

## **Bird Bash Report**

### **October 2022**

*By Dick Tafel, Compiler*

Some nice fall weather, but slightly shy of participants with only 19 participating. Still despite the lower than normal number of participants, 90 species were observed! This is the same number as last year and a bit above the average for October's counts during the past 20 years. (The first local monthly count was in October 2003.)

And so let's get going with the new species for 2022, following generally our traditional order of the *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area* within a 50 mile or 80.5 radius centred in North Bay.

The first bird to be noted is the Mute Swan a species very rare here, and many would suggest was actually a domesticated one, identified by Bill and Carol Fleming off Memorial Drive, east of Powassan.

Then there is the rare Red-shouldered Hawk spotted and watched for some time soaring in circles in the sky near Callander Lagoon by Renee Levesque and yours truly. This hawk has not previously appeared upon any previous Bird Bash results.

The latter pair also spotted only one American Coot within the said lagoon. It is normally fairly common in these parts, especially in October.

Next there was a Great Horned Owl heard at dusk by Ken Gowing near his home east of Powassan.

Finally the very hard to find Black-backed Woodpecker was discovered by Gary and Connie Sturge adjacent to a thick-spruced area between South River and Sundridge.

Now to the birds spotted at earlier Bird Bashes this year, following the same general order. And so we begin with the Common Loon. This month, for some reason, it was seen only by Steve Pitt in Lake Talon and by Faye Oei in Eagle Lake.

Then we get to the Pied-billed Grebe where more than 10 were watched in Cache Bay by the Levesque duo.

Double-crested Cormorants, about 40 of them, were located solely by the Levesque duo and by Steve. He also found the only American Bittern of this Bash, at a farm area near Astorville. Great Blue Herons were not as common as might have been expected, but were spotted by Lloyd and Janet Sparks, Greg Jaski, the Flemings, and the Sturges.

Turkey Vultures were still about in fair numbers and were noted by the previous four groups and by Mary Young, Lori Anderson, Faye, Steve, and the Levesque duo.

Canada Geese remained very plentiful and were seen by most of the participants.

Now we get to the dabbling ducks. The Mallard was seen by most. Others, such as Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Ducks, Blue and Green-winged Teals, and Northern Shoveler were able to be readily spotted by those, like the Levesque pair and the Sturges who had managed to get into any of the five sewage lagoons within the district. They are the same birds as have been similarly spotted within the past 7 months. The Northern Pintail is a rarer local specie and was noted during only 3 months, including this one, this time by the Levesque pair and the Sturges. The Wood Duck was also seen by the Levesque pair and the Sturges, as well as by Steve, Faye, and Mary.

As to diving ducks, the Redhead was found for only the second time this year by the Levesque duo. The Sturges and Levesque duo also identified the Ring-necked Duck. The latter duo found Greater and Lesser Scaup, with the Lesser Scaup also seen by Greg and the Flemings. The normally common Buffleheads at this time of the year had not yet shown up, but the Common Goldeneye was found by the Levesque duo along with Hooded Mergansers, both within a lagoon. They also spotted a concentrated flock of 90 Common Mergansers within Lake Nipissing, the same specie also being noted by the Sturges.

Predator hawks are always interesting, but many have already migrated. This time the Northern Harrier was still fairly plentiful, being watched by Lori with Ken and by the Levesque duo. The latter duo and the Sturges also identified Red-tailed Hawks, the last time on our Bird Bash list being March. There were still a few Kestrel about and spotted by the Levesque duo, the Sturges, the Sparks, and Steve. Faye may have seen the last Broad-winged Hawk in the district. (They having been migrating in very large numbers and noted upon hawk watching locations in the southern part of Ontario.) Bald Eagles often stay all winter and were watched

by Cindy Lafleur, the Sturges, Greg (three of them), and the Levesque duo. The latter pair also spotted the Merlin.

Ruffed Grouse have been spotted every month, this time by the Sturges, Faye, Cindy, Mary, and the Flemings. Wild Turkeys, rather amazingly likewise have been observed every month, often, as this time, by the Sturges.

An active Common Gallinule was enjoyed by the Levesque duo at the easterly end of Cache Bay, rather late in the season for it.

The latter duo watched huge numbers of Sandhill Cranes which seem to be forever increasing, especially in the west end. The Anderson-Gowing pair also saw them but in easterly farm fields.

Now we get to the large number of species of shorebirds. The first on the list is the Killdeer, which ought to have gone south by now, but one was briefly watched on a Nipissing beach by the Levesque pair. They also saw a Greater Yellowlegs, a couple of Lesser Yellowlegs, a Spotted Sandpiper, and a trio of Pectoral Sandpipers within a couple of lagoons. Lori saw the Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers near her farm. The Sturges managed to unearth an American Woodcock.

