

# *Bird Wing Report*



*Nipissing Naturalists Club*  
*October 2019*



## Bird Wing meeting: birds seen in October

*Renee Levesque*

I was not at the October 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of Bird Wing even though it was a meeting postponed from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> to accommodate me. I was just back from a vacation in Greece and with a 7-hour time difference, I was very jetlagged. By the time the meeting started, I was already in bed asleep!

Sarah Wheelan volunteered to make a list of birds that members saw during the month of October and were reported on during the meeting, and I added other birds not mentioned but know were seen in October. I think we tend to concentrate on the birds seen in the week or so before the meeting and plumb forget about the ones seen earlier in the month.

The birds seen are listed below, some in taxonomic order, but some out of order to accommodate photographs sent to me by members and others.

Tundra and Trumpeter Swans were seen by Dick Tafel in West Nipissing and Trumpeters were seen at Cache Bay by Therez Violette and Buddy Myles.

Gary Sturge saw Snow Geese on Maple Hill Road and some of us – Buddy, Dick, Lori Anderson, Ken Gowing and I - saw three adults and an immature in the field across from Warren Lagoon, pictured above. Curtis Irish saw Canada Geese as did many of us – maybe even most of us. They were around by the hundreds getting ready to migrate.

Nancy Pearson saw Common Loons in their winter plumage in Lake Nosbonsing, as did Grant McKercher in Callander Bay. At one point over the last month, Grant saw 26 in a raft in front of his house!

The only grebe seen in October was the Red-necked Grebe seen by Brent Turcotte, Kaye Edmonds, Dick, Grant and me at Sunset Park.

Bufflehead were seen by Brent at Sunset Park, seen also by others there and at the three lagoons.

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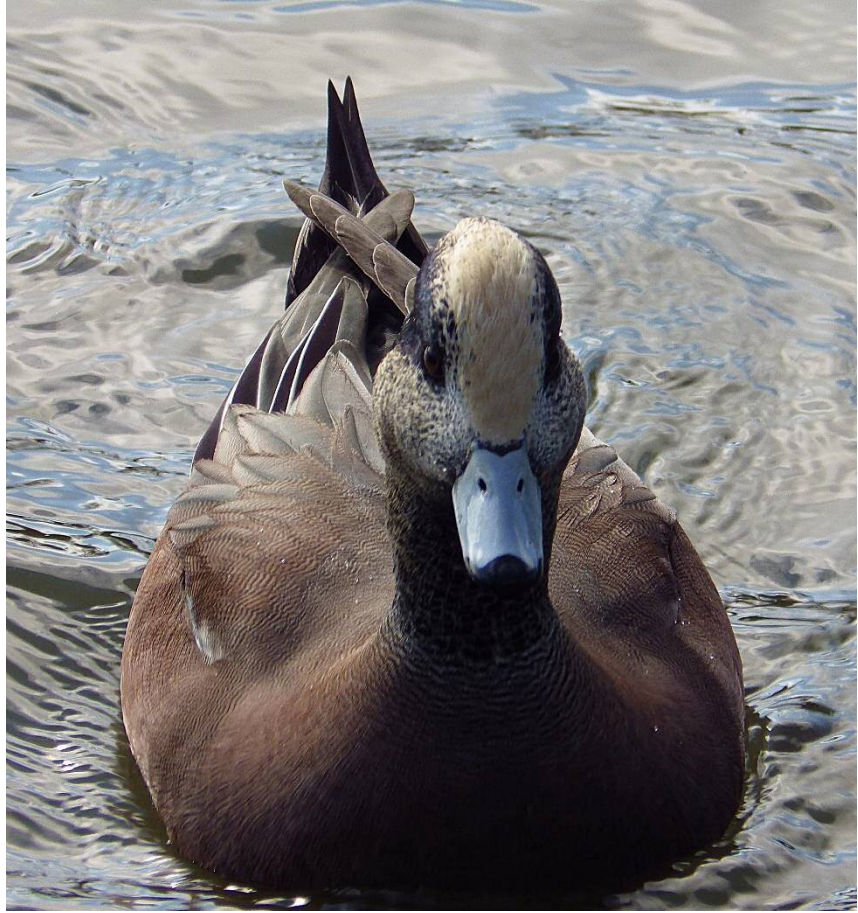
Grant saw American Wigeon (right) at Callander Lagoon. They were also seen by others, not only at Callander Lagoon, but at the other two lagoons. Other ducks seen, mostly at the lagoons, included Mallards, Common Goldeneye, Ring-necked Ducks, Gadwalls, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup and Common and Hooded Mergansers. A Northern Pintail was seen by a few of us at Callander Lagoon.

