

Bird Wing Report

May 2024



Bird Wing outing

By Renee Levesque

Introduction: Twenty members participated in May's Bird Wing outing on Thursday evening, May 30. We changed the date from our regular Tuesday date of May 28 primarily because it was Dick Tafel's anniversary on the 28th and we did not think Elsa would be too pleased to have her husband doing anything but celebrating their anniversary, their 69th! We also changed it from a Tuesday morning walk in Laurier Woods to an evening outing at Powassan Lagoon, Hills Siding Road and St. Vincent de Paul Church to watch the Chimney Swifts roost for the evening. Our switching locations and days turned out well because we saw and heard birds we might not have normally come across. It turned out to be a great outing!

Bird Wing welcomed two new participants, Mary Young and Katherine McEwen. (Karen Major, a Nipissing Naturalists Club member, also joined us.) You may be surprised that Mary was not previously a member because it always seemed she was. We know her as an excellent birder who participates in Bird Bashes, walks in Laurier Woods and does Christmas Bird Counts. Katherine is a recent graduate from the Ecosystem Management Technician Program, Fleming College. Until November, she is working as a technician for the MNRF doing forest monitoring. Her love of birds developed when she worked last summer monitoring Piping Plovers in PEI.

Powassan Lagoon: Some participants met up for carpooling at Northgate Mall, others met us at Powassan Lagoon that looked much like a car park when we arrived! There were two very special shorebirds at the lagoon, a Black-bellied Plover and a Red-necked Phalarope, perhaps lifers for some present.

The Black-bellied Plover, with its jet black face and neck surrounded by snow-white feathers, its jet black belly and checkerboard black and white upperparts, is quite an impressive plover, outstanding in the lagoon all by itself on its way to the high Arctic where it breeds. (See photo at right.) Not only is it a rather dazzling and fashionable plover, it is also the largest of the North American plovers. I haven't often seen one in the spring here. This may be the second time, the first being on Veuve River Road when a field there flooded in May 2019 and some of us saw many from May 22 to June 4. (It was a spectacular sight when, on May 27, about 200 of them took to flight!) We tend to see the Black-bellied more in the fall when they are not in their breeding plumage.



Hans Hillewaert, Wikipedia

And the second of our wow species was a beautiful Red-necked Phalarope. The Red-necked is a small sea phalarope that breeds in the high Arctic and winters in the open ocean. The one we saw at the lagoon was an adult female with a deep rufous neck, white throat, dark cap, and a needlelike black bill. (It can be mistaken for a Wilson's, but the female Wilson's has a longer bill, lacks the dark cap but has a dark stripe through its eye and has a chestnut neck stripe running down the side of its neck. It is a larger than the Red-necked – about 9.25 inches compared to the Red-neck's 7.25 inches. It breeds in the interior of central-western North America east to the Great Lakes and migrates to South America for the winter.) The sunlight was such at the lagoon that we first mistook the Red-necked for a Wilson's because we could not completely discern its features well in the strong sunlight. However, as a result of Diane Deagle's photos, we were able to later confirm it as a female Red-necked.

We more often see the Red-necked in the fall in its winter plumage, but it has been seen on occasion in May, mainly at Warren Lagoon. (I was fortunate to see Red-necked Phalaropes on their breeding grounds in the Arctic, on Grimsey Island off the coast of Iceland.)

Phalaropes frantically spin in the water like spinning tops when feeding. This results in their disturbing the water so they can pluck their prey - insects, insect larvae and small crustaceans – while swimming. The females of the phalaropes, unlike most species, are more colourful and slightly larger.



Renee Levesque

Other shorebirds seen included the two peeps, the Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers (photo above), as well as Spotted Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plovers and Killdeer. Ducks seen were Mallards, one with nine ducklings, a lone male Northern Shoveler and a lone male Gadwall in the upper cells, and Wood Ducks in the lower cell. (The ducks and phalarope shared the northern cell with a Midland painted turtle.)

