

Bird Bash Report

August 2024

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

What a beautiful weekend for birding, especially for the 20 stalwarts from our area during the August Bird Bash! There were 121 species spotted, above average for the month, though a bit below last year's total.

As usual, we will start with the several new birds for the year within the 50 mile or 80.5 km radius of North Bay during a maximum of 24 hours. For a second month, your compiler will alter the past methods of indicating the fulsome efforts by all birders and instead concentrate more upon the birds, while still mentioning the birders but not in terms of every bird sighting.

And so following the order of the *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area*, our first new discovery was the Baird's Sandpiper identified by Renee Levesque and Yours Truly within Warren Lagoon. They also observed a couple of Stilt Sandpipers.

Then we have some Bonaparte's Gulls found by Denise Desmarais at Verner Lagoon and by Gary Waldram elsewhere. A Great Black-backed Gull was watched by Greg Jaski, helped by his Mom.

Then there was the too often missed Common Nighthawk spotted by Katharine MacLeod and by Gary.

Three new warblers were discovered on their way back south - the Cape May and Bay-breasted by Gary, and the Blackpoll by the Levesque pair.

Now we get to the many birds seen during previous months, starting with the Common Loon observed by just under half of the participants.

Then there was the Pied-billed Grebe spotted by Gary and the Levesque pair.

Double-crested Cormorants were not especially plentiful this month, but a few were noted by most visitors to Cache Bay.

The American Bittern was spotted by Steve Pitt, and the more common Great Blue Heron was watched by Linda Stoner along with Pat Stack, as well as by two other groups. The more diminutive Green Heron was discovered by Denise at Cache Bay.

The wide soaring Turkey Vultures were spotted by many.

One can say that probably the Canada Goose was the most numerous of all the birds noted.

Most of our fairly common “puddle ducks” were spotted, often within the local lagoons. This included Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Ducks, Mallards (no doubt the most numerous of all), Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler and Green-winged Teal.

Among the divers, Common Goldeneyes were about in small numbers and seen by the Levesque pair, Denise, and the Jaski pair. The Hooded Merganser was discovered by Gary.

Now as to predators, the amazing Osprey remained in view at the light standards at Cache Bay and elsewhere. The Northern Harrier was noted soaring within the fields by June and Kevin Telford and a few others. Two Sharp-shinned Hawks were spotted imbibing upon some recent captures by the Levesque pair. The Broad-winged Hawk was seen by several, as was the American Kestrel and Merlin. The Bald Eagle was enjoyed by a few, including Faye Oei, Sue Gratton, Lloyd and Janet Sparks, Steve, and the Levesque pair.

Ruffed Grouse were discovered by Steve, Faye, and Gary. Wild Turkeys were spotted solely by Faye and Sue.

A few Sandhill Cranes were about and located by Donna Demarco, Sue, the Stoner pair, the Telfords, Denise, and Gary.

Now we get to the “shorebirds”. Many were found in the lagoons on their southerly migration. This included Semipalmated Plovers and Killdeer, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers, Semipalmated, Least, Baird’s, and Pectoral Sandpipers. Many participants managed to identify them.

As to gulls, the Ring-billed and Herring continued to be very numerous. Caspian and Common Terns were spotted at Cache Bay.

Of course, Rock Pigeons were very common, while the Mourning Dove was seen just by a few, including the Jaski duo, Gary, Katharine, the Telfords, and others.

A Barred Owl was noticed or heard by Faye, Sue, and the Jaski duo.

Active Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were pretty well widespread, as were Belted Kingfishers.

The two main woodpeckers, Downy and Hairy, plus the Northern Flicker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were often sighted, but the Pileated was discovered only by Therez Violette, Gary, the Jaski duo, and Steve.

Flycatchers were not quite as prevalent as perhaps expected, but the Eastern Phoebe was seen, often upon wires, by many; the Great Crested was spotted by the Sparks; the Eastern Kingbird by many; the Eastern Wood- Pewee by Denise, the Telfords, Faye, and Gary, who also viewed the Least, as did the Levesque pair and Faye; the Olive-sided by Brent Turcotte.

The Red-eyed Vireo was still very prevalent, but the Philadelphia was identified only by the Sparks and Gary, and the Blue-headed only by Sue.

Blue Jays remained ubiquitous, as did the American Crows – and though much less numerous – the Common Ravens.

Just a few swallows remained about, namely the Tree and Barn spotted by Sue, Faye, and Gary, with the Barn only by the Telfords and Denise.

The wonderful Black-capped Chickadee continued to be “everywhere”; while the Red-breasted Nuthatch was located by fewer observers, along with the White-breasted, noted only by John and Renee Levesque, the Jaski duo, the Telfords, and Steve. Brown Creepers were on the lists of Gary, the Telfords, and Sue.

The House Wren was noted only by the Telfords and Gary.

Golden-crowned Kinglets were spotted only by Gary and Sue, but no Ruby-crowns were located.

Among thrushes, the Eastern Bluebird was still about in few numbers and spotted by the Levesque pair and Gary; the Veery was also on Garry’s list; the Swainson's

Thrush was on John and Renee's list; and the Hermit Thrush was on the Sparks' list. The American Robin was still very numerous and seen by many.

Gray Catbirds were identified by the Levesque pair, Gary, and Denise. No Brown Thrashers were found.

European Starlings remained very abundant.

American Pipits were spotted only by the Levesque duo.

Cedar Waxwings were spotted by the Stoner pair, Gary, the Telfords, Sue, and Faye.

And so now we get to the some 17 warbler species spreading through the district (including the three new ones for the year). Many were in their fall plumage. Seen were the Nashville, Northern Parula, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Palm, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Wilson's.

Gary certainly found the majority, some 14 species; then came the Levesque pair with 7; the Telfords with 5; Sue and Denise with 4; the Jaski pair and Faye with 2; John, Therez, and the Sparks with 1.

A Scarlet Tanager was found by Gary.

The 5 fairly common sparrows, namely Chipping, Savannah, Song, Swamp and White-throat were identified by many participants. The Dark-eyed Junco was found only by Gary.

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak was on the list of Denise and Gary, who also saw the Indigo Bunting.

Bobolinks were spotted by Denise and Gary. Red-winged Blackbirds were still about in fair numbers. Eastern Meadowlarks were noted only by the Telfords. Common Grackles were reported by many. The Baltimore Oriole was identified at Cache Bay by the Levesque duo.

The Purple Finch was spotted only by Gary and Denise.

Some Pine Siskins were about, and along with the Evening Grosbeak, were watched by Faye.

The American Goldfinch seemed to be almost everywhere, while the House Sparrow was at its normal locations and noted by Gary, the Levesque pair, and Denise.

Which brings us to the end. Congrats to all participants! It was a grand list!

Look forward to the September Bird Bash over the **weekend of September 7-8**. This should be the busiest weekend in the Fall for our local birds. Plan for it!!

(Note: For those attending the September 7th Bird Wing outing at Garry Waldram's, you can count the birds on your way to Garry's, while you are on the outing at Garry's, and on your way home from Garry's, or you can do a combination of time at Garry's and time on Sunday as long as it is within your 24-hour consecutive period, or you can do all day Sunday.)