and the Deagles. No other wrens were found.

Golden-crowned Kinglets were spotted by Sue, Garry, and Faye.

Now to thrushes: American Robins were fairly prevalent and were noted by Sue, the Levesque pair, Garry, Faye, the Sparks, the Flemings, the Deagles, John, Chris, and the Stoner duo. But other thrushes were unusually rare, with the Veery appearing only on the Deagle, Chris, Denise, and Telford lists; the Swainson's upon John's; and a Hermit upon Sheldon's. The lovely Eastern Bluebird was found only by the Levesque trio and Chris.

Gray Catbirds were discovered by Chris, Faye, the Deagles, Garry, Steve, and Sue. Brown Thrashers were spotted only by the Flemings.

European Starlings were in wide abundance.

Cedar Waxwings, some acting like soaring swallows, were watched by the Levesque duo, Garry, Steve, John, the Deagles, Chris, and the Sparks.

Now as to the wonderful warblers, they were too numerous to ascribe to each observer, and so your compiler just lists them all except for the two that were new to our year's list, indicates how many each observer found, and comments on some unique observations. Many warblers have just recently arrived here on their way south.

Warblers discovered - 20 in all (plus the two within the new birds for the year) - were Tennessee, Nashville, Northern Parula, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Pine, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's, and Canada.

The Telfords had the largest list with 13, including the magnificent Blackburnian and the only Northern Waterthrush discovered; then Chris with 12, including that special beauty, the Northern Parula; Garry with 11, including the obvious southern migrant, a Bay-breasted; the Levesque threesome had 11, including an amazingly close and continuous view of the specially beautiful Black-throated Blue; Sheldon McGregor had 10 with a hard-to-locate and probably now quiet Ovenbird; the Deagles had 6 including that special favourite, the Canada Warbler; John saw 4, including the easily-described Black and White; Sue also watched 4, the Magnolia probably being the most vivid; Faye had 3, the Pine possibly being one of the most common within the area; Denise also had 3, including the aforementioned Blackburnian, one of the most beautiful of warblers; the Sparks had one, the Common Yellow-throat, the male especially striking with its black mask; and Linda with Rose also managed to find one, the not-so-nicely named Yellow-rumped.

The magnificent Scarlet Tanager was located by Garry and the Deagles.

Getting to the normally quite plain sparrows, we start with the Chipping seen by the Stoner pair, Chris, Garry, the Levesque trio, the Deagles, Sue, and the Sparks; the latter six groups also saw Song, as did the Telfords; the latter pair saw the White-throat as did Sue, Denise, John, the Deagles, Faye, Garry, the Levesque duo, and Chris; the latter three groups also watched the Swamp, as did the Stoner duo; and finally the Savannah was seen by the Levesque pair, the Deagles, Denise, and Chris.

The amazing Northern Cardinal came into the Deagle's view, as did the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, seen also by John, the Telfords, and Garry.

Bobolinks, most of them already in migrant plumage, were spotted by Chris, the Deagles (15 of them, one leucistic), and the Levesque duo.

Red-winged Blackbirds were seen by Chris, the Deagles, Sue, the Telfords, Faye, Steve, and the Levesque duo.

The Eastern Meadowlark was spotted only by Chris.

The Common Grackle seemed to have become the most common bird of the area!

The Brown-headed Cowbird was still around and was discovered by the Telfords.

Purple Finches were watched by Chris, the Deagles, Sue, Faye, Garry, and the Levesque duo.

Red Crossbills seem to be returning and were spotted by Chris and Garry.

American Goldfinches were widespread and were noted by John, Garry, Denise, Steve, Chris, the Deagles, the Levesque duo, and the Telfords.

Finally, the often annoying and introduced House Sparrows were found by Chris and Lori.

And so that concludes one of the most successful Bird Bashes for the month of August – ever! Congratulations to all participants! And be prepared for the September Bird Bash for another “busy” bird presence **over the weekend of September 9-10**. It could produce another record.