Passerines included Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Kingbird, a couple of Barn Swallows and a Black-billed Cuckoo (photo at right). Much to his dismay, Dick did not hear the cuckoo, a bird that I find has been singing in many areas this spring and not once has Dick heard it!

Some of us were fortunate to get a glimpse of a Green Heron as it flew off with its yellow legs sticking out.

Hills Siding Road: There were also two highlights on Hills Siding Road in addition to the number of mosquitoes – the Mourning Warbler, a normally elusive and shy warbler despite its fairly loud *chirry, chirry, chirry, chirry* song, and the American Bittern with its ability to stay perfectly still and with its amazing camouflage that blends into marsh plants.

Some saw a pair of Mourning Warblers, the male pictured below. It is a warbler we see later in the migration season than most other warblers because it postpones its flight northward until there is good tree foliage. It has a slate grey hood covering its head and neck, hence its name. The male also has an irregular black bib, lacking in the female. The similar-looking MacGillivray's Warbler is a western warbler.



Stephen O'Donnell



Except in the very early spring and during courtship, we don't often see the American Bittern in its "watery green world", but we do hear it as we did during this outing. It tends to sing between dusk and midnight, although because its song blends in well with the chorus of bullfrogs, we have to be careful it is the bittern we are hearing and not the bullfrogs. My experience with the bittern, besides seeing it sit motionless with its bill pointed sharply upwards, is the startle I experience when it unexpectedly and suddenly rises from its marshy world, spreads its large wings and flies away.

Diane Deagle

A Wilson's Snipe, with its very long straight bill, striped head and brown upperparts with white stripes, decided to honour us at the first marsh with an excellent view of it. There may have been a Sora present in that marsh too. Brent Turcotte and I heard what appeared to be part of its song, but it didn't sing again while we were there to positively identify it. It has been heard and seen on Hills Siding Road on other occasions, so you certainly could hear it there, if not see it.

We went only to the first marsh on Hills Siding Road, although others may have carried on after some of us left to get to St. Vincent de Paul Church in time to see the Chimney Swifts roost for the night. But the number of birds on that short stretch of road was amazing. Besides the Mourning Warbler, we heard the Chestnut-sided, Common Yellowthroat, Nashville, Ovenbird American Redstart; we saw the lovely male Rose-breasted Grosbeak (photo below); we heard the Winter Wren and the Ruby-crowned Kinglet.



Renee Levesque

The kinglet is such a small bird with a mighty song and in the male, a wonderful bright red “flash patch” on its crown, hidden most of the time and seen mainly in the spring during courtship. When it is seen, it could possibly rival the ruby-throat of the hummingbird, although because the hummer feeds from the nectar in our garden flowers and at our feeders, we see the hummer’s ruby throat much more frequently. **Stephen O’Donnell got an excellent photo of the male kinglet vividly displaying its brilliant flash patch. It graces the cover of this month’s Bird Wing Report.**

Other passerines included Cedar Waxwings, Swamp Sparrow, Veery, American Robin, Red-eyed Vireo, and a Gray Catbird that some heard near the start of Hills Siding Road. Also seen

were Common Grackles, one with a fecal sack in its mouth, seen by Diane and Alvin Deagle and perhaps others.

On the way to the first marsh, some saw a Merlin, resulting in some of us jumping out of our vehicles to get a positive identification – with the sun on it and the Merlin’s back to us, we had to be sure.

(When there is a group of 20 participants and they are spread out, some may have seen or heard birds not mentioned to me for this report.)

On the way to Powassan Lagoon, a Turkey Vulture was flying overhead. On the way back to North Bay, there was an Osprey flapping its wings near its nest on Hwy 11 N, just south of Hwy 94, near the former beer sign.

As we travelled back to North Bay, the night sky with its glowing sunset and multiple contrails crisscrossing every which way was spectacular, as spectacular as watching 208 Chimney Swifts (photos, with the contrails present, below) pour into the chimney of St. Vincent de Paul’s Church for their evening roost. (Fred Pinto reports the swifts arrived on May 15 when he saw 31. The high count was on May 26 when he saw 282. At the end of the official SwiftWatch season, Fred will supply the numbers to Grant Mc Kercher and Grant will provide us with a report.)



