

# **Bird Bash Report**

## **December 2021**

*By Dick Tafel, Compiler*

The weather was certainly cold, but there were still a lot of grand birds around during the last month of our 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of North Bay area Bird Bashes. Some 29 participants managed to discover 50 species! This is just above average for a December weekend. Last year we found 49 species, but in 2019, just 36 were noted.

And so getting along to first birds for the year, and there is only one this month - the Iceland Gull, three of which were enjoyed by Renee Levesque and yours truly at the North Bay landfill site.

Now following the old order of the North Bay and Area Seasonal Checklist for birds seen during a previous Bird Bash, we start with the Common Loon, one of which was spotted by Fred Pinto within the still unfrozen waters of Trout Lake, and by Lori Anderson with Ken Gowing. Fred also came upon a few Canada Geese, as did Steve Pitt and Chris Sukha, with just one Canada Goose spotted by Grant and Shirley McKercher.

Four Trumpeter Swans were discovered by Chris in the open water of the West Arm of Lake Nipissing.

Mallards were still fairly common at open waters, but the Black Duck was identified only by the Levesque pair and the McKerchers. No other “puddle ducks” were seemingly around.

Common Goldeneyes were spotted by Fred, Faye Oei, Sue Gratton, and the Levesque pair.

Both Hooded and Common Mergansers were found in Trout Lake by Fred and the Levesque pair, with only the Common Merganser seen by the Mckerchers, Dan Burton, and Chris.

As to predators, a Sharp-shinned Hawk was watched by Lloyd and Janet Sparks, while a Red-tailed was enjoyed by April McCrum near Verner, and by Gary and Connie Sturge near Powassan. As many as ten Bald Eagles were noted by the

Sturges within the Powassan landfill site and by the Levesque pair within the North Bay landfill site. Bald Eagles were also spotted by the Sparks, Chris, Dan, and the McKerchers. The Anderson duo came upon a Merlin on Bellcairn Road, Chisholm Township.

Ruffed Grouse were on the lists of the Levesque pair, Chris, Steve Pitt, the Anderson duo, and John Levesque, while increasingly common Wild Turkeys were noted by Linda Conway, April, the Sturges, and Chris.

A few Ring-billed Gulls were still around and were identified only by the Levesque pair, but Herring Gulls, very plentiful at various landfill sites and elsewhere, were watched by the Levesque pair, the Sturges, the McKerchers, the Anderson duo, and Chris. Glaucous Gulls were enjoyed by Dan and by the Levesque pair, who also spotted Great Black-backed Gulls at North Bay's landfill site.

Rock Doves remained very plentiful, while Mourning Doves were noted only by Mary Young, the McKerchers, the Anderson pair, and the Sturges.

A Snowy Owl was somehow spotted by Greg Jaski hunkered down upon a small rocky area within Lake Nipissing, last seen upon this year's Bird Bash in January, almost 12 months ago!

A Belted Kingfisher was discovered by Dan in the Sundridge area.

As to woodpeckers, both the Downy and Hairy seemed to be at many feeders and elsewhere, but the Pileated was spotted only by Elsa Tafel, the Anderson duo, and Mary, Mary's having aberrant plumage with its mostly brown back.

A Northern Shrike was found by Paul Smylie and two Northern Shrikes by the McKerchers.

Two Canada Jays were noted by the McKerchers on Roy Drive, while Blue Jays were numerous and seen in many locations. American Crows were still fairly common, especially within city areas, but Common Ravens had become especially noticeable.

Black-capped Chickadees remained wonderfully common. Red-breasted Nuthatches were noted by Faye, Sue, April, Steve, Peter and Pam Handley, Chris, Elsa, and the Sturges. White-breasted Nuthatches were watched by Mary, Therez Violette, Sue, the Sturges, Steve, the McKerchers, Lu and Gary Chowns, and the

Anderson duo.

European Starlings were still fairly common.

Bohemian Waxwings were found only by Chris and Greg.

Of course, no warblers or flycatchers were around!

However, a few sparrows were evident. The American Tree was the most common, seen by John, the Handleys, the Levesque pair, the Anderson duo, the Sturges, and the Chowns. A White-crowned was spotted by Buddy Myles and by the Chowns, and a White-throated by the Sturges. Dark-eyed Juncos were noticed by John and Renee, Steve, the Sturges, and the Chowns.

Snow Buntings were on the lists of Chris, the McKerchers, and the Levesque pair.

Two Northern Cardinals were wondered at by Therez in Sturgeon Falls!

Common Grackles were located only by the Sturges.

Pine Grosbeaks were noted by Linda, Mary, Steve, the Anderson pair, and Chris.

Purple Finch was spotted only by the Sparks.

Common Redpolls were located, sometimes in very large numbers, by the Levesque pair (over 50), the Sparks, the Sturges, Chris, the McKerchers, and the Anderson pair.

American Goldfinches were seen in many areas, spotted by Fred, John and Renee, Buddy, Mary, Elsa, the McKerchers, your compiler, the Chowns, Chris, and the Sturges, who also spotted Evening Grosbeaks.

The tough House Sparrows were noted only by the Anderson duo and by Chris.

And so that ends another year's busy Bird Bashes! Congrats to all the attendees!

Look forward to another year of northern birding come January, when the first "bash" for 2022 will be **over the weekend of January 15.**

In the meantime, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!