

Bird Bash Report

April 2022

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Wow! What an effort by a strong number of 30 participants after a long, cold April, to come up with 91 species of birds within our district! Sunday's high of 21 degrees C. did not hurt! The number of species seen is just below the average of 94 over the continuous efforts for the past 19 years. But considering the consistent cold previously felt this late "winter", a very gratifying number.

Following the order in the *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area*, and starting with birds not previously seen during the year, we commence with the iconic Common Loon. It was discovered, having just recently arrived, by Keith Thornborrow, Denise Desmarais, Connie and Gary Sturge, Elsa Tafel at Trout Lake, Lori Anderson with Ken Gowing, Grant and Shirley McKercher, Lloyd and Janet Sparks, Steve Pitt at Lake Talon, Pam and Peter Handley, and Renee Levesque with yours truly at Cache Bay.

Then we get to the Pied-billed Grebe, one alone noted by yours truly at the Laurier Woods pond.

An American Bittern was heard calling near Callander Lagoon by the McKerchers. They also saw the Great Blue Heron, as did Fred Pinto, Steve, Denise, and the Anderson pair. The latter duo also saw rare Great White-fronted Geese at the Warren Lagoon area.

Puddle ducks had arrived in a few numbers, and thus Wood Ducks and Northern Shovelers were spotted by the Levesque duo, the Anderson pair, the Telfords, the McKerchers, and the Sturges. Wood Ducks were also spotted by Steve, the Flemings, and Keith. American Wigeon were seen by the Levesque pair, the McKerchers, the Telfords, Denise, and the Anderson duo. Green-winged Teal were found by the Sturges, the McKerchers, the Anderson duo, Denise, and the Telfords, while the Levesque duo and Brent and Laura Turcotte, with their kids and Luanne Chowns, saw both Green and Blue-winged Teals. A flock of some eight Northern Pintail were watched briefly by your compiler at Cache Bay. Gadwalls were noted by the McKerchers, the Anderson duo, and the Levesque pair.

As to divers, Redhead Ducks were discovered by the Anderson pair at Warren Lagoon. Lots of Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser and Greater Scaup were spotted by

the Levesque pair; and Ring-necks and Lesser Scaup were seen by the Sturges, Denise, the McKerchers, and the Anderson duo. The Telfords spotted the Lesser Scaup. The Turcotte group and Keith also saw Ring-necks.

Hooded Mergansers were spotted by Keith, Denise, and the Levesque duo.

Now to the new predators: Osprey had arrived and were located by Denise, Keith, Linda Stoner, the Flemings, the Sturges, the Sparks, the McKerchers, the Anderson pair, Paul Smylie, and in 5 local nests by the Levesque duo. A Northern Goshawk was watched by Steve near Lake Talon.

A rare Spruce Grouse came close to the Anderson pair on the Louck's Lake trail, north of South River.

Killdeer were spotted by the Turcotte group, the Sturges, and Linda. Wilson's Snipe was identified by the Flemings and the Anderson pair, who also found American Woodcock, as did the Telfords, Fred, Keith, the Flemings, the Sturges, and the Turcotte gang.

The Belted Kingfisher was found by the Levesque duo, Keith, the McKerchers, Denise, the Telfords, Paul, and the Turcotte group.

The latter four observer groups also found Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, as did your compiler, Steve, Gary Chowns, the Flemings, the Anderson duo, and the Sturges.

The latter two pairs also discovered our first Northern Flickers, as did the Levesque duo, the Sparks, the Turcotte bunch, Keith, Steve, Denise, the Telfords, Paul, and the McKerchers.

Eastern Phoebes, always our first flycatchers, were noted by the latter five groups, as well as by Faye Oie, the Telfords, Fred, Mary Young, the Anderson pair, and the Turcotte group.

A Blue-headed vireo was identified solely by the Sturges who also found right within their property, flighty Tree Swallows, likewise seen by the Turcotte group, Keith, the Flemings, the Sparks, the Telfords, Denise, the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, and yours truly. The newly arrived Barn Swallow was spotted only by the Turcotte group and Steve.

The trunk creeping Brown Creeper was located by the Anderson pair on the

Louck's Lake trail, and by the Chowns, Fred, the Telfords, Paul, the Turcottes, and Faye.

Winter Wrens were heard (or seen) by the latter four groups, as well as the Sturges and Denise.

Busy Golden-crowned Kinglets were spotted by the Anderson duo, while both the Golden and the Ruby-crowned were watched by the Turcotte group, Paul, Fred, and the Telfords, with yours truly enjoying only the Ruby-crowned, as did Renee Levesque and the Sturges.

A Hermit Thrush excited yours truly within Laurier Woods, and also was spotted by Paul. He, furthermore, located a Brown Thrasher.

A few warblers had arrived. The Yellow-rumped was found by Renee and by Mary, both at their feeders, and by Denise and the Turcotte group, while Fred observed a very early Ovenbird in Laurier Woods.

Getting to the sparrows, a Chipping was at Renee's feeder, seen by her and John; the Savannah was watched by the Levesque pair, Denise, the Anderson duo, and the Sturges, while the Fox was found only by Mary and the Telfords. Swamp Sparrows made an appearance upon the lists of yours truly, Fred, and the Turcottes. The White-crowned was spotted only by Keith.

Eastern Meadowlarks made it on the lists of the Sturges and the Anderson duo.

A convenient flock of Rusty Blackbirds was well identified by the Levesque pair along Riding Stable Road.

Brown-headed Cowbirds were discovered by the Chowns and the Sturges.