Linda Stoner



Pat Stack

Seeds and Cones

Creative nesting spot: I think the prize for the most creative nesting spot has to go to an Eastern Phoebe that made her nest on top of a shovel hanging outside the workhouse of Lloyd and Janet Sparks. (Photo at right.) I trust Lloyd has more shovels he can use until the young have fledged!

Global Big Day, May 11: 1.3 million bird watchers from 203 countries participated in this May's Global Big Day. Colombia birders found the most species at 1,526; followed by Peru at 1,428; and then Brazil at 1,201. In Canada, 11,869 participants found 405 species, yet Canada was second after the US in submitting the most eBird lists. In the District of Nipissing, 117 species were found and in the District of Parry Sound, 96 species. Many of the species found were outside our 80.5 km circle. Those from Bird Wing who participated were Lori Anderson, Jérémie Corbeil, Greg Jaski, Renee Levesque, April McCrum, Dick Tafel and Garry Waldram. There may have been others from Bird Wing who participated in other districts and even in other countries.

Two rarities: Just a few days apart, two warbler species rare for our area were found – a Golden-winged Warbler (photo below on left) and a Brewster's Warbler, a hybrid of the Golden-crowned and Blue-winged Warblers (photo below on right). On May 24, Stephen O'Donnell and Sue Gratton found and photographed the Brewster's on Hills Siding Road off Hwy 11, and on May 26, Garry Waldram found and photographed a Golden-winged on McNutt Road off Trunk Road in Rutherglen. Both birds were lifers for Sue and Garry.



Janet Sparks



Garry Waldram



Stephen O'Donnell

Lifers: Others saw lifers closer to home. Faye Oei had four lifers during May, American Redstart, Chestnut-sided Warbler, House Wren and Brown Thrasher. In addition to the Brewster's Warbler, Sue Gratton had 10 other lifers in May and Pat Stack had four. Sue's were Caspian Tern, Bank Swallow, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Pied-billed Grebe, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup, Virginia Rail, American Bittern, and the Black-billed Cuckoo. Pat's were the Common Yellowthroat - the masked bandit as a participant in the Laurier Woods May bird walks called it as you can see from the photo at right – Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Phoebe, and Spotted Sandpiper.



Pat Stack

Pat also had a sort of lifer, as did Sue. Pat had seen the Northern Harrier here in April, but it was at a distance and this month, it was much closer, so close that she was able to get a photograph of it. And although Sue had seen a Wilson's Snipe while she was in Honduras last November, she got only a glimpse of it there, but like Pat, she saw it well here and she too was able to get a photograph of it.

Sue spent three years looking for an American Bittern and finally saw one with the help of Stephen O'Donnell! I don't know if Pat had been looking as long for an Eastern Bluebird, but I know she really wanted to see one and finally did over May's Bird Bash weekend with the help of Linda Stoner. Sue's photograph of the American Bittern and Pat's photograph of the Eastern Bluebird are below.



Sue Gratton



Pat Stack

Victoria, BC birds: Denise Desmarais and her husband were recently in Victoria visiting friends, and although not a birding holiday, when in BC there are always many birds to see even if one is not actively birding. Still, Denise found time to do some birding. She reports, “I saw 48 species, which included 12 lifers. It wasn't a great haul, but my philosophy is that if I don't see them this time, I'll see them the next. As you predicted, I saw many Glaucous-winged Gulls, as well as some Short-billed Gulls. There were also Anna and Rufous Hummingbirds, Spotted Towhees, Bushtits, Brewer's Blackbirds, Brants galore, Pacific Wrens, House Finches, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, and my favourite, the Black Oystercatcher.”

