

Bird Wing Meeting September 25, 2018

By Renee Levesque, Bird Wing Scribe; photos as indicated

September's Bird Wing meeting was held in the most unexpected of places, Laporte's Nursery on Lakeshore Drive. How did it come to be held there, you may well ask. The North Bay Public Library where we usually hold our meetings is undergoing renovations and it looks as if we will not be able to make use of the auditorium or the board room until January. A year or so ago, Doug Patterson, formerly of Mattawan and now of Annapolis, Nova Scotia, mentioned that Lori Laporte would gladly host a meeting. I never forgot this and when the library notified us of the renovations, I contacted Laporte's and Lori was only too pleased to allow us to hold our meeting there. In fact, not only did we hold our meeting there, but Lori supplied tea and coffee and Tim-bits and with the gingerbread owl cookies I brought, it made for some bon-vivant socializing after the meeting - also some shopping after the meeting. As Kaye Edmonds put it, "Where else can one meet and shop at the same time?" Not only are there bird seed, bird houses, bird feeders and window decals to buy, but there were also Thanksgiving and Halloween decorations and by November's meeting, no doubt, Christmas decorations.

Lori has offered us use of her nursery for October and November's meetings. There is no meeting in December because of Christmas, but there is the Christmas Bird Count – more on that later.

(As an aside, the delicious owl cookies were made by Monica Bessette who made the bird cookies for the Louise de Kiriline Lawrence plaque unveiling in August 2016.)



Birds Seen in September:

The two warblers that have been most common this fall are the Yellow-rumped and the Palm (left) seen by many of us, although other odd warblers were still



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around and seen recently, like the Chestnut-sided seen by Ken Gowing, as well as the Tennessee and the Nashville, seen by Dick Tafel.

Sparrows still abound, especially the White-throated Sparrow seen by Marc Buchanan and many others, some seen in fairly large numbers. Lincoln Sparrows have been spotted by some, including Kaye Edmonds, and White-crowned Sparrows are starting to migrate through, as are Dark-eyed Juncos (above), seen by Gary Chowns and a few other members. (Since I began writing this report, more and more White-crowns and Juncos are migrating through.)

Dick made mention of the Lark Sparrow, but this was covered in August's Bird Wing Report and is mentioned in October's newsletter, *The Woodland Observer*. Don't forget that if you haven't had a chance to read reports and newsletters, they are posted on our website. And just to set the record straight, though I wrote about the sighting of the Lark Sparrow in August's Bird Wing report, the Lark Sparrow was actually seen by Dick and me in Warren in September, albeit early September, but September nevertheless. I emphatically told Dick at the meeting it was an August bird. I was wrong!

However, we did allow new member, Daniel Currie, to make mention of the two birds he saw during August's outing, the Sora and the 50 Common Nighthawks. Sometimes we can be nice.

Grant McKercher saw a Belted Kingfisher by his place on Callander Bay. He was fortunate to have a pair nest there.

Lori Anderson is seeing at least a hundred American Pipits at her farm in Chisholm Township and Dick and I saw a lone one along one of the Lake Nipissing beaches. Lori continues to have Eastern Meadowlarks at her place and is still seeing Eastern Bluebirds there. Both these birds were also spotted on Stewart Road, a farming area in West Nipissing.



Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Purple Finches were seen by Connie and Gary Sturge, and also by other members. Scarlet Tanagers (at left) in their non-breeding plumage have been seen by a few of us.

I have had a Brown Creeper at my place on and off over the last little while. It may be it comes daily, but it can be so hard to spot, camouflaged as it is on the bark of the tree trunk. It doesn't hang around feeders like the Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, the former seen by many, the latter by Marc.

Rusty Blackbirds have been spotted by Kaye at Sunset Park and subsequent to the meeting by Dick and me at Cache Bay and Jocko Point.

Our Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have now moved on, the last being seen around mid-September. Always sad to see them go, for it spells the end of summer.

Northern Flickers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are still with us, but will be leaving soon and once gone, we are left with our faithful woodpeckers – the Downy, the Hairy and the Pileated. Perhaps some of will even see the Black-backed – Gary for sure!

Sandhill Cranes can be found in farm fields in West and East Nipissing.

Matt Proconier recently saw 7 or 8 Ruffed Grouse (at right) near his place in the Powassan area. Some of us haven't seen a grouse in some time, but we should be seeing a fair number now. Matt also saw a Great Blue Heron, as have other members, but it was felt by some that there weren't as many Great Blue Herons about this year. Green Herons have been spotted by many of



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us in Laurier Woods, at Callander Lagoon and at Cache Bay.

Although Lori hasn't seen her family of Wild Turkeys lately, she did see a pair in her field. We look forward to her winter reports of "her family" which she plans to feed.



