

Bird Bash Report

October 2021

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

A surprisingly good result considering the rather rainy weekend that we experienced! Slightly above average results for this month over the last 19 years - we had our first Bird Bash in October 2003: 90 species seen by 21 observers! Last year during this month, we observed 89 species.

So let's get to those species noted for the first time this year in our normal order of the Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area. That starts with a Horned Grebe off Sunset Park spotted by Renee Levesque and yours truly, and Grant and Shirley McKercher, who also saw a Red-necked Grebe within Callander Bay. Those two pairs also found a Snow Goose near the elementary school off Riverbend Road, while the McKerchers also spotted a Northern Goshawk near their home. A Red-tailed Hawk was spotted by Dan Burton, and a Great Black-backed Gull by the McKerchers.

A very rare Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, four of them, were spotted at Powassan Lagoon by Stephen O'Donnell and Craig Evans. This bird was first brought to our attention by Vernon Buckle from Labrador who some of you may remember from our bird outing a few years back.

Rusty Blackbirds were spotted by Dan and Gary and Connie Sturge, the latter pair also identifying the rare Brewer's Blackbird.

And now to those birds previously noted during this year, starting with the Common Loon, still around and noted by Lori Anderson with Ken Gowing, Denise Desmarais, Steve Pitt, the Levesque duo, Dan, Faye Oei, and the McKerchers who saw a flock of 23 – or, more accurately, an asylum of loons.

Pied-billed Grebes were spotted by the Levesque pair and Denise at Cache Bay.

A few Double-crested Cormorants were seen by the McKerchers, the Levesque and the Anderson pairs, Steve, and Dan.

The Great Blue Heron was spotted only by Steve and the Anderson pair.

Turkey Vultures, most of them soaring, were noted by Faye, the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, Fred Pinto, Bill and Carol Fleming, Greg Jaski, Dan, the Sturges, Steve, and the Levesque duo who saw some 30 of them sitting in trees on Beaudry Road.

Canada Geese were still around, usually in large numbers, and seen by very many.

Trumpeter Swans were spotted by the Levesque pair, 5 of them off 10th Street and 2 off Margaret Drive, and by Greg who saw 9 fly over Premier Road.

Now as to puddle ducks: Lots were still within the major lagoons, namely Wood Ducks, American Widgeon, Gadwall, American Black, Mallards, Blue and Green-winged Teals, Northern Shovelers, and Northern Pintail. All these were noted by the Levesque duo and the McKerchers. Several others also found Mallards and Wood Ducks, namely the Sturges, the Flemings, Steve, and Greg, while Mallards and Blacks were spotted by Fred. Wood, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal and Mallards were noted by the Anderson pair, and Northern Shoveler and American Widgeon by Denise. Dan found just Mallards.

As to divers: Ring-necked Ducks, Redheads, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead (one a female), and Common Goldeneye were also found by the Levesque duo and the McKerchers in the lagoons. The Anderson pair also spotted Ring-necks and Goldeneye. Hooded Mergansers were observed by Greg, while both the Hooded and Common Mergansers were found by the McKerchers and the Levesque pair, with just the Common Mergansers being spotted by the Flemings, Dan, and the Sturges. A raft of Greater Scaup was watched by the Levesque duo off Beaucage Park Road.

Which gets us to hawks, etc.: No Osprey any more, but the Northern Harrier was spotted by Dan, the McKerchers, and the Anderson duo, which also found a Cooper's Hawk near Alderdale Road. A Bald Eagle was also spotted by Dan. American Kestrel were still quite numerous and were spotted by the Levesque duo, the McKerchers, Greg, the Sturges, Dan, and Greg, the latter two also spotting Merlin.

Still no Spruce Grouse, but Ruffed Grouse were sighted by Steve and Denise, with both it and Wild Turkey found by the Sturges and the Anderson duo, while the McKerchers came upon just the Wild Turkey.

Common Gallinules were spotted at Cache Bay by the Anderson and Levesque duos, the latter of which also spotted American Coot at Callander Lagoon.

Sandhill Cranes were still in amazing abundance and were spotted by the McKerchers, the Anderson duo, Denise, the Levesque pair, and Greg.

No shorebirds at all were observed upon this Bird Bash. But one Bonaparte's Gull was noticed by the Anderson pair. And both Ring-billed and Herring Gulls found lots of observers. No terns were noticed, presumably now on their way south.