Dick's journal: Before I return Dick's 1984 bird journal to him, I first wanted to see how many warblers he indicated he saw in May 1984. I found mention of only a few –Yellow-rumped, which he called the Myrtle's Warbler in one instance, Nashville, Ovenbird, Magnolia and Cape May. He also saw the Scarlet Tanager, the Eastern Bluebird, lots of ducks, Chipping, Song, and Swamp Sparrows, as well as Dark-eyed Juncos, Pine Siskins, Evening Grosbeaks, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Tree and Bank Swallows, a Broad-winged Hawk, a Merlin, an American Woodcock, and some shorebirds – Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs and Dunlin. (The Myrtle Warbler, the one we see here, and the Audubon Warbler, a western warbler, were combined in 1973 into one species, the Yellow-rumped Warbler. The Audubon has a yellow throat and not a white throat like the Myrtle's. It also has more white in its wings. There are very few records of the Audubon being documented in Ontario.)

Hummingbird nest: Outside of the Saturday morning May walks in Laurier Woods, Fred Pinto came upon a Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest there. Fred's photo is at right. It's nice that so many birds like to nest in our inner-city woods! (See article on May Saturday morning walks in Laurier Woods.)

Common Tern: In late May, Erica Buck reached out to us via the Bird Wing app to ask about the nearest rehab centre for an injured Common Tern. Her friend found the tern that seemed to have a broken wing near her Lake Talon dock. Angela Mills responded with a link to the various rehab centres. However, before Erica's friend could take the tern to a rehab centre, it unfortunately died. Even though the result did not end well, it was an excellent use of our app to quickly try to get help.



Fred Pinto

Atlas-3 refresher and walk

On a lovely Mother's Day morning, seven of us met with Grant McKercher, Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas-3 Regional Coordinator for Region 29, for a refresher course and a walk through Black Forest Park off Hwy. 11 North. Using the Nature Counts app, Garry Waldram, with the help of Grant, kept track of our route and the birds seen and heard. In addition to Grant and Garry, the rest of the seven were Kevan Cowcill, Oriana Pokorny, Lori Anderson, Katharine MacLeod and me. (Photo at right.)

We were greeted in the parking lot by a singing Chipping Sparrow. Not sure it ever stopped singing because there it was singing again, bidding us adieu, when we arrived back at the parking lot after our walk.

Some birds seen or heard on our approximate 2 km route were: two Winter Wrens, about 5 Ovenbirds, a Blackburnian Warbler, a Nashville Warbler, a Common Yellow-throat, a Black and White Warbler, a couple of Magnolia Warblers, and quite a few Pine Siskins and Red Crossbills, the latter quite prolific this winter and spring, thanks to all the cones.

A few species we saw, most we heard, but I think we all agreed that seeing the striking male Blackburnian Warbler in a pine tree was our highlight. For Nature Counts, most of the birds

were marked with an S for singing birds, with the exception of two of the Ovenbirds, one chasing the other, which were marked with A for agitated behaviour. Garry was able to get a photo of the Blackburnian (at left) as it sang behind a tree branch that was removed from the photo. As a photo from our morning bird walk, it reminds us of the delight we felt seeing it, the first time for most of us this season.

If you want to find out more about this lovely park that was surprisingly blackfly-free when we were there, check out the website: <https://discoveryroutes.ca/black-forest-trail/>.

