

Bird Bash Report

May 2021

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

What grand weather to be able to be birding – within our Covid sanctions – with 30 participants observing some 137 species of birds over the weekend! That is about the average over the past 18 years, but greater than last year's 130!

As usual, we will begin in roughly taxonomic order (as per our Seasonal Checklist) with new birds noted for the year. And that starts with Redhead Ducks, noted within the prolific Warren Lagoon by Renee Levesque with yours truly, as well as by Chris Sukha, and at Callander by June and Kevin Telford.

Then we get to the Broad-winged Hawk finally appearing hereabouts and spotted by Denise Desmarais, Grant and Shirley McKercher, Gary and Connie Sturge, the Levesque duo, Lloyd and Janet Sparks, the Telfords, and Chris.

Chris also identified the Sora Rail.

Amidst a goodly number of shorebirds, the McKerchers noted the Black-bellied Plover, while within one or the other of the western lagoons. The Semipalmated Plover was seen by the Levesque duo and by Chris who also noted Lesser Yellowlegs, as did Denise. A Solitary Sandpiper was spotted by the Levesque pair who also saw Dunlin. In addition, they also watched Least and Spotted Sandpipers, as did the McKerchers and Chris who further found Semipalmated Sandpipers.

Bonaparte Gulls were discovered only by Chris at Warren Lagoon. Black Terns were there also and enjoyed by the Levesque pair, who also noted the Caspian Tern in Cache Bay, as did Chris and Denise.

Black-billed Cuckoos were found only by Mary Young, as well as Linda Stoner along with Rose McClelland.

The so-called Common Nighthawk was noted solely by the Sturges, while the Chimney Swift was spotted solely by April McCrum.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were here in large numbers and enjoyed surely by everyone who had feeders!

Now as to flycatchers – and many spotted many: The Olive-sided was watched only by

the Levesque pair at Beaucage Park Road. They also spotted the Great Crested, the Eastern Kingbird, and the Alder. The latter three were also noted by Chris; the Eastern Kingbird by Denise and the Anderson pair; the Great Crested, the Alder, the Eastern Wood Pewee, and the Least by Mary; the Least by Chris, the Anderson pair and the McKerchers; the Alder and the Great Crested by the McKerchers; the Great Crested by the Sparks and the Telfords; the Alder and the Eastern Kingbird by the Stoner pair and the Sturges; and finally the Eastern Wood Pewee by April.

Vireos had become numerous again since last year, with the Red-eyed being seen or heard almost everywhere. The Warbling, however, was seen (or heard) just by Chris, the McKerchers, Mary, the Anderson pair and the Levesque duo, who, along with John Levesque, also found the Philadelphia. The Sturges discovered the Blue-headed Vireo.

New Swallows were now about in good numbers, with the Barn seen by very many while the Bank and the Northern Rough-winged were seen only by the Levesque pair with the Northern Rough-winged also seen by Chris. Cliff Swallows were noted solely by Keith Thornborrow near South River, and by the Anderson duo at the Anderson farm. The Tree had been about last month and will be mentioned later in this report.

Some new wrens were identified: the House Wren has been at the Sparks, while the Marsh was noted by the Sturges.

One new thrush identified was the Veery, noted by the McKerchers, Gary and Luanne Chowns, the Levesque pair, the Sturges, Chris, April, Therez Violette, the Telfords, and Mary. The second new one was the Swainson's Thrush identified only by the Telfords.

Brown Thrashers were on several lists this month, namely the Stoner pair, Mary, the Sturges, the Anderson and Levesque duos, Therez, Keith, the Chowns, Donna Demarco, and the McKerchers.

Cedar Waxwings, seemingly slow this year to arrive, were spotted by just a few, namely the Levesque pair, the McKerchers, Mary, the Sturges, and Chris.