Although the Great Blue Heron did not get a mention, I know many of us saw some during October's Bird Bash and perhaps even after that.

Double-crested Cormorants were still around in early October, seen by many of us.

Surf and Black Scoters were seen by me, Dick, Grant and Kaye at Sunset Park, and Dick, Grant and I subsequently saw White-winged Scoters there. A Surf Scoter was also seen by some of us during October's Bird Bash at Callander Lagoon. Pictured below are female Black Scoters.

Large numbers of Sandhill Cranes were seen by many of us in West Nipissing fields during October's Bird Bash.



*Donna McQuay*



*Stephen O'Donnell*

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Turkey Vultures have now migrated south, but many were also still around during October's Bird Bash, and on October 12, I saw 20 on Hwy 11 South near Powassan's landfill site.

Grant saw Bald Eagles, as did some others; Matt Proconier saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk near South River, and a few were seen by some of us during October's Bird Bash; Lori saw an adult Red-tailed Hawk; and some saw Northern Harriers, Merlins and American Kestrels during October's Bird Bash.

No shorebirds were reported, although I know Dick saw a Dunlin and a Greater Yellowlegs at Sunset Park. There seemed to be a dearth of shorebirds this fall, although the spring made up for that when we saw more than we ever expected in the flooded field on Veuve River Road.

Marc Buchanan saw Great-blacked Backed Gulls on Lake Nipissing near his place, also seen by others at Sunset Park and elsewhere along the Lake Nipissing shoreline. An Iceland Gull was seen by Dick at the Government Dock and I happened to also see one there on October 30. Ring-billed Gulls and Herring Gulls were seen by many. Interestingly, no Bonaparte's Gulls were seen in any great numbers at Sunset Park, a usual stopover place during their migration south. In fact, the last time I saw Bonaparte's Gulls (3) was in August at Jocko Point.

Common Gallinules were seen by Dick, me and Buddy at Cache Bay; and during October's Bird Bash, an American Coot (below) was seen by Gary and Connie Sturge at Powassan Lagoon. American Coots were very absent in our area this year. Buddy had seen one in June at Verner Lagoon; I believe one had been seen at Callander Lagoon; Dick and I saw one at Warren Lagoon late in the summer and Lori and Ken had seen one there in the spring. It would seem that the dozen or so normally seen at Warren Lagoon in August and September did not make an appearance this year. To my knowledge, none were seen at Cache Bay.



*Renee Levesque*

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Connie saw 8 Wild Turkeys at Alsace and Hemlock Roads. Ruffed Grouse were seen by some, including Dick, Lori, Marc and me during our hunt for the Kirtland's Warbler in the McConnell Lakes area. Also seen there were many feathers, it being hunting season at that time.

Keith Pearson saw Mourning Doves, as did Gary and Connie, and, of course, many of us saw Rock Pigeons, including Curtis.

Belted Kingfishers were not mentioned, but were seen during October's Bird Bash by Dick, Buddy and me. During a previous fall, Grant captured a kingfisher at the height of autumn, as seen at right.

With most of the insects gone, the main flycatcher seen in October was the Eastern Phoebe.

In the world of woodpeckers, the one that stands out, but surprisingly not mentioned, was the Black-backed Woodpecker, seen by Lori, me, Dick and Marc, again during our hunt for the Kirtland's Warbler. It was a lifer for Marc! (Read the article about the hunt and see the photo of the Black-backed following this article.) Other woodpeckers seen were Downy, seen by Keith and others, and Hairy, seen by Cindy Lafleur, a new member of Bird Wing attending her first meeting. Welcome Cindy. Pileated Woodpeckers were seen by some; Northern Flickers abounded in the early part of the month; and the occasional Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (at left) continued to make an appearance in in early October, at least in my yard.

Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets were seen by the gang who went hunting for the Kirtland's Warbler, especially the Ruby-crowned, and Dick and I saw a small flock of Golden-crowned at Powassan Lagoon.