-Renee Levesque



Grant McKercher



Garry Waldram

Book Review

A Siege of Bitterns

By Steve Burrows

Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2014

352 pages

By Denise Desmarais

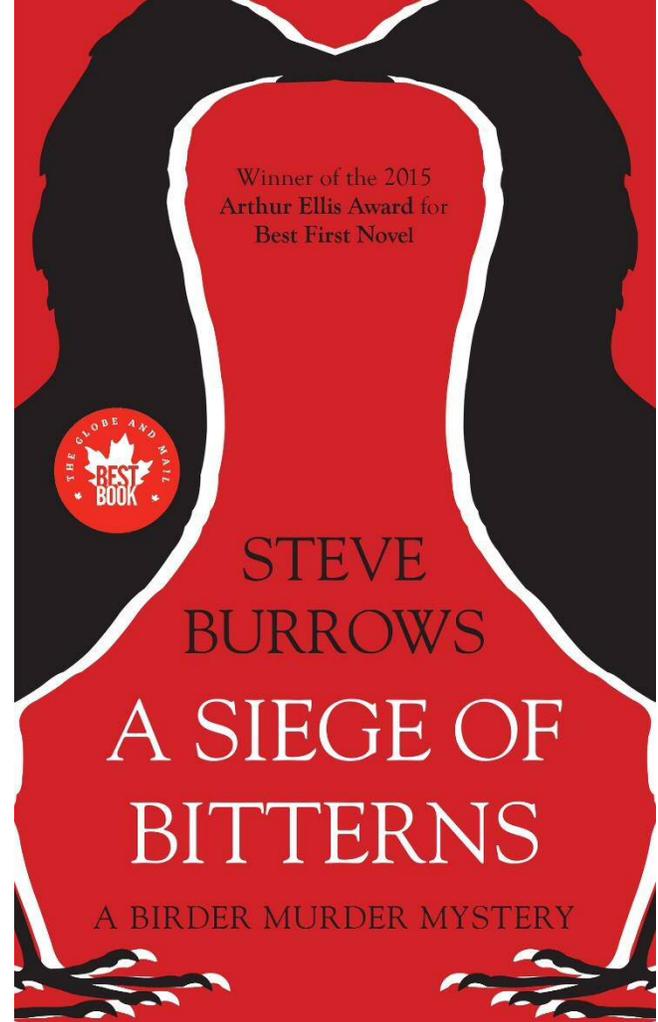
Steve Burrows is a British-born Canadian writer currently living in Oshawa. An avid birder and environmentalist, he worked as a journalist for most of his life, and in 2014 wrote the first book in his series of “Birder Murder Mysteries”. That novel, *A Siege of Bitterns*, won the Arthur Ellis Award for first novels and made it to the Globe and Mail's list of 100 best books of 2014.

A Siege of Bitterns introduces us to Burrows' main man, Detective Chief Inspector Domenic Jejuene, a Canadian living in Britain, who possesses an uncanny talent for getting to the bottom of “who done it”. Surprisingly, Jejuene is not at all enamoured with his job, but sticks with it only because he's so darn good at it. He'd rather be birding. In *A Siege of Bitterns*, Jejuene and his cast of non-birding fellow detectives set out to solve the gruesome murder of Cameron Brae, television personality and birder extraordinaire.

One of Burrows' goals in writing and in life is to draw attention to the disastrous loss of wildlife habitat experienced worldwide, and he makes his case in a “novel” way in *A Siege of Bitterns* when the health of the salt marsh, a precious avian habitat, is endangered by human activity and corruption.

The novel takes place in the fictional village of Saltmarsh in the real county of Norfolk, England. Norfolk is a popular birding destination where it is possible to view many species of wading birds in its salt marshes. (Cley Marshes of Norfolk pictured on next page.) According to eBird, an impressive 435 species of birds have been observed within its boundaries. Burrows begins his story with a fine description of the Norfolk Marsh where the murder has taken place. It's the sort of description rarely found in murder mysteries, but one that might be appreciated by Burrows' birding audience because of the obvious birding potential of this marsh and because most birders enjoy reading descriptions of extraordinarily beautiful places.

Like most murder mysteries, this one includes plenty of twists and turns, red herrings and dead ends that would appeal to almost any murder mystery reader. However, Burrows also manages to make birds a significant component of the narrative, which could make *A Siege of Bitterns* particularly interesting to amateur ornithologists. Aspects of birding culture, methods, etiquette



and competitiveness are embedded in the storyline and might remind readers of themselves or someone they know.

I generally avoid murder mysteries because I find they tend to be plot-driven and sometimes lacking in character development and writing style. But I found this mystery much more enjoyable than most. I'll admit that some of the crime-related details were wasted on me, but the people and the wordcraft were not. Read the book because of the descriptions, the birds, the politics or to find out who done it, but I recommend you read it.

