

SUMMARY OF BIRD WING MEETING

September 23, 2014

After a spring and summer meeting hiatus during which time outings took place in Laurier Woods, Cache Bay, and the Callander and Powassan Lagoons, we are now back at the North Bay Public Library for our regular monthly meetings held on **the fourth Tuesday of every month, starting at 6:30 pm.**

Birds of the Summer: Despite the inclement weather for a good chunk of the spring and summer, many species were observed. Dick Tafel saw 195 species by summer's end. Others were not too far behind.



Some of the species seen or heard include all four wrens, the House, Winter, Marsh and Sedge; both bitterns, the American and the Least (seen at left); and the Common Gallinule.

Others seen include the Peregrine Falcon; the American Kestrel; the Sharp-shinned Hawk; the Red-tailed Hawk; the Osprey in its nest at the Hwy 11 Lakeshore Drive exit, as well as at the Cache Bay ballpark; the Bald Eagle, nesting near all three lakes, Nipissing, Nosbonsing and Trout.

There are 28 species of warblers seeable in North Bay and many of these were seen, including the Palm, Tennessee, Nashville, American Redstart, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Northern Parula, Cape May, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green (seen below), Yellow-rumped, Blackburnian, Pine, Black and White, Mourning, Wilson's, Common Yellowthroat and Canada. Also seen (and part of the warbler family) were the Northern Waterthrush and the Ovenbird.



The two warblers seen the most this summer were the Common Yellowthroat and the Chestnut-sided. However, no species this summer was seen or heard more than the Red-eyed Vireo.

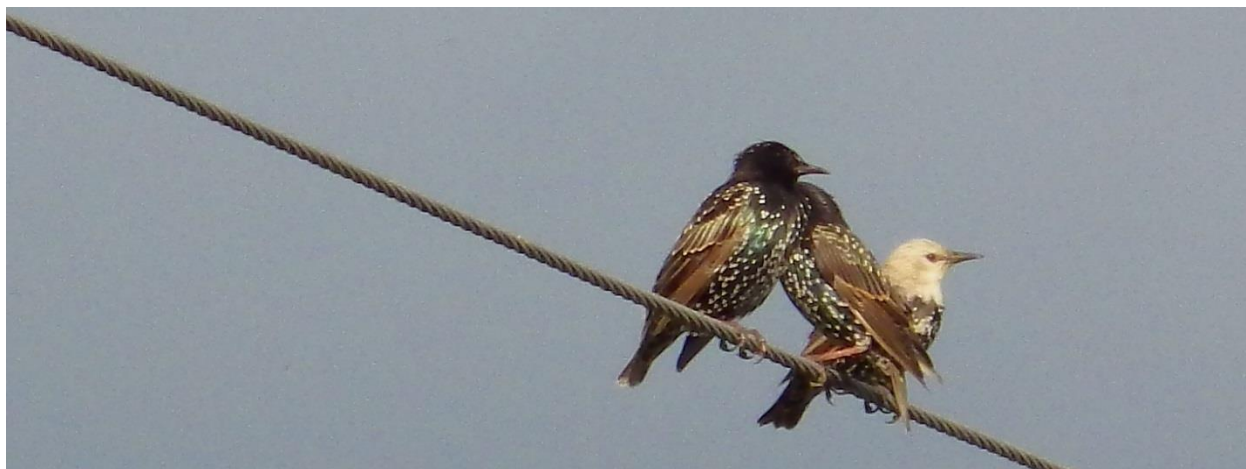
Sparrows seen were the Song, the White-throated, the Chipping (seen below), the Savannah, the Swamp and the Vesper.



The handsome Indigo Bunting and the pretty Eastern Bluebird were seen. Also seen were the two grosbeaks, the Rose-breasted and the Evening, as well as the grassland bird, the Eastern Meadowlark.