*Grant McKercher*



*Renee Levesque*

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American Robins were still about in small numbers, usually in flocks migrating south. They were seen by Connie and others. Connie and Gary also saw a Gray Catbird during October's Bird Bash.

American Crows and Common Ravens were seen by most, with ravens once again moving into some areas where crows once dominated.

Our very faithful little Black-capped Chickadees were seen by most of us, including Cindy. Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches were seen by Sarah and I assume by some others.

The American Pipit did not get a mention, but I know they were seen by some of us at Verner and Powassan Lagoons and elsewhere. Horned Larks (at right) were seen by Lori in her field in Chisholm Township.

Cedar Waxwings did not get a mention. I don't know if they were seen in October prior to the meeting, although I did see a flock on Marleau Road in Sturgeon Falls on October 30.

European Starlings were no doubt seen by many of us, some in large murmurations, especially in West Nipissing.

Ken Gowing saw a Dark-eyed Junco (below) and others saw Chipping and Song Sparrows. My recollection is that there were also some Swamp, Savannah and White-throated Sparrows and, in particular, White-crowned Sparrows seen in October. Dick and I saw a number of Lincoln's Sparrow at Cache Bay and the Sturges saw an American Tree Sparrow during the October Bird



*Kaye Edmonds*

Bash. More American Tree and Dark-eyed Juncos should be seen in November.

Snow Buntings were also not mentioned, but Dick saw about 20 or so at Sunset Park, and here again, more should be seen in November.



*Renee Levesque*

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Warblers did not get a mention, but Yellow-rumped and Palm were the main warblers seen in October. Other warblers that I know were seen were Common Yellowthroat, Tennessee and Orange-crowned.

Surprisingly, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen by some of us who were on the hunt for the Kirtland's Warbler.

Eastern Meadowlarks were seen by Lori and Ken during October's Bird Bash in a field by Lori's farm, probably the last of the meadowlarks seen in October.

The only finches reported were American Goldfinch, now in their winter plumage, and seen by some, and Pine Siskins seen by Matt. November may bring us more Pine Siskins and American Goldfinch.

Blue Jays (at right) were seen by Keith and I assume by many others. I know they have made a great comeback in my yard. I just hope that this winter they do not peel the paint from my newly-painted verandah.

Red-winged Blackbirds were around in the early part October and seen by some of us during October's Bird Bash, with a juvenile seen more recently by Ken. A few Common Grackles were also seen during October's Bird Bash. There were no reports of Rusty Blackbirds, normally seen in some numbers in the autumn in their rusty fall colours. **However, some were seen by Buddy and it is his wonderful photo of a Rusty Blackbird that I have used for this month's cover.**

- *R. Levesque and S. Wheelan*



## *Bird Wing Report*

# Our search for the Kirtland's

*By Renee Levesque*

On October 8, a group of us went looking for the Kirtland's Warbler on migration from its summer home in Michigan to its winter home in Bermuda. It was

one of those perfect fall days, warm and sunny with trees in full and splendid colour, a great day for a journey deep into the woods of northeastern Ontario.

Because there was the possibility of the Kirtland's migrating northeast of North Bay after leaving Michigan on or about September 23, we – Dick Tafel, Lori Anderson, Marc Buchanan, Rose McClelland, Kaye Edmonds, Dan Burton and Marilee Koenderink - made our way to the McConnell Lakes area driving and walking along logging roads at the end of McConnell Lake Road.

Did we find the Kirtland's? No, we didn't, but we saw and heard many other birds and we had a fun time doing so. Kaye and Rose had to leave us early because of appointments in North Bay, and Dan and Marilee had to leave before we finished our exploring because Marilee was dangerously low on gas and it would not do to run out of gas in the middle of nowhere! It was unfortunate all four had to leave because we saw many more birds after they left. (I heard from Dan and Marilee later in the day and they reported they made it just in time to the nearest gas station – which wasn't all that near!)



*Joel Trick, Wikimedia Commons*



*Dan, Marilee and Lori, Renee Levesque*



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In no particular order, the birds we saw and/or heard were many Ruby-crowned Kinglets; some Golden-crowned Kinglets; many Black-capped Chickadees; American Crows; a Common Raven; Blue Jays; a Common Loon; a couple of Common Mergansers; an unidentified diving duck; a couple of Red-breasted Nuthatches; White-crowned, White-throated and Song Sparrows; a Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Palm, Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped and Tennessee Warblers; at least three Ruffed Grouse and many, many grouse feathers, it being hunting season; a Downy and a Hairy Woodpecker; and the piece de resistance, a Black-backed Woodpecker (below), a lifer for Marc! We all exalted in his obvious joy!