Note from Renee: You can purchase this novel through Dundurn Press at:

https://www.dundurn.com/books_/t22117/a9781459708433-a-siege-of-bitterns - and while on the site, you will see Steve Burrows' other bird murder mysteries: *A Pitying of Doves*, *A Cast of Falcons*, *A Shimmer of Hummingbirds*, and *A Tidying of Magpies*

On the Nipissing Naturalists Club's website under Bird Wing, you will see a link at the top of the Bird Wing page directing you to Book Reviews. So far there are book reviews on *Woman Watching* by Merylyn Simonds, *The Birds* by Daphne Du Maurier and *The Bird Way* by Jennifer Ackerman. Denise's book review on *A Siege of Bitterns* will be posted there after it appears in May's Bird Wing Report. Book reviews of any books dealing with birds are always welcome.

And if any of you are planning a trip to England, the Cley and Salthouse Marshes in Norfolk County in the east of England attract hundreds of birders from all over the world.



Ian Clapper, Wikipedia

May walks in Laurier Woods

By Renee Levesque

Throughout May, Dick Tafel led Saturday morning birding walks in Laurier Woods as he has for a number of years now. These walks are for the general public, but often some Bird Wing members join in, because even for us it may be the first time this spring and the only time this season that we will see certain species.

First Saturday, May 4: There were 14 participants and up to 32 species seen, excellent for the first Saturday walk in early May which usually begins slowly in terms of birds seen or heard, but not this May. I think more warblers were seen this first Saturday than in many past first May Saturdays. Two highlight warblers had to be the Northern Parula (at right) and the Black-throated Green, seen by many of us for the first time this spring. Other warblers seen or heard were the Black and White, Yellow-rumped, Pine and Ovenbird.

Hearing the Ruby-crowned Kinglet is always a delight and I believe this was the only Saturday walk that we heard it. Other notable sightings, some for the first time this spring, were the Least Flycatcher and the Blue-headed Vireo. And to have waiting for us in the first pond, a Pied-billed Grebe, was a nice treat.



Garry Waldram

Another highlight for me was meeting up again with Daniel Currie, a former Bird Wing member. I will always remember when Dick, Lori Anderson, Kaye Edmonds, Daniel and I were on a Laurier Woods walk one Tuesday morning in May 2018 and seeing the Black-crowned Night Heron!

Second Saturday, May 11: Again, 14 participants and about the same number of species, although for me down by 2 to 30. But this walk produced for all 14 of us, most of whom were



Mike Johns

not Bird Wing members, a major sighting that lasted many minutes, a resplendent Scarlet Tanager! I think only one participant, Mike Johns, had a camera, and although I didn't know Mike except from meeting him during the first walk, he was able to get a photo of it (at left) and kindly sent it to me.

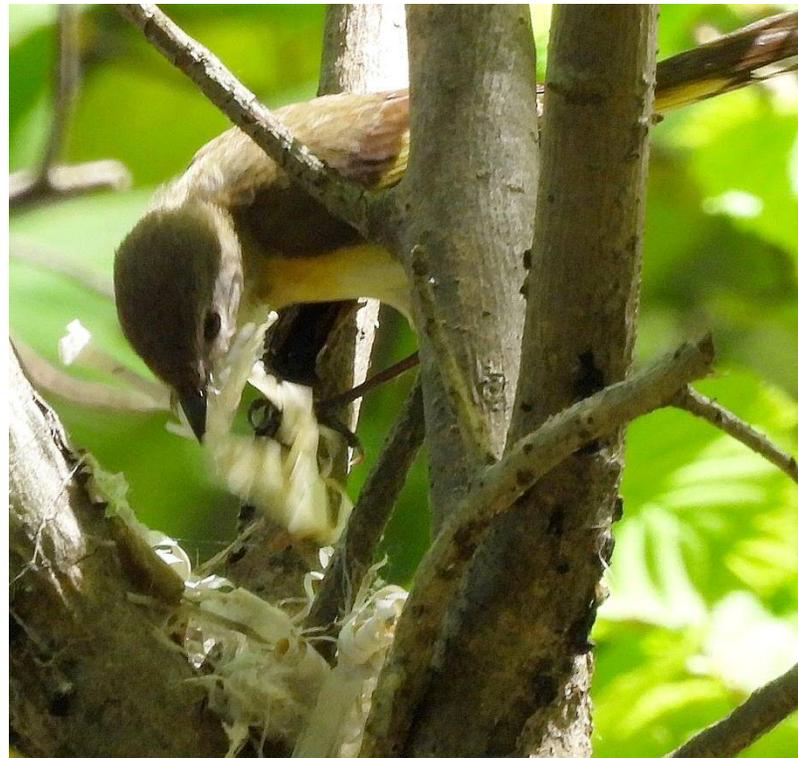
Another highlight was witnessing the shift exchange between the mamma and papa Common Ravens, one staying with the young in the nest while the other went off and then returning and replacing the one who stayed behind in the nest. It was a nice cooperative family moment.