Now to the lovely wood warblers: seventeen new ones were identified. I will contain the notations firstly to those seen by just one or two participants, and then add the balance. And so we start with the Tennessee seen solely by Chris, who had seventeen warblers altogether from his early Saturday morning hike near the town of Field! He was also the only one to spot the Magnolia and Northern Waterthrush. Sue Gratton identified the only Cape May. Mary and Chris noted both the Canada and the Mourning Warblers. The Telfords also noted the lovely Canada. The Sturges and Chris found the beautiful Northern Parula. The magnificent Black-throated Blue was spotted only by April, Chris, and the Sturges. Just four sighted the amazing Blackburnians, namely Faye

Oei, April, Sue, and Chris. The Nashville was identified only by the Levesque pair, the Sturges, Mary, and Chris. Black and Whites were noted only by April, the Anderson pair, Mary, and Chris. Black-throated Greens were found by Chris, Mary, the Sturges, the Telfords, and April. American Redstarts and Common Yellowthroats seemed to be the most often found, with the Yellow Warbler, Ovenbird, and Chestnut-sided being close behind.

Now we get to the super-natural Scarlet Tanager, surely one of the most exotic birds found within our jurisdiction. It was spotted by Keith near his home in South River.

Then a couple more beauties: the Indigo Bunting enjoyed by the Levesque pair off Marsh Drive, and the Baltimore Oriole flashing orange for them along the Veuve River, and for the Anderson pair east of Powassan. (The Levesque duo also heard one at Cache Bay by the trailer park.)

Busy Bobolinks were out in fairly large numbers displaying for the Anderson and Levesque duos, Mary, the Sturges, Chris, the Stoner duo, and the McKerchers.

And so, that concludes the lengthy list of new birds spotted for the first time this year at a Bird Bash. Now we will get to the birds noted in previous months, continuing in the same general order.

That means, as always, we start with the Common Loon. This iconic species seems not to have been as common as in previous Bird Bashes, being noted only by Keith, Denise, Faye, Mary, the Sparks, Steve Pitt, and Chris.

Double-crested Cormorants seem to have withstood much of the massacre foisted upon them by last year's provincial edict, and were noted by Chris, the Sturges, Denise, and the Levesque pair.

American Bitterns were a bit surprisingly fairly numerous, observed by the Levesque pair, the McKerchers, the Anderson duo, the Sturges, Mary, the Stoner pair, and Chris.

Great Blue Herons were upon the lists of Chris, the Sparks, the Sturges, Denise, Keith, the Telfords, Donna, and the Levesque duo.

Turkey Vultures glided by Faye, the Levesque pair, Sue, the McKerchers, the Sturges, Mary, the Stoner pair, Chris, the Telfords, Steve, Donna, and the Sparks.

Canada Geese were still about in large numbers! But no swans!

Now as to the ducks: Most were easily spotted in any of the various lagoons. That

includes the so-called puddle ducks of Gadwalls, Wood Ducks, American Wigeon, American Black Duck (one only spotted by the Levesque pair at Verner Lagoon), Mallards (everywhere), Blue and Green-winged Teal, and Northern Shovelers. These ducks were mostly noted by Chris, Denise, the McKerchers and the Levesque pair, with Black and Wood Ducks also being noted by Keith near South River, and Green and Blue-winged Teal being noted by the Telfords.

Some diving ducks, namely Lesser Scaup, were still within the lagoons and seen by some; Ring-necked Ducks and Hooded Mergansers were found by Keith and Chris; Common Goldeneye by the McKerchers and the Telfords; and Common Mergansers by the Levesque pair (off Jocko Point), Faye, the Telfords, and the McKerchers.

Ospreys were watched by Therez, Chris, Denise, Keith, the Sparks, and the Levesque pair. Northern Harriers were spotted by the Levesque pair, Steve, and the Anderson duo. Bald Eagles were noted only by the McKerchers, the Telfords, and the Levesque pair. American Kestrel were seen by the McKerchers, the Sparks, Denise, and the Levesque pair, who also spotted the Merlin, as did Chris and John Levesque.

Ruffed Grouse were on the lists of the Sturges, the McKerchers, Keith, Denise, the Stoner pair, the Sparks, the Telfords, Steve, Donna, and Chris. Wild Turkeys, clearly becoming more common, were found by Keith, the McKerchers, and the Anderson pair.

Virginia Rail were found this month by the Levesque duo and the Sturges.

Sandhill Cranes persist, and were discovered by Chris, the Levesque duo, the Anderson pair, Steve, Donna, and the Sturges.

Among the shorebirds, Killdeer were pretty plentiful, being noted by the Sturges, the McKerchers, the Levesque duo, Denise, Chris, and Keith. Greater Yellowlegs were spotted by Chris.

Wilson's Snipe were discovered by the McKerchers and the Sturges, who also observed American Woodcock, as did Chris, and the Anderson pair.

Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were very plentiful, as were the Rock Pigeons. Mourning Doves were less common, but were seen by many, including the Sparks, Keith, the Sturges, the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, Therez, the Levesque duo, the Telfords, Steve, and John.

The Barred Owl continues to be noted (this is its fourth consecutive Bird Bash), observed this month by Chris and the Anderson duo. But no other owls were heard or seen.

Belted Kingfishers were not particularly common, but were spotted by the McKerchers, Sue, the Sturges, Keith, and Faye.

As to woodpeckers, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker and Hairy Woodpeckers were upon many lists. But the Downy seemed to be less noticeable, spotted just by Chris, Steve, and the Anderson duo. The Pileated was upon the lists only of the Sturges, Chris, and the Anderson pair.

Eastern Phoebes were upon more lists this month, namely that of Chris, the McKerchers, Mary, the Sturges, Denise, Keith, the Sparks, Steve, and the Chowns.

Now as to jays and crows: The Canada Jay was upon only Keith's list; Blue Jays, Common Ravens and American Crows were, however, very widely dispersed.

Tree Swallows were here last month in small numbers, but now seem to be a major swallow, noted by many.

Black-capped Chickadees were as common as ever, certainly a good thing!

Nuthatches seemed perhaps to be hiding with the Red-breasted observers limited to Denise, the Sturges, Sue, the Telfords, Renee and John, Steve, Donna, and Chris, while with the White-breasted was seen only by Steve and the McKerchers.

Winter Wrens were found by the Telfords, April, Chris, and the Levesque duo.

Kinglets were still about though tough to find and identify in the now very green forests. But the Ruby-crowned was noted by the Sturges and Chris, who also saw the Golden-crowned.

As to previously seen thrushes, the Eastern Bluebird was noticeable but seen only by the Stoner pair and the Anderson duo. The Hermit Thrush was sighted (or heard) only by Chris. American Robins were, very pleasingly, now everywhere!

The Gray Catbird was spotted by the Chowns, the Sparks, the Levesque duo, the Anderson pair, Denise, the Sturges, and Mary.

European Starlings, a commonly seen species, were often seen in large flocks.

Two warbler species had been noted last month, namely the Yellow-rumped, seen again, by the Sturges, April, and Chris, and the Pine spotted only by the Sturges and Mary.

No new sparrow species were seen this month, but five previous ones were seen again, namely Chipping, Savannah, Song, Swamp and White-throats. Only Chris and the McKerchers saw them all; others who noted the Chipping were Mary, the Sturges, Sue, Cindy Lafleur, the Anderson duo, Renee, the Chowns, April, Faye, Chris, and the Telfords; Savannahs were identified by the Levesque pair, the Stoner duo, the Anderson pair, Denise, and the Sturges; Swamp Sparrows were discovered by the Levesque pair; Songs and White-throats were observed by many participants.

Remarkably what showed up for the fifth month in a row was a Northern Cardinal, spotted this month by Cindy!

The pretty and loquacious Rose-breasted Grosbeak was certainly enjoyed by the Levesque pair, Keith, the Sturges, Mary, and Steve.

Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles were now among our most common birds and seen by most participants.

The Eastern Meadowlark was around, but not in large numbers, seen by the Sturges, as well as the Anderson, Stoner and Levesque duos.

Brown-headed Cowbirds were discovered only by the Chowns and Keith.

Purple Finches were in the area in fair numbers and observed by Pam and Peter Handley, Therez, Steve, Chris, Mary, Donna, and the Sturges.

A few Pine Siskins have remained and were noted by Chris and Steve.

The very pretty American Goldfinch showed up in small numbers, spotted by the Levesque and Anderson duos, the Sturges, Mary, Steve, Cindy, Therez, and the Chowns.

A few Evening Grosbeaks remained, noted only by Steve.

Finally, the lowly and much inappropriately maligned House Sparrow was observed by the Anderson pair, the Sturges, and Chris.

And that concludes a busy May Bird Bash. Congratulations to all participants who despite the constraints inflicted upon their movements by the soon to end (we hope) Covid restrictions, brought forth such a good number of local birds.

Before we know it, we will be upon a likely slightly slower month of birds for the June Bird Bash slated for the **weekend of June 12**. Plan for it!