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Curtis Irish mentioned the number of Canada Geese being seen and right enough there are flocks of hundreds in many fields including Veterans' Field, Lee Park, where some of us, including Gary Chowns, saw a lone Snow Goose (above) – always exciting to see one. Kaye reported seeing 4 at the end of Nipissing Road in Sturgeon Falls and subsequent to the meeting, Dick and I saw almost 20 in a Quesnel Road field. Neither of us has ever seen that many at once in Nipissing District. Grant also saw our lone Veterans' Field Snow Goose the day after the meeting. (I am assuming it was the same goose, as Grant saw it in the same general area.)

In terms of raptors, Ken saw a kettle of Turkey Vultures, 15 of them on River Road; Jackie Manella also saw many on Hwy. 17 near the Powassan landfill site; and I saw a dozen or so on Levac Road. They will soon be migrating, leaving our area until next spring when once again we will get excited at seeing even one!

Jackie also saw a juvenile Bald Eagle; Kaye saw a Broad-winged Hawk (right); Gary Sturge saw a Merlin; Connie saw an American Kestrel, as did others; Lori saw a Northern Harrier, as did Connie and Gary; Gary Chowns saw a Peregrine Falcon; and Dick and I saw a Northern Goshawk on Maple Hill Road – finally after not seeing one for 2 years despite Gary’s seeing one almost daily or so it would seem!!

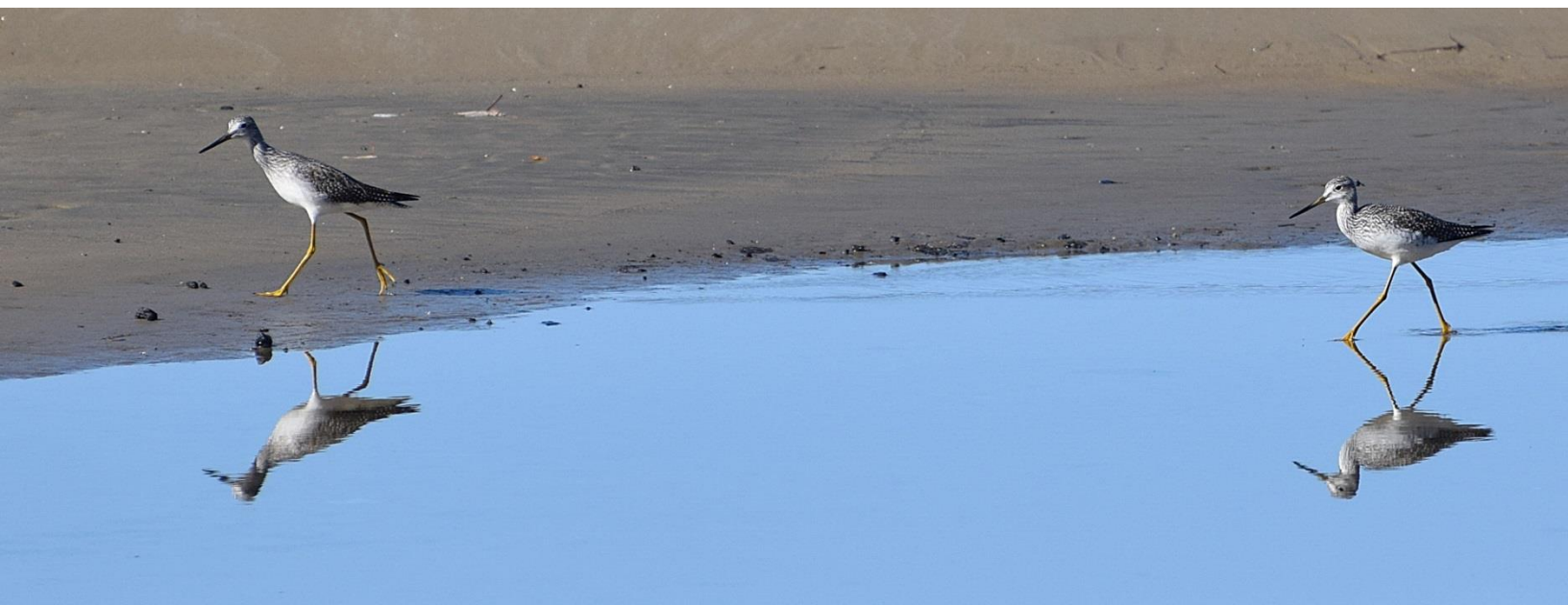
Shorebirds seen included a Black-bellied Plover seen at Sunset by Kaye, Dick and me the day prior to the meeting; Greater Yellowlegs (seen below); Lesser Yellowlegs; Killdeer; Semipalmated Plovers; Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers; and Solitary Sandpipers, one seen by Marc at Lake Nipissing and 2 or 3 by some of us at the various lagoons where we saw most of the shorebirds listed. Newcomer David Rooke saw a Stilt Sandpiper at Powassan Lagoon.

