

Bird Bash Report

November 2021

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

The weather was certainly quite pleasant over the weekend. Perhaps our birds have taken advantage of the weather being rather wholesome to move southerly more quickly, resulting in our second lowest count for November during our 19-year history. Twenty-six participants did manage to find 55 species, quite a bit below average. The average for November is 68. Previous low was 52 in 2019. Last year we noted 74!

Regardless, there were lots of interesting birds discovered!

As usual, we proceed in the order of our North Bay and Area Seasonal Checklist with birds not seen previously within the year. That starts with scoters near Lake Nipissing's Sunset Park. Grant and Shirley McKercher found a Black Scoter, while Renee Levesque and yours truly spotted a White-winged Scoter. These birds are often spotted during late fall in that shallow area of the lake.

From there, we get to birds previously seen and follow the same order, and that starts with the Common Loon. It was spotted by the McKerchers, the Levesque pair, Lori Anderson with Ken Gowing, and by Steve Pitt in Lake Talon and Elsa Tafel in Trout Lake.

A Pied-billed Grebe was spotted by the Levesque duo within duck-hunt-involved Cache Bay.

A Double-crested Cormorant was spotted near Lavigne by Buddy Myles and on Lake Nosbonsing by the Anderson duo, who also spotted a Great Blue Heron.

Canada Geese remained as numerous as ever, seen by everyone who went beyond their homes.

Two Trumpeter Swans surprised the Levesque pair at Callander Lagoon, while Therez Violette found some 35 Tundra Swans on Lake Nipissing just south of Sturgeon Falls.

Fewer puddle ducks were around than recently, but Steve Pitt had a lovely pair of Wood Ducks near his home. And within some of the lagoons were many Gadwall, Black Ducks, myriads of Mallards, a couple of Northern Shovelers, and many Green-winged Teal. Diving Ducks remained very numerous especially within protected lagoons: Ring-

necks, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, and Common Goldeneye. Hooded Mergansers were found by the Levesque pair, the McKerchers, Sue Gratton, Faye Oei, Buddy Myles, Lloyd and Janet Sparks, Denise Desmarais, and the Anderson duo who counted over 50 of them in Lake Nosbonsing. Denise also found the Common Merganser, as did the McKerchers.

A few hawks were around, the Red-tailed being spotted by Gary and Connie Sturge, Denise, and the Levesque pair, who also watched a hovering Rough-legged give them an exciting discovery, the first upon a Bird Bash since January. The Sparks found a late American Kestrel. The Levesque duo also found several Bald Eagles at the North Bay landfill site. They were elsewhere found by Sue, Faye, the Anderson duo, and the Sturges.

Ruffed Grouse were spotted by Faye, Donna Demarco, Steve, Keith Thornburrow, the Sturges, Denise (5 of them in her yard), the Anderson pair, the Sparks, and Sue.

Wild Turkeys were on the lists of the Levesque duo, Peter and Pam Handley, the McKerchers (at two locations, 23 birds altogether), the Anderson pair, and Keith.

American Coots were especially numerous this month, enjoyed by the Anderson pair at Cache Bay and the Levesque pair and the McKerchers at the various lagoons. In fact, Lori reported well over 100 coots in Cache Bay!

No shorebirds were discovered.

The two main species of gulls, the Herring and Ring-billed, were almost everywhere, while the Black-backed was noted just by the McKerchers, Fred Pinto, and the Levesque pair.

Rock Pigeons remained very common, while Mourning Doves were noted by the Levesque pair, Keith, the Sturges, the Anderson duo, Buddy, Steve, and the Sturges.

No owls were reported.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were widely dispersed, especially at many feeder areas. The Pileated was observed only by Gary and Lu-Anne Chowns.

Some Northern Shrikes had started their journey south, the first around here since March. They were noted by the Sturges and Keith.

The Canada Jay was spotted only by Keith within the South River area. Blue Jays were spotted by almost everyone, along with American Crows and Common Ravens.

Black-capped Chickadees were one of our most common feeder birds, with Red-breasted Nuthatches almost as much so. But the White-breasted Nuthatch was noted solely by the McKerchers, Keith, the Chowns, Therez, Steve, and the Sparks. No kinglets were reported.

As for thrush, American Robins were about, but in very minimal numbers, being spotted only by the McKerchers (one which flew overhead at Laurier Woods), Keith, and Denise who saw three in a tree near the Cache Bay trailer park.

European Starlings were still in the area in considerable numbers.

Cedar Waxwings were spotted only by Fred.

No warblers were about! And even the sparrows were very limited in number. A few American Tree Sparrows were spotted by the Sparks, Denise, the Levesque duo, Keith, the Chowns, the Anderson pair, and John Levesque. White-throats were discovered by the Chowns, the Sturges, the Levesques, the Handleys, and April McCrum. Some Dark-eyed Juncos were found by Therez, the Levesques, Steve, Keith, and the Sturges.

Snow Buntings were enjoyed by the Levesque duo and the McKerchers, who also found three Northern Cardinals adjacent to Callander Bay. The cardinal was also seen by Keith in South River.

Just a few Red-winged Blackbirds were discovered – by the McKerchers, the Anderson duo, and the Sturges. Common Grackles were found only by the Levesque duo, the Sturges, and Steve.

American Goldfinch had arrived at many area feeders and may stay for the winter. They were noted by Elsa, April, the Sparks, the Levesques, the Chowns, Denise, the Sturges, and the Anderson duo.

Finally, the energetic House Sparrows were located solely by the Anderson duo.

Despite the below average number of species seen and with winter slowly coming, some very interesting birds were indeed observed. Congrats to all participants! **The December Bird Bash will take place over the weekend of the 4th and 5th.** Matters should be obviously different then, but exciting birds will still be around and worth the effort of discovering them! Plan for it!