

## JANUARY 2017 BIRD BASH REPORT

*By Dick Tafel, Compiler*

A pretty winter weekend saw 27 local birders checking for birds during our first bird count of the New Year. Found were 35 species, just about average for the count during its past 14 years. (Last January we saw 39 species.) Because the species seen are new for the year, I will just report upon them all in roughly taxonomic order.

Our two wintering ducks, hundreds of Mallards and a few Black Ducks, continue their wintering survival within the North Bay water treatment plant. Many noted Mallards at various places, but only Renee Levesque and her associate, yours truly, observed the Blacks among the hundred or so Mallards at the treatment plant.

Only two predators were noted, a Northern Goshawk seen east of Powassan by Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing; and Bald Eagles, seen surprisingly by many, from Doug Patterson along the Ottawa River to the eleven seen by Gary and Connie Sturge in the Powassan and East Ferris areas.

Ruffed grouse were noted by several, including Doug in Mattawa, Elsa Tafel near Corbeil, and Ernie Frayle and Donna Demarco near Rutherglen. Rock Pigeons were, of course, seen by many, but Mourning Doves only by a few, including eleven along Centennial Crescent by the Levesque duo and one at Talon Lake by Steve Pitt.

Four species of woodpeckers were observed: the Downy and Hairy by many; the Pileated by fewer; and the rare Red-bellied only at the feeder of Mary Young in Corbeil.

Single Northern Shrikes were discovered by Grant and Shirley McKercher near Callander, the Anderson duo east of Powassan and the Levesque pair along Hwy 17 near Sturgeon Falls.

A few Gray Jays (suggested by some they should be deemed Canada's national bird) were found by the Martins, Keith Thornborrow, and the Levesque and Anderson duos. Blue Jays and Common Ravens were noted by many, of course, but American Crows only by those covering city areas.

Ten Horned Larks were observed by Chris Sukha at the Verner Co-op. Energetic Black-capped Chickadees were seen by everyone, and both Red and White-breasted Nuthatches were seen by almost as many. A Golden-crowned Kinglet was observed by Keith in South River.

Kaye Edmunds saw Bohemian Waxwings, as did Brent and Laura Turcotte, Gary Chowns, and the Levesque pair all within the city at miscellaneous berry trees.

American Tree Sparrows were at a few feeders, four of them at Ernie's and some at the Martin's. At Luanne and Gary Chowns' in the city, and at Keith's in South River, was a Song Sparrow, while the Turcottes had a Dark-eyed Junco at their place.

Chris also saw five Lapland Longspurs at the Verner Co-op. Snow Bunting flocks were enjoyed only by the Sturges and the Anderson and Levesque duos, the latter along Hwy 64.

There was a perhaps stricken Common Grackle at both Therez Violette's place in Sturgeon Falls and at Doug's in Mattawa. But probably the most amazing bird was discovered by the Turcottes and Gary Chowns - a seemingly female Brown-headed Cowbird sitting upon a blanket on the back of a horse at a nearby stable.

A few Pine Grosbeaks were discovered on both sides of Powassan, by the Anderson duo and by Gary and Connie Sturge. No Purple Finches or crossbills showed up, but a few Common Redpolls put in an appearance – seen by Chris, John Levesque, and the Turcottes. Pine Siskins were noted by several, including Keith, Kaye, and Mary Ann Kenrick. She and several others, including Pam and Peter Handley, saw the very many American Goldfinches showing up at feeders this winter. Evening Grosbeaks are back in good numbers and were seen by many.

House Sparrows were noted only by the Sturges, the Anderson duo and Chris.

A good number of birders turned out on a lovely weekend to observe our active winter birds for the first count of 2017. Congrats to all!

February's count weekend will be **February 18-19**. Mark it on your calendars.