The only gulls found were the Ring-billed and Herring, both by many participants, generally near Lake Nipissing shorelines.

Rock Doves remained very numerous, while the Mourning Dove was spotted only by the Sturges, the Levesque duo, and Mary.

Hummingbirds seemed to have all disappeared. But Belted Kingfishes were still about and were found by Cindy, Mary, Greg (two of them), the Levesque duo, and Steve.

All the summer-time woodpeckers were still about, with the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker being discovered by the Sturges and by Greg, both of whom also found the Hairy, as did Faye. The latter bird plus the Downy were also noted by Cindy, Steve, the Sturges, and the Flemings. The Pileated was, it seems, the most popular, being observed by Faye, the Sturges, Cindy, Lori, and the Sparks. The latter pair also saw the Northern Flicker, as did the Sturges, who had all 5 woodpeckers on their list.

The only flycatcher still about was the Eastern Phoebe, usually also the first to

arrive in the spring. It was spotted by the Sturges and the Levesque pair. The Blue-headed Vireo was discovered by Mary. None of those ever so common Red-eyed Vireos were found by anyone.

Blue Jays were still everywhere, as were American Crows, sometimes in huge numbers, especially in the west end fields. Common Ravens were identified by Cindy, the Sparks, the Levesque duo, the Sturges, Greg, the Flemings, Faye, and Mary.

The so perky Black-capped Chickadees were watched by almost everyone. Among the nuthatches, the White-breasted was spotted by Mary, Faye (who also saw the Red-breasted), the Flemings, Steve (who also found the Red-breasted), Greg, the Sturges, the Levesque duo, and Lori. John Levesque and Donna Demarco found the Red-breasted in their yards. John also had a Brown Creeper.

The Golden-crowned Kinglet was discovered only by Faye and the Sturges, who also spotted the Ruby-crowned, as did Renee and Mary.

A few thrushes were still about, Mary finding the Hermit, as did the Sturges. The Eastern Bluebird was very surprisingly about in fairly large numbers, being found by the Levesque duo, (9 of them), John, and Lori. The American Robin was truly in smaller numbers than usual but spotted by Peter and Pam Handley (just 3 of them), John, the Sturges, the Flemings, Greg (just two), Cindy, the Levesque pair, the Sparks, Faye, and Mary.

European Starlings remained very plentiful.

American Pipits were seen in many places by the Levesque pair, Greg (21 of them), and Lori (about 150).

Just a few warblers were still around, the Yellow-rumped being discovered by John, the Sturges, Cindy, Greg, the Levesque duo, and the Sparks who also noticed a Nashville. The Levesque pair also found the Palm.

Now we get to the now very plentiful, but sometimes hard to identify sparrows. Chippings were still around and noted by the Levesque duo and the Sturges. The Sturges and Renee saw White-throats, as did the Handleys, John, Cindy, Mary, Greg, and Faye. White-crowns were becoming probably the most plentiful and were discovered by Mary, Lori, the Sturges, Cindy, Steve, the Flemings, and the Levesque pair. Savannahs were still around in lesser number but found by Lori

and the Levesque pair. Songs were noted by the latter two groups, as well as by Mary, Cindy, the Sparks, Greg, and the Sturges. The Swamp was identified by the Sturges and Cindy. The Fox was discovered by Mary in Laurier Woods. Many Dark-eyed Juncos were around and were enjoyed by Steve, Mary, Greg, the Sparks, the Sturges, the Handleys, Donna, and the Levesque duo.

The once predominant Red-winged Blackbirds were disappearing fast, but some were found by Cindy, the Sturges, and the Levesque pair.

Some Eastern Meadowlarks were spotted by the Sturges.

Rusty Blackbirds, not present since April, were back and noticed by the Levesque pair and Lori.

Common Grackles were still around in fairly widespread circles.

The American Goldfinch was hereabouts, maybe for the winter, but only discovered by Cindy, the Sturges, and Greg.

The Evening Grosbeak was spotted only by the Sturges.

Lori, the Sturges, and the Levesque pair were the only groups to find the much maligned House Sparrow.

That concludes this report. Congrats to all participants!

Get ready for the November Bird Bash. It will be over **the weekend of November 5-6**. Should still be a fair number of birds around then, maybe some new ducks like scoters and Long-tailed, plus perhaps a few winter finches. And whatever else - owls, maybe? And surely many more!