

Bird Bash Report

September 2023

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Another wonderful, almost summer-like Bird Bash weekend saw seventeen participants seeking mostly migrating birds. They found 107 species, two less than last year, but very close to the average for September over the past 20 years.

As you know, the area in which we look for birds is anywhere within the 80.5 kilometre or 50 mile radius of central North Bay, as shown on the map found inside the front cover of the *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area*. Only two first-of-the-year birds for the Bird Bash year within that area were discovered this month.

The first was the lithesome Wilson's Phalarope enjoyed by Grant and Shirley McKercher who saw it in Warren Lagoon as it made its way south.

Then there was the Wood Thrush, for some reason not previously discovered by anyone during the earlier months of the Bird Bash, but found this month by Lloyd and Janet Sparks.

Now to all the other 105 species that were previously noted during this year's Bird Bash, following the order found in our popular *Seasonal Checklist*, that starts with the iconic Common Loon, which was noticed only by Denise Desmarais, Bill and Carol Fleming, Greg Jaski, and the Sparks.

Next is the Pied-billed Grebe located in Cache Bay by Renee Levesque along with your compiler.

Double-crested Cormorants were noted by Greg, the Flemings, the McKerchers, and the Levesque pair.

An American Bittern was located by Garry Waldrum and the Flemings. Garry also saw a Great Blue Heron, as did the McKerchers, Denise, Greg, and the Sparks, and two Green Herons were also spotted by Garry in Laurier Woods.

Turkey Vultures were watched by Garry, the McKerchers, the Levesque duo, Denise, the Sparks, and the Flemings.

Canada Geese were about in very huge numbers!

Many "puddle ducks" were still around, especially within the lagoons. Wood Ducks - about which many males had already changed their muted colours back to their beautiful features - were spotted by the Levesque pair, Garry, the McKerchers and the Flemings. Black Ducks and American Wigeon were also noted by the McKerchers and the Levesque pair, the latter group also spotting Gadwall, Blue and Green-winged Teals, and the Northern Shoveler. Garry also spotted the Blacks and the McKerchers also observed the Blue-winged Teal, as well as the Northern Pintail. Mallards were very abundant and spotted by most participants.

A few more diving ducks had appeared, including the Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, and Ring-necked Duck all noted by the Levesque pair. The McKerchers saw the Ring-neck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, and Hooded Merganser. The Flemings also found Lesser Scaup. Faye Oei, Sue Gratton, Greg, and Garry saw the Common Merganser, with the latter participant also seeing the Hooded.

Now to the predators: just a few Osprey were still around and noted only by the Sparks; the Bald Eagle was seen by Donna Demarco, the Sparks, and Garry; the Red-tailed Hawk and the Broad-winged Hawk, as well as the American Kestrel, were also seen by Garry; the latter two species were seen as well by the Levesque duo, who also spotted the Northern Harrier, as did Faye, Sue, and the Flemings; the American Kestrel was also seen by Denise, the Sparks, and the Flemings; and the Merlin was spotted by the McKerchers and the Levesque pair.

Ruffed Grouse were discovered by Sue and Faye, and the Wild Turkey by Garry.

Sandhill Cranes were observed by Denise, the Flemings, Garry, the Sparks (heard only), the McKerchers, and the Levesque pair.

Several shorebirds were still about: the Semipalmated Plover was spotted by the Levesque duo at the Tenth Street beach; the Killdeer by Renee at the Government Dock; the Spotted Sandpiper by the Levesque pair, the McKerchers, and Garry; Greater Yellowlegs by the McKerchers and the Levesque duo; and Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated, Least Sandpipers (Warren Lagoon) and a Pectoral Sandpiper by the Levesque pair (Powassan Lagoon).

Ring-billed Gulls were very common, while Herrings were identified only by the Levesque pair, the McKerchers, Garry, Faye, Sue, and Greg.

Caspian Terns were watched by the Levesque duo, Denise, and the McKerchers. No Commons were identified.

Rock Pigeons were, as usual, very widely distributed. Mourning Doves were found by the Levesque duo, Greg, the Sparks, Denise, Sue, Faye, and the Flemings.

A Great Horned Owl was heard once again by Denise, an owl she heard during May's Bird Bash.

There were still some hummingbirds about, noted by John Levesque, Denise, the Flemings, Faye, Garry, the Sparks, Greg, Renee, and the McKerchers.

The Belted Kingfisher was spotted by Denise, the McKerchers, Greg, and Garry.

