

Bird Bash Report June 2021

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Another lovely weekend and another good one for our birding results! A total of 28 participants managed to find and identify some 121 different species! At our 18th consecutive June Bird Bash, we ended up just a bit above average over that period. Last year we found 118 species.

Now as to new birds for the year, about which we regularly commence our tabulation in roughly taxonomic order (actually following the *North Bay and Area Seasonal Checklist*), we will start with the Green Heron. This neat fellow was spotted by Denise Desmarais in Cache Bay and by Gary, Connie and Rachel Sturge. The latter threesome also noted the next new bird for the year, the Wood Thrush. And that completes “new birds” for this year's Bird Bashes.

And so we get to those birds previously spotted, starting as usual with the Common Loon, seen by June and Kevin Telford, Steve Pitt, Lloyd and Janet Sparks, Faye Oei, Denise, Grant and Shirley McKercher, Renee Levesque along with your compiler, and Chris Sukha.

Chris also spotted Pied-billed Grebe and Double-crested Cormorant in Cache Bay. The cormorant was also seen by the McKerchers, the Sparks, Steve (not “Double-breasted”, by the way), the Sturges, Denise, and Brent and Laura Turcotte with their children, Teagan and Victoria.

American Bitterns were discovered only by the Turcotte group, the Sturges, Lori Anderson, and Steve. Those four groups also spotted the widespread Great Blue Heron, as did the Telfords, Denise, Faye, the McKerchers, the Levesque pair, Linda Stoner with Rose McClelland, and Greg Jaski.

Turkey Vultures flew over Chris, the Levesque pair, Greg, the McKerchers, Mary Young, the Sparks, the Telfords, Denise, Lori, the Sturges, and Steve.

Canada Geese remained upon most lists, now often with their goslings.

As to the many local “puddle” ducks, we must mention Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Black Ducks, Mallards, Blue and Green-winged Teal, and Northern Shovelers. All of them remain within most of our local lagoons, as well as some in marsh ponds.

A few Ring-necked Ducks were around, spotted by Chris and the Levesque duo. The latter pair also spotted a family of Common Goldeneye in Lake Nipissing near Beaucage Park Road. They also watched one male Bufflehead at Powassan Lagoon, such species also noted by the Sturges. A Hooded Merganser family was observed by Chris, along with the Levesque pair at Warren Lagoon. The latter duo also saw Common Merganser families, as did the Telfords and Steve.

Now to the main predators, starting with the Osprey. Fewer were around than expected, being noted only by the McKerchers, Greg, the Levesque pair, Denise, and Chris. Northern Harrier

were watched by the Sturges, Chris, the Levesque duo, and Lori. Broad-winged Hawks were on the lists of Mary, the Sparks, Lori, Greg, the Levesque duo, Chris and the Sturges. The latter three groups also spotted Bald Eagles, as did the McKerchers and the Telfords. Both American Kestrel and Merlin were noted by the Levesque duo, with the Kestrel noted by Chris, Denise, the Sturges, the Sparks, and Lori, and the Merlin noted by John Levesque.

Ruffed Grouse were on the lists only of Denise, the Sturges, and the Turcottes. Wild Turkeys were located solely by Lori.

The marsh-hiding Virginia Rail was discovered only by the Sturges, who also noted Sandhill Cranes, as did Lori, the Turcottes, the Levesque duo, Sue Gratton, and the Stoner pair.

There still were some shorebirds in the area. Semipalmated Plovers were spotted at Warren Lagoon by the Levesque duo and Chris. They also saw Killdeer, as did the Turcottes and the Sturges. Spotted Sandpipers were noted by the Sturges, Greg, the Levesque duo and Chris, who was the only one to identify the Semipalmated Sandpiper.

American Woodcock were noted only by Renee, the Sparks, and the Sturges.

Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were very common, but Black Terns were discovered only by Chris at Cache Bay, while diving Caspian Terns were seen there only by him and the Levesque pair. No Common Terns have been identified yet at any Bird Bash this year.