Ducks seen included a raft of 50 Common Mergansers seen by Kaye, Dick and me; Common Goldeneye seen by Grant in Callander Bay; Ring-necked Ducks seen by Lori; and a lone Northern Pintail seen by Dick and me at Callander Lagoon. We tend to see Northern Pintails in the spring, but not often in the fall. Lesser Scaup were seen at Powassan Lagoon by Dick and others.

And finally, a Common Loon seen by Dick on Trout Lake and by others on Lake Nipissing, and a Trumpeter Swan seen by Lori on Graham Lake at the back of her property. I believe this is a



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first there, at least for Lori. It did not have a wing tag.

I think I got all the birds we talked about, with the exception of the 100 Common Grackles seen by Gary Sturge; American Crows seen by Curtis and many others; Blue Jays seen by many; and Mourning Doves seen by Marc and others. Red-winged Blackbirds weren't mentioned, but I recently saw a flock of about 200. And no one mentioned the American Robin, but the odd one is still being seen.

What we also failed to mention as sightings were Wilson's Phalaropes and American Coots at Warren Lagoon and a Red-necked Phalarope at Callander Lagoon. We also neglected to mention the hundred or so Bonaparte Gulls at Sunset.

Christmas Bird Count:

The Christmas Bird Count runs from Friday, December 14 to Friday, January 5. We will hold ours on **Saturday, December 15**. Lori has agreed to be our compiler again this year. Gary Sturge mentioned that he has had some difficulty getting access to the East Ferris Landfill Site for the 15 minutes it takes to count the species seen there. Dick will talk to the person in charge of the site in hopes of rectifying this situation.

Collision Count Week:

Collision Count Week took place from September 24-30. It was a pilot event through Global Bird in partnership with Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ontario Nature and Ecojustice to determine the number of birds that were killed as a result of building collisions. Because it was already underway by the time of our meeting, I emailed the information to birders on September 26.

Global Big Day:

For those who enter their eBird sightings, **Saturday, October 6**, is the second Global Big Day this year. Be sure to enter all your sightings for that day.

Project FeederWatch:

Project FeederWatch begins on **November 10 and carries through to April 10, 2019**. You must be a member of Bird Studies Canada to take part in this worthwhile project. See <https://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/pfw/> for further details.

Stories from the Field:

David Rooke: Dave is our newest Bird Wing member who lives at Seguin Beach during the summer, but feels he must go back to Waterloo for the rest of the year.

In *Ontario Birds, August 2018 issue*, there is the annual article, "Ontario Bird Records Committee Report", this one for 2017. As I was reading it, Dave Rooke's name popped out



David Rooke

under *Slaty-backed Gull*: one definitive basic in 2016, November 28 to December 2, Waterloo. Dave hadn't identified it as a Slaty-back, but he had submitted to eBird a photo of it (above) with some Herring Gulls, calling it a small Greater Black-backed. The fact that it was actually a Slaty-backed was discovered when Brandon Holden noticed the photo posted on eBird under another species. This was the first record of a Slaty-backed since one was seen in Thunder Bay in November 2013. One, a definitive basic, was subsequently seen in Niagara Falls and Thorold in January 2017 and may have been the same one Dave saw in Waterloo, and one, a third basic, was seen in Lambton in May 2017 by Brandon. The May sighting was the first record of one in Ontario outside the November to January timeframe.

The Slaty-backed is a resident along the coastlines of northeastern Asia and a regular summer visitor to western Alaska, albeit in small numbers. So quite the thing to spot it in Ontario!



Renee Levesque: Recently, I happened upon a leucistic Canada Goose in Veterans' Field while there to see the lone Snow Goose. Photo at left.

Kathleen Thorne: I received an email on September 26 from Kathleen Thorne who lives in Cache Bay, not at the trailer park, but in a

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house on the other side of the Bay. She had three Trumpeter Swans outside her place, one being Ava, L95. The other two were not tagged. Kathleen's photo is at end of this report.



From the Vancouver Courier

Steve Pitt: Steve sent me a newspaper article and a photo of a British Columbia fisherman and a Bald Eagle that was not afraid to almost climb on board the fisherman's boat to get a tasty treat. Steve, although envious, said he will stick with less threatening species. Compare and contrast the photos at left and below!

Rachel Sturge: Rachel is helping out at the bird banding station at Leslie Street Spit, Toronto. "Right now I am not actually banding birds. I mostly help by taking birds out of the nets and acting as a recorder. However, I plan to learn how to band there, and hope one day to become a master bander. That is a long way off, though." Still, Laurier Woods will be here for a long,

long time and maybe one day a bird banding station will be set up there.