As to woodpeckers, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was found only by John and Renee; the Northern Flicker was spotted by virtually everyone, as was the Hairy Woodpecker; the Downy was noted only by John, Renee, and the Flemings, who also saw the Pileated, as did the McKerchers, and Denise.

There were still some flycatchers around: the Least Flycatcher was spotted by the Levesque duo and by Garry; the Eastern Phoebe was especially active and noted by young Jeremie Corbeil, Garry, Sue, the Levesque duo, Denise, and the Sparks; the Eastern Kingbird was watched only by the Flemings.

A few vireos had stayed around: the Warbling was noted by the Levesque duo; the Red-eyed, by Sue and the Levesque pair; the Philadelphia by Sue and the Sparks.

Blue Jays were spotted by almost everyone, as was the very numerous American Crow. Common Ravens were on the lists of Sue, the Levesque duo, Garry, Greg, Faye, John, the McKerchers, the Flemings, the Sparks, Denise, Sue, and Donna.

The only swallow still around seemed to be the Barn, found by Faye.

Of course, the Black-capped Chickadee was enjoyed by virtually everyone.

Both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches were discovered by Sue, John, and Renee; the Red-breasted alone by Faye, Garry, and Denise; the White-breasted alone by Greg and the McKerchers, who also found the Brown Creeper, as did Sue.

A Winter Wren was unearthed by Garry, who also came upon the Golden-crowned Kinglet, as did Sue and Faye.

Now to thrushes: the lovely Eastern Bluebird was enjoyed by the Levesque pair, Garry, and Jeremie; the Veery was noted only by John and Renee; the Hermit Thrush by the Sparks and Garry, who also spotted some of the few American Robins still appearing locally, as did Linda Stoner, the Levesque duo, John, Denise, the McKerchers, Faye, Sue, the Flemings, Greg, and Jeremie.

Some Gray Catbirds were still around, found by Denise, the Levesque duo, Garry, and the McKerchers. Brown Thrashers were observed only by Linda and the Flemings.

The European Starling remained on just about everyone's list.

American Pipits were travelling through, sometimes in large numbers, and were spotted by the Levesque duo, the McKerchers, and Denise.

Cedar Waxwings were pretty well spread out, and being noted by Denise, Greg, the Levesque duo, Garry, the McKerchers, and John.

Now to wood warblers (not quite as pretty in their Fall colours or as numerous as in the Spring) that were moving quickly within leafy trees as they travelled through our area, fourteen were found: Nashville, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Cape May, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Palm, Bay-breasted, Black and White, American Redstart, Ovenbird, and Common Yellowthroat. Sue identified eleven, the McKerchers seven, the Levesque duo four, Garry four, Faye three, Denise two, John two, Greg two, the Sparks one, and

Linda one. All were exciting to discover en route to their southern winter habitations. Few will still be here next month!

Next we have the Scarlet Tanager within wonderful view of the Sparks, the McKerchers, Linda, and Garry.

Now to the sparrows: the Chipping, the smallest one around here, but often found within home surroundings, was spotted by Sue, the McKerchers, Jeremie, the Levesque duo, Garry, Faye, and the Sparks; Savannah Sparrows normally found in farm field areas were noted only by the McKerchers and the Levesque duo; Song Sparrows, usually the most common one in our area, were discovered by Sue, Faye, Greg, the Sparks, Denise, the McKerchers, and the Levesque duo, while the latter three groups and Garry also saw the well-described Swamp Sparrow; the easy to identify White-throat was seen by Garry, John, Faye, Sue, and the Levesque duo; and moving south from their nesting area were two White-crowned Sparrows found at Sunset Park by the Levesque pair.

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen by John, Renee, and Faye.

Some Red-winged Blackbirds were still around and were spotted by the Levesque duo, Greg, and the Flemings. Large flocks of Common Grackles were seen by most everyone.

The Purple Finch was noted by Garry, Renee, and John. American Goldfinches, often to be seen all year round, were spotted by Sue, Jeremie, the McKerchers, the Flemings, the Levesque duo, Denise, and Greg.

Finally, we get to the world-widely distributed House Sparrow that was seen only by the Levesque duo and the McKerchers at the Coop Grain Store in Verner.

And that concludes a very successful and enjoyable September Bird Bash. Congratulations to all participants. Be prepared for the October one, to take place **over the weekend of October 7-8**. Should be many more exciting, new birds to find then!