Marc, Dick and Rose, Renee Levesque



Renee Levesque

So although no Kirtland's, we had fun searching and exploring and discovering and making some new acquaintances. As Marilee and Dan said in a subsequent text message, "Had a good time with good people."

I later heard from Stephen O'Donnell who sent me a link (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jav.01096>) to a study that was done on the migration of the Kirkland's Warbler. This study in the *Journal of Avian Biology* that can be read online at Wiley Online Library, as per the link above, was first published in January 2017. Below I have highlighted a couple of paragraphs on fall migration from this study.

*During fall migration, nearly all males first stopped somewhere in southeastern Ontario or the northwestern Mid Atlantic states after departing the*

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*breeding grounds in Michigan. The latitudinal estimates during the first part of fall migration should be interpreted with some caution because of proximity in time to the autumnal equinox. However, even after the end of the equinox period, several males were still estimated to be in this region, indicating that these positions are plausible. Moreover, migrating Kirtland's Warblers have been observed there, particularly along Lake Erie and Lake Ontario (Petrucha et al. 2013). After leaving this region, males flew south to an area along the coasts of North and South Carolina, stopping again before flying 600–950 km over the Atlantic Ocean towards The Bahamas.*

*Information is severely lacking with respect to Kirtland's Warbler diet, re fueling rates, habitat use, predation, and competition at stopover sites. Only by first identifying stopover sites can we begin to determine if the quantity or quality of stopover habitat is limiting the population. By documenting the general location of stopover sites, we have begun the process of understanding how events during stopover might shape individual performance and population dynamics. Unfortunately, our tracking data are too coarse to identify specific stopover sites and determine habitat use.*

I think kudos are in order for some of us at least looking for the Kirkland's during its fall migration even if we did not see any. Our search was based not on the above quoted study, but on a video that shows the Kirtland's heading east over Ontario, with a concentration northeast of North Bay, before heading south. (<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/03/watch-tiny-geolocator-map-rare-bird-s-round-trip-migration>.) Thanks to Dan Burton for making us aware of this video and encouraging us to get out and look for this warbler.



**Marc, Marilee, Renee and Lori, Dick Tafel**



*John Levesque*

## Christmas Bird Counts: that time of year again

Hard to believe a year has almost passed and it is once again time to get things underway for the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This year North Bay's count, its 41st, takes place on **Saturday, December 14**.

The Christmas Bird Count, which began in 1900, is North America's longest-running Citizen Science Project. It is one of the world's largest wildlife surveys and the data collected is used daily by conservation biologists and naturalists to assess population trends and distribution of birds. Christmas Bird Counts are conducted on a single day between December 14 and January 5. Designated routes within the count circle tend to stay the same from year to year.

For North Bay's designated routes, field surveyor teams are in place, but if you would like to be part of a field team, **contact Lori Anderson**, our CBC compiler, as soon as possible at [lori.anderson58@hotmail.com](mailto:lori.anderson58@hotmail.com) or **705-724-5780**.

Field areas are Airport, Thibeault, Downtown, Lakeshore, Callander, Centennial and Trout Lake.

Lori is always looking for feeder watchers, so important for the count, especially when our weather is not the best – that's when birds come to feeders. And judging on how things are shaping up weather-wise, we may be in for another December like last December.

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As a feeder watcher, you can report on the number of birds seen for as long or as little as you want from the comfort of your own home as long as you are within a 24-km or 15-mile radius of North Bay.

If you have any questions about field surveying or feeder watching, come to the next Bird Wing meeting on November 26, or contact Lori at the above email address or telephone number.

The Burk's Falls Christmas Bird Count, its 43<sup>rd</sup>, will be held on **Wednesday, December 18**. Burk's Falls CBC's northern edge is just south of Sundridge, so not too far away if North Bayites and those from surrounding areas wish to participate. Gary Sturge will lead a group around one section of Lake Bernard and Stephen O'Donnell, around the other.