Rock Pigeons were ubiquitous, while Mourning Doves continued widely about, but in much lesser numbers.

The Black-billed Cuckoo was recognized again by Mary and also by the Turcottes.

No owls were noted.

Chimney Swifts were discovered by the McKerchers, Brent, and Chris.

The amazing Ruby-throated Hummingbirds made a very wide presence – just about everywhere within the district - and not just at feeders!

The always active Belted Kingfisher was spotted by Chris, Steve, Denise, the Levesque duo, and the Stoner pair.

Among the woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reasonably common, being noted by the Stoner pair, the Turcottes, the Levesque duo, the Sturges, Denise, the Sparks, Steve, Sue, and Chris. Northern Flickers seemed to be the most common. Downys were spotted only by Steve and Chris, who also had the Hairy, a woodpecker also upon the Turcotte list. It seems our common wintertime woodpeckers are out in the nesting woods, with few feeders to tempt them inwardly. Pileateds were a bit more noticeable, being seen by the Sturges, Denise, John and Faye.

The flycatchers were quite widely noted, except for the Olive-sided. The Eastern Wood Pewee was observed only by the Levesque pair and Chris, both of whom also saw Alders, as did the Sturges, the Turcottes, and Mary; the Least was identified by the Levesque pair, Mary, and Chris, who also saw the Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher and Eastern Kingbird; the latter two birds were also noted by the Levesque pair; the Phoebe and Great Crested were spotted by the McKerchers, the Telfords, and Mary; the Eastern Phoebe and the Kingbird were located by Denise and the Sturges; the Phoebe was seen by Steve and the Sparks; and finally the Great Crested was seen by the Turcottes and Greg.

Red-eyed Vireos seemed to be everywhere and noted by many. The Warbling was noted by the Levesque duo, Chris, Mary, the Turcottes, Greg, and the McKerchers. The Philadelphia was identified by the Levesque duo and by the Sturges, who also had the Blue-headed on their list.

The Canada Jay (formerly called Gray Jay) was briefly spotted by Renee on the back part of the Riding Stable Road (off Hwy 17 West). It has not been easy to spot around here this year, though it has been upon our Bird Bash list for all but one month. Blue Jays remained quite common, though they are more within the bush now rather than at foodless local feeders.

American Crows remained very common. Common Ravens were not quite as commonplace, but outside the housed municipalities they were sometimes more regular than crows.

Now to swallows: Tree Swallows remained the most common. Chris was the only one to identify the Rough-winged. He also saw both Barn and Bank, as did the Sturges and the Levesque duo. Steve also saw the Barn, as did Lori, who was the only one to identify the Cliff, a swallow which is nesting right at Lori's home east of Powassan.

Black-capped Chickadees were around, though not quite as common as when feeders were more needed and operating.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch was noted by Chris, Steve, Renee, the Telfords, John, Faye, and the Turcottes. But the White-breasted was only upon the list of Denise.

The House Wren was noted solely by the Levesque pair at Vic Rizzo's home. They also noted the Winter Wren, as did the Sturges, the Turcottes, and the Telfords.

Both kinglets were recognized by the Sturges, with only the Ruby-crowned being spotted by Chris and by the Turcottes.

As to thrushes previously seen, the Eastern Bluebird was present for the third consecutive month and enjoyed only by the Stoner pair. Veerys and American Robins were very widely dispersed, but the Hermit was recognized only by the Sturges.

The Gray Catbird was noted by Chris, Denise, Mary, Chris, the Sturges, and the Levesque pair, the latter four groups also finding the Brown Thrasher, along with the Sparks, Steve, and the Turcottes.

The European Starling was another one of those “ubiquitous” species, spotted all over.

Cedar Waxwings seemed mostly to be in pairs, and were spotted by the Turcottes, Chris, Mary, Denise, Lori, Steve, the Levesque duo, Greg, and the Sturges.

