

North Bay Area Bird Bash August 26-27, 2017

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Just 14 stalwarts were out seeking birds during our recent Bird Bash. Somewhat disappointing a number; however, some 97 species were discovered – just 1 less than in July, but well below August's average of 113 over the past 14 years. Regardless, it was a good weekend and a lot of very neat birds were found.

As usual, we will start off in rough taxonomic order with new birds for the year. Baird's Sandpiper comes out first, seen by Renee Levesque and yours truly at Callander lagoon. It is one of the many small peeps which at about this time of year are migrating south from their barren-land breeding range. They also saw the neat Red-necked Phalarope at Warren Lagoon; and for the first bash this year, a Wilson's Warbler at Sunset Park.

Now onto the other birds in similar checklist order. The Common Loon comes first, seen by many, including Steve Pitt at Talon Lake. Pied-billed Grebes were at Cache Bay (after the fishing contest people had left the area). Double-crested Cormorants are still about in good numbers upon the big lake. A Great Blue Heron was noted by Kaye Edmonds, by Gary and Connie Sturge, by Steve and by Fred Pinto. Fred also saw Green Herons, as did the Levesque pair and Kaye.

Soaring Turkey Vultures continue to be numerous, as, of course, were Canada Geese. Only one Trumpeter Swan was about Cache Bay, discovered by the Levesque pair. Ten ducks or mergansers were noted, including Redheads and Ring-necked Ducks. Normally common but non-noted ones were the Gadwall, Hooded Merganser and Green-winged Teal.

Among predators, Northern Harrier were still around, as were Osprey, the latter found near their many nesting areas. The Sturges saw several Broad-winged Hawks near their home west of Powassan, while John Levesque noticed one near the north part of North Bay. An adult Bald Eagle was seen flying along the North Bay lakeshore by the Levesque duo, while Donna Demarco saw one in the east end. Many American Kestrels were still about, with Merlins noted by a couple of observers.

American Coots were still at the Warren Lagoon. Kaye, the Sturges and the Levesque pair saw Sandhill Cranes, the latter seeing a flock of at least 75 off Levac Road in West Nipissing.

Some nine shorebirds were observed, most of them within a lagoon cell with low waters,

like the one at Callander. But the Spotted Sandpiper, which breeds around here, was noticed only by Grant and Shirley McKercher, and it was beyond the lagoons. Wilson's Snipe was spotted only by Kaye. Further, she saw the only Bonaparte's Gull. The other two main gull species remain increasingly noticeable. Caspian Terns were still evident about Cache Bay.

Mourning Doves were fairly widely distributed, observed by Donna and others. The Black-billed Cuckoo was found only by Kaye. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were still pretty common in flower beds and at feeders, such as that of Pam and Peter Handley. The Belted Kingfisher was fairly widely noticed.

Now as to woodpeckers or similar, the Pileated was the only common one not observed. Fred was the sole person to find a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Flycatchers were still fairly widely dispersed, the Least found by the Levesque duo at Laurier and the Great Crested at Cache Bay. Both the Eastern Phoebe and Kingbird were seen by the Sturges, among others.

Red-eyed Vireos, the only vireo discovered, were still almost everywhere, as were Blue Jays, crows and ravens. But the only swallows observed were the Tree and Barn, both seen by Kaye, and solely the Barn by the Sturges. Black-capped Chickadees seemed to be all over the place, while the two local nuthatches, were somewhat less so - the Red-breasted noted by the Sturges and Kaye, and the White-breasted only by the McKerchers.

No creepers or wrens or kinglets were discovered. Among the thrushes, the Eastern Bluebird was enjoyed by the Sturges, while the Levesque duo and Fred saw the Veery. American Robins were fairly widely observed. The Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher were both seen at Laurier and elsewhere, but the Northern Mockingbird, a real local rarity, was watched with much enjoyment by the Levesque duo at an abandoned home on Leclair Road in West Nipissing.

Cedar Waxwings were widely noticed.

Some 15 wood warblers were discovered. Elsa Tafel and yours truly identified a Tennessee at their home off Trout Lake; the McKerchers were the only ones to find a Blackburnian; John saw the Orange-crowned – earlier than usual arrival - at his home area; Kaye found the only Canada; Fred observed the only Ovenbird; and Steve discovered a Pine Warbler, as did the Levesque duo. Other warblers found were Nashville, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Back and White, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-rumped, and as mentioned previously in this report, a Wilson's.

The Levesque pair also saw a couple of non-male Scarlet Tanagers.

Only 5 sparrow species were identified, with Fred being the only one finding Swamp and White-throat.

No Indigo Buntings or Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were noted. Several Bobolinks were seen by the Levesque pair and Kaye, but all were either females or juveniles.

Red-wings and Common Grackles were numerous.

Purple Finches were seen by the Sturges and by Kaye. American Goldfinch were noted by many. The House Sparrow was on the Sturges and the Levesque duo's lists.

Other missing and normally spotted birds during this month were the Ruffed Grouse, Eastern Meadowlark, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak.

And so that is it for August, 2017. Congrats to all participants! Hopefully a few more will get involved during September's Bird Bash – to be over the weekend of **September 9 and 10.**