

Bird Bash Report

July 2017

By Dick Tafel, compiler

It was a lovely weekend, but maybe too beguiling for some for there were just 12 seeking our local birds. Still, these 12 did quite well, finding some 98 species compared to 99 last year, although some relatively common ones were missed.

Starting as usual with the new ones found for the year, we must begin with the Ruddy Duck. This has rarely been seen in this district, being primarily a western bird. However, one was busy diving at the northeast cell of Powassan Lagoon and identified on Sunday by Renee Levesque and yours truly. They also saw several shorebirds that had begun their escape south, all in low-lying sections of the various lagoons. These included the Semipalmated Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, and Least Sandpiper. They also found a Brewer's Blackbird on Eugene Road in West Nipissing.

Now to the previously noted birds of this year, following rough taxonomic order, we start with the Common Loon. This iconic species was observed by Elsa Tafel in Trout Lake, by Grant and Shirley McKercher in Callander Bay, and by Steve Pitt in Talon Lake. The Pied-billed Grebe was in Cache Bay, observed by the Levesque duo. Double-crested Cormorants were observed also by the latter three groups.

The American Bittern was found by Gary and Connie Sturge, Kaye Edmunds, and the Levesque pair, and the Great Blue Heron, by the same participants, as well as the McKerchers. Green Heron were identified by Kaye and the Levesque duo.

Turkey Vultures were noted by most groups, as, of course, were Canada Geese. Nine species of ducks, including Hooded Mergansers, were found, mostly in various lagoons. However, neither teal was identified, and the only south-migrating one was a lonely Lesser Scaup seen by the Levesque pair at Powassan Lagoon. No Common Mergansers were spotted.

Among the predators, Osprey was certainly noticeable in many areas, as was the Northern Harrier. The Sturges located a Red-tailed Hawk and Merlin near Powassan. American Kestrels were widespread. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was discovered near the North Bay lakefront by the Levesque pair. They also observed Bald Eagles near Cache Bay. Interestingly, the most common hawk, the Broad-winged, was not discovered.

Now Ruffed Grouse are sort of in hiding at this time of year, but the Sturges and Kaye

each found one. And Kaye also spotted Sandhill Cranes. One American Coot was at the Warren Lagoon, located there by the Levesque duo. Shorebirds seen again during July's Bird Bash included the Killdeer and Spotted Sandpipers, common at most lagoons, while Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and a Short-billed Dowitcher were spotted by the McKerchers at Callander Lagoon; Lesser Yellowlegs by the Levesque duo at Verner and Warren Lagoons; and a Short-billed Dowitcher with an especially long bill (but not identified as a Long-billed Dowitcher), by the Levesque pair at Warren Lagoon. They also spotted Wilson's Snipe swooping across their car as dusk approached.

Our two common gull species were almost everywhere, while Caspian Terns and Common Terns were discovered at Cache Bay by yours truly. Mourning Doves were observed by Mary Ann Kenrick, among others. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were spotted by Elsa and several others. The Belted Kingfisher was spotted by the Levesque pair and Kaye.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Pileated Woodpecker were noted by John Levesque, and the latter species also by the McKerchers, while Northern Flickers were observed by most. However, our two main woodpeckers were rather scarce, though Mary Ann did see both at her place within the city.

Getting on to the flycatchers, the Eastern Wood Pewee was spotted by the Sturges near Powassan, as was the Eastern Phoebe, also noted by the Levesque duo and the McKerchers. The latter also found the Great Crested and the Least Flycatchers. Eastern Kingbirds were seen by Kaye, the Sturges and the Levesque pair.

Red-eyed Vireos were still rather ubiquitous, but only the Levesque pair observed the Warbling Vireo, with Renee identifying a Philadelphia Vireo. Blue Jays and American Crows were widespread, Common Ravens somewhat less so, the latter identified by Donna Demarco, among others. Tree and Barn Swallows were the only swallows noted.

Black-capped Chickadees were common, but of the two nuthatches that were noticed, only the McKerchers and Kaye discovered the White-breasted. John observed Brown Creepers near his home within the north part of the city. American Robins were everywhere, but, somewhat surprisingly, only the Sturges found Veery and Hermit Thrushes. But no wrens, kinglets, Eastern Bluebirds and Indigo Buntings were noticed.

The Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher were observed by Kaye, the Sturges and the Levesque duo, the latter two in Laurier Woods. Cedar Waxwings were widely noted by the Sturges, the McKerchers, and the Levesque pair.

Only 8 species of Wood Warblers were discovered - Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Yellow-rumped, Pine, Black and White, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, and Canada.

Somehow, even the usually seen (or heard) Ovenbird was overlooked.

As to sparrows, the common ones - Chipping, Savannah, Song, Swamp and White-throated - were all accounted for. The Rose-breasted Grosbeak, a young one, was observed only by Renee. But Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlarks, and Common Grackles were fairly widely observed. The Brown-headed Cowbird and House Sparrows were found only by the Sturges. Purple Finches were about, observed by Steve, Peter and Pam Handley. American Goldfinches were seen by many.

And so that concludes the report of the July Bird Bash for the district. Well done all!

The August bash will be during the **last weekend of August – the 26 and 27. Plan for it!**