

Bird Bash Report

September 10 & 11, 2016

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

A very good weekend for birds and for birders! Twenty-two local watchers managed to discover 110 species within the 50 mile radius of North Bay.

As usual, I will comment upon the birds first observed during this year. And so, following roughly in taxonomic order, the Sanderlings and Great black-backed Gull seen by Brent Turcotte and Stephen O'Donnell along the Lake Nipissing shoreline come first. Then there is the one (only?) American Pipit discovered by Renee Levesque and yours truly within Verner Lagoon. They also saw, not previously included within this year's Bird Bash list, a number of Palm Warblers sorting through stubble near the same lagoon. Grant and Shirley McKercher found the Palms also, near Callander.

Getting to other birds, I usually start with the Common Loons, noted by a number of you, including by Stephen and by Keith Thornborrow at the southerly edge of our range, and Steve Pitt at Talon Lake. Several Pied-billed Grebes were within Cache Bay, noted by Angela and Gary Martin and the Levesque duo. Double-crested Cormorants were still around in goodly numbers, as were Great Blue Herons, but Kaye Edmunds was the only one to spot a Green Heron – in Laurier Woods.

Turkey Vultures are still being observed by many, also in goodly numbers and the same with Canada Geese. Three Trumpeter Swans were seen within Cache Bay on Sunday, but only by the Martins.

Fifteen species of ducks (including mergansers) were noted, many very much in evidence within the various lagoons. But only the Turcotte duo saw the Northern Pintail (last observed in this area back in April) and Ring-necked Ducks, both in Callander Lagoon. Redheads were spotted only by the Martins in Warren Lagoon. There was also in Warren Lagoon, one female Bufflehead, likewise last seen here back in April, putting in an appearance for the Levesque pair.

Among the predators, a few Osprey were still around, found by Keith in South River and by Stephen at Lake Bernard. Northern Harrier and Sharp-shinned Hawks were spotted by a few, but the Cooper's only by the Levesque and the Martin pairs. A Broad-winged Hawk was found by the Turcotte duo, as well as the Red-tailed, also discovered by Gary and Connie Sturge near Powassan – the first on the Bird Bash since May. Bald Eagles were seen only by the Martins near Lavigne. American Kestrel seemed still to be plentiful, within the farming lands, but the Merlin less so and seen by just a few.

Ruffed Grouse were spotted by Kaye and by the Martins. A few Common Gallinule (formerly called Moorhen) were located by both the Martins and the Levesque duo within Cache Bay, and

American Coot by both these groups at Warren Lagoon. Sandhill Cranes were in very large flocks west of Cache Bay, enjoyed by Therez Violette and the Martins.

Then we get to the shorebirds. Strangely no Killdeer were discovered, but a Solitary Sandpiper; three Pectorals; several Leasts; Semipalmated Sandpipers; and a quick quartet of Wilson's Snipe were in good view of the Levesque pair at Verner Lagoon, while Spotted Sandpipers were watched by the McKerchers and the Martins. A single Wilson's Phalarope was found by the Martins and the Levesque pair in both the western lagoons.

Bonaparte's Gulls were around in good numbers, seen by the Turcotte, McKercher and Levesque duos. Of course Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were noted by many. Caspian and Common Terns were still at Cache Bay.

Mourning Doves were seen by several, though always in small numbers. Again, Doug Paterson was the only finder of any owls – a Barred Owl by his home near Mattawa.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds had not quite departed from the area, some being at many feeders, including that of Elsa Tafel. Belted Kingfishers likewise remain in fair abundance.

Many woodpeckers were seen: the Hairy and Downy were on Helen McCombie's list; the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on Mary Ann Kenrick's; the Pileated on Kaye's; and the Northern Flicker on many.

The flycatchers seemed to have all gone, except for the Eastern Phoebe. It was seen by several. Interestingly, several vireo species were identified: the Warbling and Philadelphia by the Turcotte pair; the Blue-headed by Stephen; and the Red-eyed by many.

Blue Jays and American Crows were everywhere, with Common Ravens not far behind. But, the only swallow still about seemed to be a few Barn Swallows noted by the Levesque duo near Warren.

Black-capped Chickadees were commonplace, and likewise Red-breasted Nuthatches, including at Pam Handley's. However, the White-breasted Nuthatch was less commonplace, noted by but a few. The Brown Creeper was solely on the Levesque duo's list, seen within the woods of Jocko Point. A Golden-crowned Kinglet was spotted by Stephen near Sundridge.

Eastern Bluebirds were noted only by the Sturges and by Stephen and Stephen was the only one to discover a Hermit Thrush. American Robins were not widespread, but were seen in small numbers by many. A Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher were found by Lisa Hackett at Sweetman's Gardens, the thrasher also seen by Mary Ann Kenrick, near her home. Cedar Waxwings were noted by several. European Starlings were in the thousands at Warren and elsewhere.

Now as to warblers, ten species were found, not as many as two weeks ago, but still enjoyably abundant. Lisa saw the Wilson's and the American Redstart, the latter also seen by John Levesque. The Turcotte duo viewed the Blackburnian and Magnolia, the latter also seen by the

Sturges. The Pine was seen by Paul Smylie, the Sturges and the Martins, who also viewed the Nashville. Black-throated Green was identified by the McKerchers. The Yellow-rumped was seen by many, as was the Common Yellowthroat.

Scarlet Tanagers now in their fall colour were observed by Lisa and by the Levesque pair. An Indigo Bunting, also in its fall colour, was recognized by Kaye.

Sparrows were not especially widespread, except for Chipping, seen by many; Song and White-throats, less so. The Swamp Sparrow was identified solely by the Levesque duo. A White-crowned, first of the year travelling south through here, was observed by Mary Ann. The Savannah was found by the Turcotte duo and a Dark-eyed Junco, new for the season, was spotted by John in his yard.

Red-wings and Common Grackles were not especially plentiful, but seen by several. The Eastern Meadowlark was discovered by the Sturges. Purple Finch was on a few lists, including Keith's. Pine Siskin was on Doug's. American Goldfinches were seen by several, but House Sparrows were solely within the view of the Sturges and of the Levesque pair.

And that completes the list of sightings for September 2016. Congrats to all participants!

Do plan now to get out during the **October Bird Bash, the weekend of October 1-2**. The birds are getting fewer – but are, therefore, even more exciting!

All Bird Bash reports, as well as Bird Wing Summary Reports, are posted on the Nipissing Naturalists Club website at <http://www.nipnats.com/>. Click on *Enter Bird Wing*, bottom right of home page.