Warblers that were seen this Saturday that weren't seen last Saturday were the American Redstart, Yellow and Chestnut-sided. And although the Red-eyed Vireo hadn't yet been seen, the

Warbling Vireo certainly made its presence known with its much richer song!

Third Saturday, May 18: This time, perhaps because it was the long weekend, we had 20 or so participants and up to 39 species seen! Turned out to be quite the special morning! Not only did we witness the Common Ravens' shift exchange once again, but we saw a White-breasted Nuthatch feed its young inside its tree cavity, and then as another special treat, a female American Redstart building a nest. Both were spotted by our eagle-eyed young birder, Jérémie Corbeil. Sue Gratton was able to get a picture of the redstart building her nest as you will see on the right.

We added only one other warbler to our Saturday walk list, the always brilliant male



Sue Gratton

Blackburnian. Other highlights included seeing a Ruby-throated Hummingbird glistening in the sun as it flew near Arum Pond, hearing a Great Crested Flycatcher many times, actually seeing a pair of Hermit Thrushes, and hearing a Gray Catbird adding its mimicking song to that of the Brown Thrasher that had been greeting us with its more melodious mimic song every morning from the very first walk.

Fourth Saturday, May 25: I was not able to go on this walk, but I hear there were about a dozen participants and about 23-25 species seen or heard. I was very sorry I missed the highlight, a Green Heron with a fish in its mouth at Arum Pond, especially as I had not yet seen a Green Heron this spring. Fortunately, Sue Gratton was able to capture the moment. Her photo is below.



Sue Gratton

What was also special about the walks is that I was able to see Bird Wing members I hadn't seen in person in a while – Lori Anderson, Joel and Jérémie Corbeil, Sue Gratton, Cindy Lafleur and Mary Marrs.

Eastern Whip-poor-will

*By Rebecca Geauvreau,
Species at Risk Biologist*

Introductory note by Renee:

Because some of us haven't heard the Eastern Whip-poor-wills at Dreany Lake for a couple of years

now, I asked Rebecca Geauvreau about the state of Whip-poor-wills and the Dreany Lake location in particular. (Dreany Lake and Dreany Haven Campground are off Hwy 17 east just past Centennial Crescent.) We are hoping this June will be a different story. Below is what I received from Rebecca.

Over the years, we've done Eastern Whip-poor-will/nightjar surveys for clients around the North Bay, Parry Sound and Sudbury areas. In general, whip-poor-wills seem to be fairly common where the habitat is appropriate. Sudbury in particular seems to offer great open and semi-open forested habitat that they love!

We haven't done any population estimates or other landscape type monitoring, just property-specific work. Created habitat seems to attract the birds and we have confirmed breeding in those locations.

I can't speak to populations before about 12 years ago, but since then, it seems that they are locally/regionally stable. South of us might be a very different story! The Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) recently reassessed the Eastern Whip-poor-will from threatened to special concern, effective as of January 2025. The assessment found that protection and recovery efforts have resulted in some successes, enough that the species designation was downlisted to reflect its improved status. This is good news for whip-poor-wills!