That is Rachel's hand holding the lovely young male Baltimore Oriole in the photo on the next page. Rachel tells me there was a lot of debate on whether the bird was a young male or an adult female – there is quite a bit of overlap – but young male won the debate.

Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing: During the summer, Lori's son found an Eastern Kingbird on River Road with a broken wing. It was brought to Ken who looked after it in a glass aquarium. He put iodine on the bird's wound, gave it water and fed it crickets that he purchased at a pet store for a goodly sum of money. The kingbird went through \$15.00 (plus gas money) in 2 days, and when Ken went back to get more, the pet store was out of



Courtesy of Steve Pitt



Courtesy of Rachel Sturge

crickets!! Because of Ken's purchase, the store gave him a cricket card, much like a coffee card whereby after 10 purchases, you get a free cup of coffee. Not sure how many crickets Ken would have had to purchase before he got some for free.

Ken took the bird to Wild at Heart, Wildlife Rescue, 95 White Road, in Lively. Its wing was x-rayed, but the break was too complex and severe to repair. It was a fracture that would prevent the bird from ever flying again and a bird is not a bird if it can't fly. And so it was euthanized. Had it been able to be saved, it would have been brought back to River Road to be released.

Louise Simpson recently took a Pileated Woodpecker to the same centre, but it too had to be euthanized.

Lori said she was very impressed with the centre which takes not only birds, but also large and small animals, reptiles and turtles. Visit the centre's website at <http://wahrefugecentre.org/>.

Lori also reported some good news: The Barred Owl seen by Marc, Louise, Fred Pinto and Sarah Wheelan during the Nocturnal Owl Survey this past April was released in the area it was found. If you didn't read the article or can't recall it, you will find it on our website at: <https://www.nipnats.com/club-activities/bird-wing/reports-and-bird-counts/>. Scroll down past Year End Reports to Owl Survey Reports, 2018.

Trophy Presentation:

The meeting culminated in the presentation of trophies, the Nocturnal Owl Trophy and the Great Canadian Birdathon Trophy. I presented the Nocturnal Owl Trophy to Gary, Connie, Matt and Rachel Sturge in absentia for not only seeing/hearing the most owls, 18 in total with 4 repeaters, but also for writing an entertaining account of things that go bump in the night. See photo below.

Gary Sturge presented the Great Canadian Birdathon Trophy to Dick, Lori, Jackie and me for seeing and hearing the most birds during that lovely May Birdathon day when summer was still before us. See photo below. (Why are we leaning like that, Lori, me in particular?)

Marc brings it up yearly that he and Fred Pinto once won the Great Canadian Birdathon challenge, but it must have been before 2014. I don't have any of my reports before 2014 to check when he and Fred won (a computer change did not transfer these reports for some reason), and reports prior to 2014, before Sarah Wheelan's time, are not posted on our website. However, to be fair, I do remember them winning one year, maybe 2013? There is a clock with birds on it - the previous "trophy" until it got mislead - so if either of them wants it and if it can be found, we will gladly let them share it!



Kaye Edmonds



Matt Procnier

Sarah posted on Nipissing Naturalists Club's Facebook a short write-up of the presentation and the photos shown above.

November Bird Bash: November's Bird Bash will take place over the weekend of **November 3 and 4**. (If I get this report out on time, October's will be held over the Thanksgiving weekend – all three days, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, but only for 24 consecutive hours on either of these days.)

Bird Wing Meeting: October's Bird Wing meeting will be held on the 5th Tuesday of October to accommodate me. I won't be here on the 4th Tuesday and I think I am only being accommodated because no one else wants to write a report. So, mark down, the day before Halloween, **October 30, starting at 6:30 p.m. at Laporte's Nursery, 1054 Lakeshore Drive**. This time Lori Laporte and Steve Claridge, to whom we gave memberships, will join us. Thank you again, Lori, for your generosity.

In closing, I would like to extend our sympathy to Bev Kingdon who lost her husband, Ray, on September 7. Ray and Bev had been together since they were teenagers. Ray was instrumental in helping Bev with her tremendous work on saving the Trumpeter Swan from extirpation. Although Ray and Bev lived in Burlington, they loved nothing better than spending plenty of time at their cottage on Lake Nosbonsing. I had the privilege of twice spending time with Ray, once on a lovely outing around Lake Nosbonsing and once when we found Ava at Cache Bay, both very special times.

The funeral was held in Powassan and Ray is buried at Powassan Union Cemetery. If any one wishes, memorial donations can be made to the Ontario Trumpeter Swan Restoration. Make cheques payable to Amherst Wildlife Foundation, Trumpeter Swan Restoration, c/o Mrs. Myrna Wagner, 26 Swanhurst Boulevard, Mississauga ON L5N1B7.

<https://www.paulfuneralhome.ca/notices/Raymond-Kingdon>



Kathleen Thorne