Purple Finches made an appearance upon their first Bird Bash of this year. Twenty-two of them were seen by Peter and Pam Handley, and some were seen by the Levesque duo, the Flemings, the McKerchers, the Sturges, Paul, the Turcotte group, Elsa, John Levesque, Donna, Steve, Keith, the Chowns, Faye, the Telfords, and Mary.

And that concludes the large number of birds upon our Bird Bashes for the first time this year!

Now as to birds previously referred to on our lists, following the same order as before, we start with the Double-crested Cormorant. It was noticed by the Levesque pair in fair numbers, mostly at Cache Bay, the Anderson duo, the Telfords, the Sturges, Denise, and the McKerchers.

The latter six groups also found Turkey Vultures in small soaring numbers, as did the Turcottes, Steve, Faye, the Sparks, and Linda.

Canada Geese were found by most participants.

Trumpeter Swans were seen by more than might have been expected, including the Levesque duo, the Anderson pair, Faye, and the McKerchers.

Among the previously seen ducks, of course the Mallards were spotted by a great many, but none remarked about the American Black Duck.

The diving Buffleheads and Common Mergansers were here in large numbers and seen by the McKerchers, the Flemings, the Sturges, Denise, the Turcottes, Steve, Keith, the Telfords, the Anderson pair, and the Levesque duo. The latter four groups also saw Common Goldeneye, while Linda, Faye, Elsa, and Paul came upon only the Bufflehead. Donna saw only the merganser.

Northern Harrier seemed somewhat more numerous than last month, being noticed by the Levesque duo, the Anderson pair, the Flemings, and Steve. But American Kestrel seemed to be almost everywhere, being spotted by those seeing the Northern Harrier, and by Denise, the McKerchers, and the Telfords. Then there is the Bald Eagle, being seen around the North Bay area now more than ever. The McKerchers saw it near its nest in Callander, the Sturges just west of Powassan, the Sparks observed it, as did Steve, Keith, the Turcottes, and the Levesque pair. The Merlin was found by Fred and John.

Ruffed Grouse seemed to have overcome the winter pretty well for they were spotted by many, including yours truly, the Handleys, the Sparks, Steve, Denise, the Flemings, the Telfords, the Anderson pair, Donna, the Sturges, Faye, and the Turcottes. Wild Turkeys seem to be holding their own also, being noted by the latter four groups, the Handleys, and Keith.

Most Sandhill Cranes may have flown north, but some seem to be remaining in small numbers, being spotted by the Levesque duo, the Anderson pair, Steve, Denise, the McKerchers, the Flemings, the Telfords, and the Turcottes.

Ring-billed and Herring Gulls seem to have settled down in large numbers.

Rock Pigeons remain very numerous as usual, but Mourning Doves were observed only in small numbers by the Levesque duo, Steve, Keith, the Sturges, John, the Sparks, and Paul.

Barred Owls were listened to and occasionally spotted by the Flemings, the Telfords, and the Sturges. No other owls have been observed at a Bird Bash this year.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers remain common at many feeders, as well as elsewhere. The Pileated was noticed by Faye, the Anderson pair, Denise, Renee, Fred, the Telfords, and the Flemings.

Northern Shrikes were still around and were found by Steve and Linda.

The Canada Jay was spotted once again solely by Keith near South River.

Blue Jays continue to be very prominent; likewise the American Crow and Common Raven.

What could be more wonderfully ubiquitous than the so-friendly Black-capped Chickadee?

Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen by your compiler, Elsa, Faye, the Telfords, Denise, the Handleys, the Sturges, Donna, the Anderson duo, and Keith; while the White-breasted was watched only by the latter three combos, as well as by Paul, the Chowns, and the Flemings.

American Robins are seemingly handling the variety of weathers okay and were around in fair numbers and joyfully watched by almost everyone! Not quite the same enthusiasm probably for the European Starlings, but they also were almost everywhere.

American Tree Sparrows had not all gone north yet, and some were observed by the Levesque pair, Fred, the Chowns, the Handleys, Paul, the McKerchers, Keith, the Anderson duo, the Telfords, the Flemings, Mary, and the Sturges. Song Sparrows had increased their presence somewhat and were enjoyed by almost everyone. The same with the just-arriving White-throats.

Dark-eyed Juncos had increased their presences in the area, and were watched by Denise, Keith, the Anderson pair, the Telfords, the Sturges, the Turcottes, Fred, the Chowns, Mary, the Handleys (with 16 of them at their feeders), Paul, Elsa, the Levesques, and the McKerchers.

Red-winged Blackbirds had arrived in many of their home swamps (as well as many feeder areas) and were observed by the Levesque pair, the McKerchers, Mary, the Chowns, Fred, the Sparks, Linda, the Turcottes, the Sturges, the Flemings, the Telfords, the Anderson duo, John, Denise, Elsa, and Keith. Common Grackles have spread themselves around almost everywhere in very large numbers.

The very great number of Common Redpolls that had been here most of the winter have almost all gone back north, but a very few have remained, and were spotted only by the Flemings.

Pine Siskins have returned in small numbers and were observed by Paul, the Levesques, and Elsa.

American Goldfinch were also returning in larger numbers and were observed by Elsa, the Levesques, Paul, Mary, the Chowns, the Turcottes, the Sturges, the McKerchers, Denise, and the Telfords.

Evening Grosbeaks were still around, noted by the Sturges, the Turcottes, and the Chowns.

Finally, the much maligned House Sparrows were observed by the Anderson duo and the McKerchers.

Especially considering the strange weather we have been subject to recently, the efforts of the participants have certainly been exceptional. Congrats to all!

And expect to see even more bird species at the normally busiest Bird Bash date coming up – **the weekend of May 28-29**. Prepare for it!