Swallows seen over the summer were mostly the Tree and the Barn. Thrushes included the Veery, the Swainson's, the Hermit with its ethereal flute-like song and the Robin, of which Renee Levesque had a leucistic Robin in her yard in July, a photo of which is on the OFO website, archived photos, July 2014. She also saw a leucistic European Starling (seen below) among hundreds on a telephone wire at Warren Lagoon.

One of the rare species seen was the Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, a tiny, slim bird with a long tail and a narrow white eye-ring. Dick saw it in early September at Sunset Park. It was the third time he had seen one in North Bay and all three times he saw it in September.



Heard frequently throughout the spring and early summer was the Brown Thrasher, its beautiful song resembling that of the Gray Catbird, also seen, but with each phrase in pairs unlike the Gray Catbird.

The only owl heard during the summer was the Barred Owl.

Although common in our area, but not forgotten, were the Black-capped Chickadee, the Blue Jay, the American Crow, and the Common Raven.

Shorebirds began arriving in late August and in September, and seen were the large sandpipers, the Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, as well as the Solitary; also the small sandpipers, the Pectoral, the Baird's (seen at right), the Stilt and the Spotted; and last, but sometimes least, the small "peep" sandpipers, the Least and the Semipalmated.



Rare for this area, a Hudsonian Godwit was seen at the Powassan Lagoon, initially by Dick and later by others. It is a large shorebird that flies thousands of miles from its breeding ground in the Arctic to southern South America. It flies great distances at a time, making only two or three stops enroute. Therefore, to see it is a treat!

Wilson's Snipe were seen at the Verner Lagoon and the Red-necked Phalarope at the Warren Lagoon.

All lagoon levels seemed particularly high this summer.

Winter Finch Forecast: Ron Pittaway's winter finch forecast is now available at <http://ebird.org/content/canada/news/ron-pittaways-winter-finch-forecast/>.

In general, after little movement in the way of finches last winter, this winter should be a mixed bag of finch movement. Some species, such as the Purple Finch (seen below), will head south. Others, such as the White-winged Crossbills, will probably remain in the boreal forest in those areas where the spruce are laden with cones. Common Redpoll will move to southern Canada and the northern States because of the thin to average birch seed crops in the north.



Check out Ron's forecast to see what you can expect this winter at your feeder and in our area.

Bird Banding at Laurier Woods: Further to the summary of August's Bird Wing, Bruce Murphy tallied the number of birds banded at Laurier Woods on August 23, 2014, during the Louise de Kiriline Lawrence Nature Festival, organized by the Nipissing Naturalist Club. The numbers are as follows:

Nashville Warbler, 23
Tennessee Warbler, 12
Wilson's Warbler, 1
American Redstart, 3
Mourning Warbler, 1
Yellow Warbler, 4
Common Yellowthroat, 2
Chestnut-sided Warbler, 1
Black and White Warbler, 2
Cape May Warbler, 1
Canada Warbler, 1
Pine Warbler, 1 (Bruce was most excited about this bird because one does not often see Pine Warblers in the New Liskeard /Englehart area.)

Black-capped Chickadee, 8
Least Flycatcher, 1
Red-eye Vireo, 7
American Goldfinch, 1
Chipping Sparrow, 1
Song Sparrow, 5
Swamp Sparrow, 1
Gray Catbird (seen at right), 1

The above represents 20 species and 77 individual birds. A good morning indeed for bird banding!



Horned Grebe Rescue: In Ontario Birds, April 2014 edition, Ed Poropat wrote an article entitled *Encounter Between Bald Eagles and a Horned Grebe* that took place in February 2014 in Haliburton. Renee Levesque emailed Ed and one of the editors of Ontario Birds, Chip Weseloh, informing them of a similar incident in our area on January 29, 2014, when a Horned Grebe was rescued by a woman in Balsam Creek and by Dick Tafel and Fred Pinto. If this rescue has been forgotten by readers, read the summary of the Bird Wing Meeting for February 2014 on the Nipissing Naturalist Club website and see Dick's photo of the rescued Horned Grebe on the OFO website, archived photos, January 2014.

