

Bird Bash Report October 2024

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

An interesting weekend weather-wise for sure with rain, thunder and lightning on Sunday. So perhaps no wonder only 16 participants found but 74 species – fourth lowest number within the 23 years of October Bird Bashes. Regardless, there were certainly lots of interesting birds discovered.

As usual, we start the report with birds not seen previously during a Bird Bash this year, following the order within the *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area*. First off, is the American Coot seen by Denise Desmarais and by Renee Levesque with your compiler; then there is the Lapland Longspur spotted by Faye Oei with Sue Gratton and young Griffin, Sue's nephew; and lastly, the Brewer's Blackbird, not often seen in our area and identified by the Levesque pair in West Nipissing.

Now we get to the balance of birds noted, starting with our wonderfully northern Common Loon, spotted only by Steve Pitt, Denise, and the Levesque pair.

Pied-billed Grebes were in considerable number within Cache Bay and watched only by the Levesque duo.

The Double-crested Cormorant, very common earlier in the year, was located only by Garry Waldram.

Great Blue Herons were somewhat more discoverable, being spotted by Linda Stoner, Garry, Steve, and the Levesque pair.

Turkey Vultures had almost fully moved south, but some were still around and were spotted by Lloyd and Janet Sparks, Denise, the Gratton-Oei bunch, Garry, Steve, and the Levesque duo.

Canada Geese were very common, noticed by most observers.

Then there were the “puddle ducks” still much abundant, especially within the various lagoons - Wood Ducks, Gadwall, Black Ducks, Mallards (especially abundant), Northern Shoveler, and Green-winged Teal. However, the Northern Pintail was spotted only by the Gratton-Oei group.

Amidst the divers, Redhead Ducks were noted only by the Levesque pair, along with lots of Ring-necked Ducks; Common Goldeneye were found by Denise; Greater and Lesser Scaup were seen by the Levesque duo; and Lesser Scaup and Hooded Mergansers were spotted by Garry.

Only a few predators were observed - the Northern Harrier by Garry, Steve, and the Levesque pair; the Red-tailed Hawk by Brent and Laura Turcotte with Luanne Chowns; and Bald Eagles by the Levesque pair, the Sparks, and Steve.

Ruffed Grouse were on the lists of Donna Demarco, Garry, Denise, and the Turcottes.

Wild Turkeys were spotted only by the Gratton–Oei bunch.

Sandhill Cranes were bountiful in West Nipissing, but enjoyed only by the Levesque duo. They were also the only ones to have (very luckily) spotted any shorebirds, namely the Solitary Sandpiper at Warren Lagoon, and both the Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs in the pouring rain at Sunset Park.

Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were widespread, as were Rock Pigeons, while Mourning Doves were watched only by John Levesque, Steve, and Faye.

The Belted Kingfisher was viewed by Denise and Steve.

As to woodpeckers, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was found only by the Turcottes. Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers remained fairly constant, but Northern Flickers were noticed only by Linda and Steve. The Pileated was on the lists of Garry, the Sparks, and John.

Some flycatchers were still around, namely the Eastern Phoebe, spotted by Garry and Steve.

Blue Jays, American Crows and Common Ravens were plentiful.

Horned Larks, not present since the February Bird Bash, appeared on the lists of Sue and Faye.

Black-capped Chickadees were pretty well everywhere, while the Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches were spotted by the Gratton-Oei pair, Steve, and Garry, while the White-breasted alone was seen by the Turcottes and the Red-breasted alone by Donna. Brown Creepers were noted by Garry, Faye, and Denise.

Kinglets seemed to be increasingly noticed, with the Ruby-crowned seen by Denise, Garry, Linda, and Sue; the Golden-crowned by Faye and the Turcottes; and both kinglets by the Levesque duo and John.

Some thrushes were still around, namely the American Robin spotted by many; the Eastern Bluebird by Garry, Sue and Faye; and the Hermit Thrush by the Turcottes.

A Gray Catbird was noted only by Luanne.

European Starlings were about in large numbers.

American Pipits were found by the Turcottes, the Levesque pair, and Denise.

Just a couple of warblers were still around - the Yellow-rumped and the Palm seen by the Levesque pair, Sue, and Garry; the Yellow-rumped by John and Steve; and the Palm by Faye.

Sparrows remained pretty numerous, but the newly-arriving American Tree was spotted only by Denise. The White-crowned, White-throated and Song Sparrows seemed the most plentiful, noted by most observers; the Chipping was seen by the Levesque pair and by Sue and Faye; the Savannah was seen by Faye, Garry, and John; and Dark-eyed Juncos were seen by John, Linda, Garry, the Turcottes, and the Sparks.

A grand Northern Cardinal was enjoyed by Linda.

A few Red-winged Blackbirds were still about and noticed by Denise. Rusty Blackbirds were discovered by Garry. Common Grackles were fairly numerous and found by many.

The Purple Finch was noticed by John. A few American Goldfinch were about and were watched by the Turcottes and John.

Finally we get to the House Sparrow, located by Denise and the Levesque duo in Verner.

It actually was a very interesting collection of observations during a very unusual Fall period. We all found lots of interesting and imaginative birds. Congrats to all for your persistence and time!

And who knows what the next Bird Bash will bring? Keep on getting out and be ready for it over **the weekend of November 2-3.**