Regarding the Dreany Lake whip-poor-wills, I haven't heard them there for a couple of years either. It could be that the breeding pair passed away/moved on and a new pair hasn't taken up residence yet. It could also be that the habitat has changed so it has become less suitable.

Whip-poor-wills prefer the open and semi-open forested habitats, but if a previously open spot has grown up, it might not be suitable for nesting and foraging. This is very common in cutovers and other anthropogenic sites. Sudbury with its acid rain issues has open and semi-open habitat that has persisted because of the absence of soil. This very negative anthropogenic habitat creation (acid rain) actually created great whip-poor-will habitat. The irony is that the subsequent liming and revegetation efforts are not good for whip-poor-wills!

Whip-poor-wills also use wetlands – open fen type wetlands with low-to-the-ground herbaceous vegetation. I know these areas are commonly used in the northwest, for example in Fort Frances, and there are a couple of spots in Sudbury, for example Daisy Lake wetland along the Hwy 17 bypass, but generally in North Bay and Parry Sound they seem to be calling from non-wetland areas.



Tom Benson, Birds of PEI

Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program

I received from Birds Canada, as no doubt some of you did, the trends in marsh birds covering the period from 1995 to 2022. Some marsh birds remained stable; some showed significant increases; and some showed significant decreases.

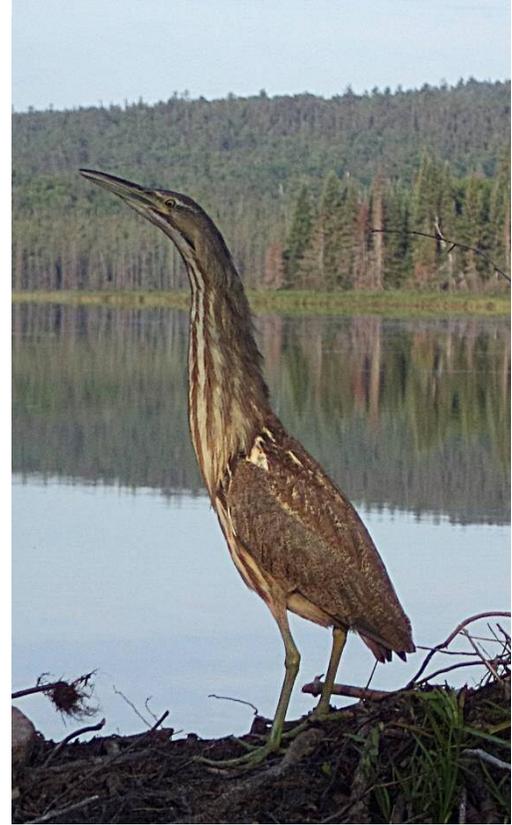
Marsh birds that are remaining stable: American Bittern (at right), Common Grackle, Common Yellow-throat, Marsh Wren, Red-winged Blackbird and Wilson's Snipe.

Marsh birds that are significantly increasing: Canada Goose, Least Bittern, Mute Swan, Sandhill Crane and Trumpeter Swan.

Marsh birds that are significantly decreasing: American Coot, Black Tern, Common Gallinule, Pied-billed Grebe, Sora, Swamp Sparrow and Virginia Rail (photo below).

Until 2023, Paul Smylie conducted the Marsh Monitoring Program in Laurier Woods for a number of years, I believe taking over from Dick Tafel. I asked Paul if he noticed the above trends. He said he never saw that many marsh birds in Laurier Woods to be able to detect any trends, but said it is rather disturbing to see this decline in some of the marsh birds over such a short period of time.

It is my understanding from Paul that Bird Wing member Olivia Brundia took over the Marsh Monitoring in Laurier Woods in 2023.



Oriana Pokorny



Renee Levesque

If you would like a copy of the statistics, let me know and I will email them to you.

- *Renee Levesque*