Rock Pigeons were as ubiquitous as ever, while Mourning Doves were spotted only by the Sturges, Fred, April McCrum, Steve, the Levesque duo, and the McKerchers.

The hummingbirds seemingly had left.

The Belted Kingfisher was spotted only by Greg and Dan.

Which gets us to the woodpeckers: No sapsuckers, but Downys were located by the Flemings, the Sturges, Greg, Elsa Tafel, Pete and Pam Handley and Dan; Hairys were noted by the Sturges, the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, the Flemings, Steve, Faye, Gary and Luanne Chowns, and the Levesque duo. The latter group also found the Northern Flicker, as did the Chowns, Dan, Denise, and Fred. He also found the Pileated, as did the Anderson pair, the Flemings, the McKerchers, April, Steve, the Sturges and Greg.

The only flycatcher to still be around was the Eastern Phoebe spotted by the Sturges.

The Canada Jay, absent at a Bird Bash since June, was finally noted by Donna Demarco. Blue Jays remained very numerous, as were American Crows. Common Ravens (often by their hoarse voices) were identified by the Levesque duo, the Sturges, Greg, the McKerchers, the Anderson pair, Fred, Dan, Denise, the Flemings, and Steve.

No swallows any more, not even at our September “bash”.

Black-capped Chickadees seemed to be even more plentiful, seen by most participants.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch was spotted by Donna, Faye, Denise, the Sturges, and April. Both it and the White-breasted were seen by Elsa, Dan, Steve, the Handleys, and the Flemings, while Greg, and the Chowns just saw the White-breasted.

The Brown Creeper was spotted only by John Levesque at his home area.

John and Renee saw Golden-crowned Kinglets, as did the Anderson duo, while Dan saw both kinglets, the Golden-crowned and the Ruby-crowned, and the Sturges just the Ruby-crowned.

There were still some thrushes around. Eastern Bluebirds were much enjoyed by the Levesques at their home area, by the Sturges, and by Dan. American Robins were not too plentiful, but were spotted by Dan, John, the Anderson and Levesque pairs, the McKerchers, Denise, April, the Flemings, the Sturges, the Handleys, and Fred, who also spotted the Veery.

Fred was the only one to spot the Brown Thrasher.

European Starlings were still about in great abundance.

American Pipits, sometimes in large numbers, were watched by the Sturges, the Levesque and Anderson duos, Dan, and Greg.

Cedar Waxwings were found only by Fred and John.

Now as to warblers, there were still a few discovered: Palm, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow-rumped by Dan; the latter two birds plus Chestnut-sided by Fred; the Pine plus the Yellow-rumped by Greg; the Yellow-rumped and Palm by the Anderson pair; and solely the Yellow-rumped by the Levesque duo, Denise, John, and the McKerchers.

Sparrows: Lots of them were about, but sometimes tough to identify. The Chipping was found by April, Fred, the Sturges, the Anderson duo, and Dan. Song, White-throats and White-crowned were spotted by Denise, the Levesque pair, Greg, April, Fred, the Sturges, Dan, and the Anderson duo who also saw Savannahs, as did the Levesque pair. Dan also saw Swamp Sparrows. White-crowns and White-throats were also spotted by the Flemings, Elsa, John, and the Chowns. Faye also saw Song Sparrows as did the McKerchers, and Donna and the McKerchers saw White-crowns. The Handleys saw White-throats.

Dark-eyed Juncos were seen by the Chowns, the Flemings, Dan, Fred, the Anderson pair, the Sturges, and April.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found by Greg and Dan. Eastern Meadowlarks were spotted only by the Anderson pair.

Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles remained in large flocks throughout the area, seen by many of our participants.

Purple Finches were located only by Fred, the Sturges, and the Flemings.

American Goldfinches seemed to be coming back in larger numbers, being spotted by Dan, Fred, Elsa, Steve, Denise, the Sturges, and the Flemings.

Meanwhile, the often demeaned, but energetic House Sparrow was on the lists of the Anderson, the Levesque pair, and the McKerchers.

That concludes a very successful October Bird Bash. Congrats to everyone who

participated!

Our next Bird Bash is set for the first weekend in November, **November 6 and 7**. Be ready for it!