Ed and Chip responded with thanks for sharing the interesting rescue.

The Thing With Feathers, The Surprising Lives of Birds and What They Reveal About Being Human:

Dick read an excerpt from this intriguing book by Noah Strycker, published in 2014 by Riverhead Books, a member of Penguin Group. The following is from Amazon.ca where the book can be purchased in hardback for approximately \$20.00 and on Kindle for approximately \$16.00.

“An entertaining and profound look at the lives of birds, illuminating their surprising world—and deep connection with humanity.

Birds are highly intelligent animals, yet their intelligence is dramatically different from our own and has been little understood. As scientists come to understand more about the secrets of bird life, they are unlocking fascinating insights into memory, game theory, and the nature of intelligence itself.



The Thing with Feathers explores the astonishing homing abilities of pigeons, the good deeds of fairy-wrens, the influential flocking abilities of starlings, the deft artistry of bowerbirds, the extraordinary memories of nutcrackers, the lifelong loves of albatross, and other mysteries—revealing why birds do what they do, and offering a glimpse into our own nature.

Noah Strycker is a birder and naturalist who has traveled the world in pursuit of his flighty subjects. Drawing deep from personal experience, cutting-edge science, and colourful history, he spins captivating stories about the birds in our midst and reveals the startlingly intimate coexistence of birds and humans. With humor, style, and grace, he shows how our view of the world is often, and remarkably, through the experience of birds.

Beautiful and wise, funny and insightful, The Thing with Feathers is a gripping and enlightening journey into the lives of birds.”

Mike Burrell, Bird Studies Canada: Dick spoke about keeping checklists of birds seen and he showed us some examples of the type of checklists he keeps using Excel. He also itemized some of the birds seen by Stuart L. Thompson in North Bay and vicinity in 1904, as published in The Canadian Field Naturalist, December 1922. It is very interesting to compare the species and numbers of individual birds seen then compared to now and it demonstrates how valuable data can be.

This led to a discussion on having Mike Burrell from Bird Studies Canada attend a Bird Wing meeting to talk about the importance of entering data on eBird. Mike had previously emailed Renee to tell her he would like to attend one of our meetings and the Bird Wing Group is keen to host him. Mike will not only talk about the importance of eBird and show us how to navigate our way around entering our data on it, but will talk about his famous birding family - himself, his brother and his father. You can read more about Mike and his passion for eBird in the following article that appeared on eBird on February 13, 2012: <http://ebird.org/content/canada/news/featured-ebirder-mike-burrell/>

Also check out Mike's *The Nomadic Naturalist* blog at mikeburrell.blogspot.com. You will find it interesting and informative.

Mike would like those who have archived data to also attend. He will demonstrate how that data can be transferred to eBird, especially if it is already digitized. He is particularly interested in the Gould data and, to that end, Fred Pinto will invite the Nipissing University student who is digitizing that data to attend the meeting, scheduled for **November 25, 2014, at 6:30 pm. in the auditorium of the North Bay Public Library.**

Dick will be making accommodation and transportation arrangements with Mike, with funding provided by the Nipissing Naturalist Club.



Bird Wing Outings: Some discussion centred around more bird field outings, especially on a Saturday, during the coming months. A visit to the landfill site (seen above) to check out the gulls in particular

usually takes place annually in late October or early November and Dick will inform us of the date and time.

Bird Bash: The next Bird Bash takes place **weekend of November 1 and 2**. Dick will be sending out a reminder closer to the date. There was a good showing for October's Bird Bash despite the less than stellar weather and it is hoped it will be the same for November. The October Bird Bash results are posted on the Nipissing Naturalist Club website.

Bird Wing Meeting: The next meeting of the Bird Wing group will be held in the auditorium of the North Bay Public Library on **Tuesday, October 28, starting at 6:30 pm**.

Bird Wing Scribe: Renee Levesque

Photos: Renee Levesque

In order to see birds, it is necessary to become part of the silence.
-Robert Lynd