Other field areas are Burk's Falls, Ryerson Township, Magnetawan and Chapman North.

If you wish to participate, let **Martin Parker**, Burk's Falls compiler, know as soon as possible by contacting him at [mparker19@cogeco.ca](mailto:mparker19@cogeco.ca) or 705-745-4750.

- Renee Levesque



*Kaye Edmonds*



*Dick Tafel*

## *Bird Wing Report*

### Rare find: Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis*

By *Renee Levesque*

Of all the breeding birds in Ontario, one of the most seldom seen is the Yellow Rail. But on October 15, Stephen O'Donnell had the privilege of seeing one! He was walking his dog, Whisper, when they unexpectedly flushed a Yellow Rail in a small wetland at the edge of Lake Bernard off Tamarack Lane in Sundridge.

Stephen reports that the bird fluttered up and then back down not far from where he and Whisper were. Stephen, who had previously banded Yellow Rails on the James Bay coast, immediately recognized it as a Yellow Rail by its size, shape, flight and colour.

The reason the Yellow Rail is so seldom seen can be attributed to various reasons: it runs quickly under dense marsh vegetation; lives deep in the wetlands; is camouflaged by its colours of black, brown, yellow and white; and rarely takes flight.

The Yellow Rail prefers shallow marshes in which the water is no more than a foot or so deep and the vegetation – sedges, rushes and grasses – is dense and short. It is not found in cattail marshes or other marshes with tall vegetation. Because water levels can vary from year to year, the Yellow Rail does not always breed in the same area each year. If it is a dry year, it will find another area in which to breed.



*Government of Canada, Christian Marcotte*



© John C. Mittermeier

It is a small rail, about robin-sized, with a short tail; a short, blunt, yellowish bill; a short neck; and a small head. What distinguishes it from other rails is its colour. It is yellowish below and dark above with yellowish and black streaks, a dark crown with a dark stripe through it and with a dark smudge on its cheek. In flight, it shows white underwings and white patches on the trailing edge of the upperwings. (See photo at left.) It is seldom seen in flight.

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As Stephen saw when the rail was flushed, it flies a short distance and then drops back into the wetland vegetation.

Other names the Yellow Rail is known by are Yellow Crake and Clicker, Clicker probably because of its call, *tic-tic, tic-tic-tic*, the sound two stones make when banged together. This distinctive clicking call is heard almost exclusively on spring nights.

This rail breeds in Central Canada and northern United States and in Ontario is found mainly in the Hudson Bay Lowlands and some localized marshes in southern Ontario. It winters along the southeastern coast of the United States and along the Gulf of Mexico.

It is on the Yellow Watch List for species with a restricted range and is of Special Concern in Ontario. The concern is as a result of habitat loss; expanding Snow Goose populations in the Hudson Bay Lowlands – these geese may be destroying habitat from localized grazing; it is a species that does not benefit from wetland restoration for waterfowl because of its preference for shallow marshes as opposed to open water; and because of invasive, non-native plants.

A few years back, before my time as a Bird Winger, Laura Turcotte found a Yellow Rail on River Road in Chisholm Township. Because this find came during a Bird Wing outing, other members got to see it too. Every year since, our group has tried to find it again on River Road, but to no avail. Even the Sedge Wren has not made an appearance there over the last 2 or 3 years, nor has Le Conte's Sparrow, also seen there in past years.

*Sources: All About Birds, The Cornell Lab; Audubon's Field Guide, National Audubon Society; Government of Ontario.*



*Richard Crossley, Wikimedia Commons*

## *Bird Wing Report*

# Bird stories from the field

At our September meeting, Dick Tafel showed us a newspaper from the distant past, entitled *Bird Stories, The Dick E. Bird News*. If anyone would like to read the newspaper, let me know. If not, it will go in my recycling box.



*Sarah Wheelan*

This month, our bird stories are predominantly in photo form – and a photo can often be worth a thousand words. There is one story based on Steve Pitt's story which appeared in September's report, his story about a Blue Jay mimicking the call of an American Goldfinch, trying to fool Steve into hurrying up to get the seed in the feeders.

