

Bird Bash Report

July 21-22, 2018

By Dick Tafel, compiler

The number of species counted during July's Bird Bash was 95, the third lowest count in 15 years! July's average over 15 years is 111, with 146 being the highest count in 2008, and 90 being the lowest count in 2012 and 2014. Last year's count was 98 despite only 12 participants. This year we had 19 participants. Perhaps because of the heat, birders did not explore as many areas as other years or perhaps there was another reason for the lower count.

Regardless, lots of interesting birds were discovered! Starting with new ones for this year in rough taxonomic order, the first one must be the Least Bittern, seen briefly by the trio of John and Renee Levesque and yours truly within the thick reeds of Cache Bay during a canoe outing there Sunday morning. They also came upon a Common Moorhen on their trip.

Next a Peregrine Falcon, discovered by Kaye Edmunds within the steeples of North Bay.

Now shorebirds that are already moving south and coming in large numbers upon the bountiful, muddy flats of some of our lagoons. A Semipalmated Plover, a Pectoral Sandpiper and a Solitary Sandpiper were in Verner Lagoon. A Baird's Sandpiper was in Callander Lagoon, while Lesser Yellowlegs were in both lagoons. These shorebirds were identified by the duo of Renee Levesque and yours truly. Lori Anderson and Ken Gowing also saw a small flock of Lesser Yellowlegs east of Powassan.

A busy House Wren was found by Gary and Connie Sturge near their home west of Powassan. Marsh Wrens were in large numbers in the Cache Bay marshes, found by the Levesque trio. (By the way, Sedge Wrens during this year's Bird Bash have not yet been discovered anywhere within the area.)

Now to the other birds, following rough taxonomic order: Of course, Common Loons always come first, and now often with their young. Many of our participants enjoyed them, including the Levesque trio in Trout Lake. They also found Pied-billed Grebes within Cache Bay, along with Double-crested Cormorants and an American Bittern, the latter also found by Steve Pitt near Astorville.

Great Blue Herons were seen by Gary and Connie Sturge and by Gary and Luanne Chowns, among others.

Turkey Vultures remained quite ubiquitous; likewise, Canada Geese.

A Trumpeter Swan was seen in the easterly section of Cache Bay and was noted by Therez Violette and by the Levesque trio. This is same the swan, L95, aka Ava, seen in the same area last summer.

Wood Ducks and Mallards were the main species of ducks within the lagoons, both species with many young. Kaye Edmunds was the only one to list the Black Duck. She also saw Common Mergansers, now also with their young.

Osprey were fairly common in the area, many with young in their nests. Kaye saw a Cooper's Hawk near her home; Broad-winged Hawks were observed by the Levesque pair; Bald Eagles were seen by the Sturges; and American Kestrels were on several lists.

Ruffed Grouse and Sandhill Cranes were upon Ernie Frayle's and the Sturge's lists, the latter bird also noted by Kaye and by Steve. Wild Turkeys were spotted by the Anderson pair east of Powassan. An American Coot was seen solely by the Levesque trio - seen in Cache Bay during the canoe outing.

Spotted Sandpipers were found by Grant and Shirley McKercher. Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers (the latter in pirouetting, close-together large flocks of up to 80) were at Verner and Callander Lagoons. A Wilson's Snipe was at Callander Lagoon. Killdeer were also spotted at the lagoons.

The McKerchers were the only ones to find American Woodcock.

Ring-billed Gulls were everywhere, but only Herring Gulls were identified by the Sturges. Black, Caspian and Common Terns were seen at Cache Bay.

Rock Pigeons were noted by most, but Mourning Doves by somewhat fewer.

A Black-billed Cuckoo and some Chimney Swifts were observed by Kaye.

No owls were noted this month.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were on many lists, including that of Elsa Tafel.

Belted Kingfishers were seen fairly widely.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen by a few, including the McKerchers, while both Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were back upon more lists this month, including that of Peter and Pam Handley. Northern Flickers were also seen by many, but no one noted the

Pileated.

Among the flycatchers, the Eastern Phoebe and Eastern Kingbird were the only ones identified –by the Levesque pair, the McKerchers and the Sturges.

Red-eyed Vireos were seen (or heard) by many.

The Gray Jay was found only by Kaye. Blue Jays were, as usual, in many places, as were American Crows and, to a lesser extent, Common Ravens.

Three swallow species were discovered - Tree and Barn by various participants, and Cliff by Ernie.

Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches remained quite common, but White-breasted Nuthatches were not noted for the second month in a row. Brown Creepers were found by the Levesque trio.

The Winter Wren was noted by the Sturges.

Eastern Bluebirds were enjoyed by the McKerchers, the Sturges, and the Levesque duo. The Veery seemed to be only upon the McKercher list. American Robins were very common. No other thrushes were noted.

Gray Catbirds were discovered by a few, including Therez, Steve, and the Chowns. They also found Brown Thrashers which were also within the very busy backyard of Mary Ann Kenrick, and seen in Verner by the Levesque duo.

Of course European Starlings were everywhere. Cedar Waxwings were quite common.

The Warbler numbers were down, but seen by a few were Nashville, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, American Redstart and Common Yellowthroat. The Sturges were the only ones to spot the Black-throated Green; the Levesque trio, the Black and White; and John Levesque, the beautiful Blackburnian.

Chipping and Song Sparrows were upon many lists; Savannah Sparrows were only upon the lists of the Levesque and Anderson duos; and the Swamp Sparrow noted only by the Levesque trio. White-throated Sparrows were near the Handley's home and noted also by the Chowns.

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak was spotted by the Chowns, by Steve, and by Kaye.

Surprisingly, Bobolinks were not discovered! But there were certainly lots of Red-wings and Common Grackles about!

Eastern Meadowlarks were noted by the Levesque pair and by the Sturges, who also spotted a lovely Baltimore Oriole.

Purple Finches were noted by many, as were American Goldfinch, but Pine Siskins were spotted only by John, and Evening Grosbeaks solely by Ernie.

House Sparrows continued to be at the Anderson's property, near the Sturges' property, and at the Co-op Feed Store in Verner, the latter noted by the Levesque duo.

And so that completes the summary of the July Bird Bash. Congrats to all participants!

Mark down the **August Bird Bash for the weekend of August 25**. Should still be lots of resident birds around then, with many more moving southwards.