We have now reached the wonderful wood warblers. Seventeen species were identified among 26 potentially possible in our area. Very strange as it might be, the one warbler most of us would ascribe as the most numerous within our area, the Yellow-rumped, was noticed by only four groups – the Sturges, Denise, Chris and Greg. The especially beautiful Northern Paula was identified only by the Telfords, while the striking Black-throated Blue was spotted only by the Sturges. The magnificent Blackburnian was found by the Levesque duo, the Telfords, the Turcottes, and Denise. The American Redstart seemed to be the most commonly discovered – by Chris, Steve, the Levesque pair, the Sparks, Greg, the Telfords, the Sturges, Denise, the McKerchers, and Mary. The noisy Ovenbird was close behind, being noted by the Telfords, the Sturges, the Levesque pair, Chris, Mary, the McKerchers, Denise, Peter and Pam Handley, and the Turcottes. One wonders whether anyone actually saw that latter mid-forest warbler whose voice is so decipherable at *teacher, teacher, teacher*.

As to other unique warbler species, the Turcottes and Mary were the only ones to find the neatly named Canada. The Mourning was enjoyed only by Chris, Mary, John, and the Levesque duo. The Pine was on the list only of Greg, the Sturges, the Levesque pair, and Chris. The oddly one out, with little distinguishing colours, the Northern Waterthrush, was recognized only by the Levesque pair and the Turcottes.

A common specie and easy to recognize both by its shredded wheat call and simple visage is the Yellow Warbler. It was spotted by the Turcottes, Mary, the McKerchers, Chris, Steve, Greg, the Levesque duo, the Sturges, and the Telfords. The Common Yellowthroat (also common to find) was found by the Turcottes, Mary, the McKerchers, Chris, Greg, John, the Levesque pair, the Telfords, and the Sturges. Finally, another common warbler specie, and easy to identify was the Chestnut-sided. It was enjoyed by the Levesque pair, the Sturges, John, Greg, the McKerchers, Chris, Denise, Mary, the Handleys, and the Turcottes.

Finally - just a few more – there was the Black and White found by Mary, the Turcottes, Chris, the Sturges, and the Levesque pair; the Magnolia on the lists of the Sturges, the Levesque pair, Denise, and Chris; the Nashville noted by Mary, the Turcottes, and Chris; and finally the Black-throated Green identified by the Turcottes, the Sturges and the Telfords.

That was quite a wonderful listing of unique boreal forest birds not found on other continents, except in the winter.

The next bird on our list is the luscious Scarlet Tanager. It was located only by the Sparks.

Now as to sparrows: The Chipping, Song and White-throats were spotted by many, but the Savannah was identified only by the Levesque pair, Chris, Denise, the Sturges, and Lori; the Swamp by the Sturges, Chris, the Turcottes, Mary, Denise, Greg and the Levesque pair; and a White-crowned, still around, by Steve.

No cardinals came into anyone's presence, but the Rose-breasted Grosbeak was noted by the Levesque pair, Steve, Denise, the Turcottes, and the Sturges. And the scintillating Indigo Bunting was enjoyed much by the Levesque pair on Beaucage Park Road.

Bobolinks were relatively common, being noted by Lori, the Sturges, Chris, the Turcottes, Denise, and the Levesque pair. Red-winged Blackbirds seemed to be almost everywhere, as were Common Grackles. Eastern Meadowlarks were spotted only by the Levesque pair, Mary, Chris, the Sturges, and Lori. Baltimore Orioles were discovered only by the Sturges and the Levesque pair. No Brown-headed Cowbirds showed up.

Purple Finches were detected only by the Levesque pair and the Sturges.

The American Goldfinch was now fairly widespread, being noted by Mary, Denise, the Turcottes, Chris, the Levesque pair, the Sturges, John, the Sparks, the Handleys, and Steve, who was the only one who still had the Evening Grosbeak in sight.

Finally, as always, the often wrongly maligned House Sparrows, spotted only by Lori and Chris.

And so that is it. Once again, a very successful Bird Bash! Congrats to all participants. You are the causes of our many local birding discoveries.

The July Bird Bash will take place the last weekend of the month, **July 24-25**. There should be some species returning by then, along with lots of young. Plan for it!