From Kevan Cowcill who was working in Haileybury at the time: "I was fooled by a Blue Jay doing some strange calls that I thought were those of an immature Broad-winged Hawk. Later in the day I heard it again, this time doing most of the hawk's whistle. Shortly after this, I again heard it, but this time doing only partial whistles, like an immature Broad-winged would do, and also some calls that were a bit like a Sharp-shinned. Then right in the middle of the calls and whistles, it gave a typical Blue Jay squawk before reverting back to the whistles. As soon as it gave that squawk, I said, "Dang, I bet that's a Blue Jay fooling me again!" My coworker could see the bird from where she was sitting and confirmed it was indeed a Blue Jay and not a Broad-winged Hawk – nor a Sharp-shinned."

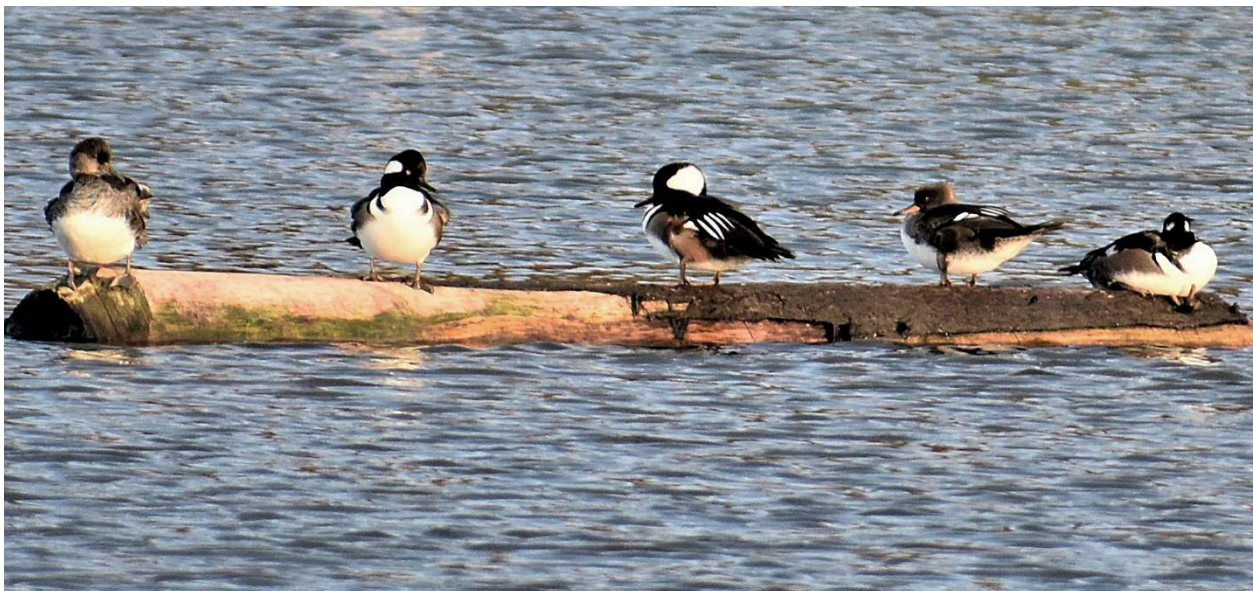
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From Keith Thornborough in Sundridge is this photo below. What bird do you see?



*Keith Thornborough*

From Kaye Edmonds is a photo she took in Laurier Woods. Normally the ducks we see sitting on the turtles' log are Mallards. But this time, five delightful ducks that are not Mallards!



*Kaye Edmonds*



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From Steve Pitt, a Red-winged Blackbird he dubbed the bow-legged bird.



*Steve Pitt*

And finally from Kaye again, a photo of birders, one waving and one smiling at the photographer, and one actually birding!



*Kaye Edmonds*

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### **Slaty-backed and Bird Wingers get a mention in *Ontario Birds***

In November 2018, Dick Tafel, Lori Anderson and I saw a Slaty-backed Gull at North Bay's landfill site. I mention this again now because in the August 2019 edition of *Ontario Birds*, in the article entitled "Ontario Birds Records Committee Report of 2018" written by the committee members, the Slaty-backed Gull is reported on page 66 as being seen by Lori Anderson, Nicole Richardson and me. Unfortunately, the reviewers neglected to name Dick, so to correct this, I emailed Mike Burrell and I expect the correction to run in the August 2020 issue.

Partially reprinted below, with some additional information, is an article I wrote for the February 2019 issue of *The Woodland Observer*.

On a sunny and mild late November morning, three members of Bird Wing, Dick Tafel, Lori Anderson and I, made our way to North Bay's landfill site, hoping to get some good views of the Arctic Gulls - Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. We did see them, in fact quite a number of Glaucous Gulls, including an adult which we rarely see. But little did we expect to see an adult Slaty-backed Gull. Not that we knew it was a Slaty-backed at the time.

Dick was the first to notice this unusual gull sitting nicely in the sun beside Dick's car just waiting for more garbage to be dumped. Initially we thought it might be a Lesser Black-backed until we saw its bright pink legs. (A Lesser Black-backed has yellow legs.) I was able to get a photo of it before it flew off (above) and I did not get to see it in such plain view again. In the end, we decided it might be a Greater Black-backed, although its smaller size and its extensively streaked head did not fit the bill.

When I got home, I looked up gulls in my field guides but was not able to confidently determine what type of gull it was and thought it might even be a hybrid. So I posted it on eBird under Great Black-backed, knowing someone would get in touch with me if it wasn't. And it wasn't long before two birders did, Bruce Di Labio from the Ottawa region and Rick Stronks from Algonquin Park. It was Bruce who finally confirmed its identity as a Slaty-backed Gull after consulting with Newfoundland birder Bruce Mactavish.

For about 10 days or so, the Slaty-backed stayed at the landfill site during the day, then made its way to the open water on Trout Lake in the late afternoon. As more severe winter conditions set



*Renee Levesque*

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in, off it went. Subsequent to this sighting, two adults were seen in Brantford in December and one at the Windsor-Essex landfill site in January.

From *Ontario Birds*: The occurrence of two adults “at the Brantford landfill site is exceptional and the first occurrence in Ontario. It is part of a steady increase in this vagrant species to this region.” (pg. 66)

The Slaty-backed Gull is a large, stocky gull, with pink legs the colour of bubble gum and with an orange-red gonydeal spot on a yellow bill. In adults, the mantle is slate grey, darker than a Herring Gull’s, but not as dark as a Great Black-backed Gull’s. In breeding plumage, its head is white, but in winter plumage, the adult has extensive dark smudging on its head and upper breast. Its most telling feature is the broad white trailing edge on its wing tips with a “string of pearls” pattern on the underside of the wings, very noticeable in flight or when its wings are extended. (See photo at right.)

The Slaty-backed is a resident of the coastlines of northeastern Asia and a regular summer visitor to western Alaska, although in small numbers. It has been seen as a rare stray in many locations in North America, and was seen in November 2016 by member David Rooke in Waterloo. David posted it on eBird in amongst some Herring Gulls, describing it as a small Great Black-backed until alerted by Brandon Holden that it was actually a Slaty-backed. This Slaty-backed stayed in Waterloo from November 28 until December 2, and then in January 2017, one was seen by Brandon in Niagara Falls and Thorold. It is believed it was the same one David saw in Waterloo.



*Bruce Mactavish*

Towards the end of November or in early December, there will be an outing to the landfill site. The date is yet to be determined, but an email with details will be sent to members closer to the date.

*Sources: Audubon Field Guide, eBird, and Ontario Birds, August 2018 issue.*

- *Renee Levesque*

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# Project FeederWatch and BirdSpotter

Although Project FeederWatch got underway on November 9, it is not too late to become a member of Bird Studies Canada and participate in this important winter Citizen Science Project.

You can participate in Project FeederWatch when you join Bird Studies Canada as a new member or renew your current membership. Your donation of any amount makes you a member and your membership is valid for the rest of that year. If you give \$50 or more, you will also receive the BirdWatch Canada magazine. See: [Join FeederWatch](#).

Below is information, quoted for the most part from Project FeederWatch, on how to count:

FeederWatch count days are **two consecutive days** when you count the birds at your feeders. Count days always come in pairs. Pick days that will maximize the time you have to count birds, and, if possible, schedule your count days in advance. **Do not change your count days just because one day you may have a remarkable number of birds or many kinds of birds or rare birds.** Doing so would bias your data. If you are unable to count during a particular week

or count period, that's okay. Your data are valuable even if you were only able to count on a few occasions.

**Schedule each pair of count days at least 5 days apart.** You may decide to count every Tuesday and Wednesday, for example. Counting once a week means you can submit up to 21 bird counts—the number of weeks in the FeederWatch season. However, it is fine to miss weeks. I find it easiest to stick to the two consecutive days I decided upon at the beginning of the count season.



*Kaye Edmonds*



*Kaye Edmonds*

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Watch your feeders for as long as you can during your count days. However, you don't need to watch continuously. Some people can only watch before and/or after work, for example. If you cannot count on both of your two count days, you can count on your one available day.

Be sure to keep track of how much time you spend observing your count site.

Birds don't need to come only to feeders and to the ground seed you may have scattered. They can also be counted if they come to your yard because of your plants, trees and shrubs.

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For those who like to photograph birds at their feeders or in their yards, the BirdSpotter contest returns again this year.

The contest starts on **November 11** with the category, *Birds with Food or at the Feeder*. In other words, you can submit photos that fall into that category, and can do so until this submission period closes on **November 21**.

Every other week, there will be a new category, and for each category there will be two winning photos, a People's Choice and a Judges' Choice.

For more information on the BirdSpotter Contest and to determine what the categories will be every other week, see <https://feederwatch.org/birdspotter2019-20/>.

You can also send photos to Project FeederWatch, Bird Studies Canada, to be used on their website, calendar or printed materials. To find out how, see <https://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/pfw/?targetpg=pfwphotos>.

Participants in FeederWatch can also share bird feeding tips, stories, and/or memories. After recording your data online, follow the *Enter to Win* prompt and answer a question. From **November 9–28**, your story, tip or memory is to be about your favorite bird that comes to your feeders. As in the photo contest, the category will change every other week. The winning story will be posted on the Project FeederWatch [blog](#).

**Watching birds and sharing what you see is one of the 7 simple actions The Cornell Lab of Ornithology recommends to help in stopping the further decline of the almost 3 billion birds already lost since 1970.**

- Renee Levesque



Renee Levesque

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# Other upcoming events and documentary

**Bird Wing Meeting:** November's Bird Wing meeting takes place on **Tuesday, November 26, starting at 6:30 p.m., and held again at 176 Lakeshore Drive, the corner of Gertrude and Lakeshore, in the café, suite #8.**

It is being held here to accommodate another presentation, this one by **Gary and Connie Sturge**, who drove as far as Saskatchewan this past summer with their young grandson. They will talk about and show photos of some of the birds they saw along the way, but that's not all. They will also focus on some geography, biology, history and astronomy. In other words, **their talk is about what they did on their summer vacation – and the birds they met along the way.** See one of these birds below!



*Connie Sturge*

An outing date to North Bay's landfill site to see the Arctic gulls will be determined at the November meeting. If the outing is to be sooner than that, members will be notified by email.

## *Bird Wing Report*

There is no Bird Wing meeting in December and come January, we are back in the library. It has been a long hiatus!

**And because there is no meeting in December, for those who haven't yet done so, please pay your membership dues at the November meeting, or mail your \$5.00 membership cheque to Gary Sturge , 537 Hwy 539, Powassan, P0H 1Z0. If you like, you can pay by online banking. To do so, contact Gary at [sturge@sympatico.ca](mailto:sturge@sympatico.ca) to ask how. However, there is a dollar charge for using this method – but you pay 90 cents to \$1.05 to mail your cheque anyway.**

**Bird Bash:** December's Bird Bash takes place the weekend of **December 7 and 8**. This could help give those who are participating as field surveyors in the Christmas Bird Count on December 14 an idea of which species are around and where they might be and to determine if or where the lakes are free of ice.

**Netflix Documentary:** Steve Pitt informed me there is an excellent documentary entitled *Dancing With The Birds* now on Netflix. (Launched on October 23.) To view the trailer, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6po8dWuvCL..>

Steve reports the photography is stunning and the commentary by Emmy Award-winner Stephen Fry, droll. "*Dancing With The Birds* visits everyone's favorite birds-of-paradise and their spectacularly captivating mating rituals from flash dancing to shape shifting."

I heard from members that the Nova documentary shown at October's meeting, *World's Fastest Animal*, about the Peregrine Falcon, was all it promised to be, a fascinating look at this magnificent falcon, a falcon some of us have seen recently atop its usual spot, the cross at Pro-Cathedral.



*Wilson's Bird of Paradise, Serhanoksay - own work - Wikipedia*