

Bird Bash Report

November 2023

By Dick Tafel, Compiler

Well, after an almost record low October Bird Bash, some 21 participants managed to follow-up with a record high November over our 21 years - 86 species! Clearly amazing!

And so, getting to the meat of it all, let's see first just what new birds for the Bird Bash year were discovered within our usual order set out in our little *Seasonal Checklist of the Birds of North Bay and Area* within a 50-mile or 80.5 km diameter circle.

That starts with Tundra Swans recognized flying over Verner Lagoon by Diane and Alvin Deagle.

Then there were Surf and Black Scoters found along the southeastern shores of Lake Nipissing by Renee Levesque with your compiler.

A Long-tailed Duck was spotted in Callander Bay by Grant and Shirley McKercher.

A Black-bellied Plover was identified at Verner Lagoon by Denise Desmarais, the Levesque duo, and the Deagles.

White-rumped Sandpipers were noticed at Powassan Lagoon by the Levesque pair.

Great Black-backed Gulls were found by Greg Jaski, the Deagles, and the Levesque pair.

The long-sought-after Black-backed Woodpecker was discovered in the west end by Chris Sukha!

Bohemian Waxwings had begun their presence locally this year and were watched by Lloyd and Janet Sparks and Garry Waldrum.

A just-arrived Lapland Longspur was spotted by the Deagles at Verner Lagoon.

That concludes the new species, so we now move on to the balance of birds seen in our time-honoured order.

As usual (till lakes are frozen) that starts with the Common Loon. It was watched by Steve Pitt, Lori Anderson with Ken Gowing, Denise, Chris, the Levesque duo, the McKerchers, the Sparks, and Greg.

The Pied-billed Grebe was still about and noted by Keith Thornborrow.

The Horned Grebe was sighted along the North Bay waterfront by Katharine MacLeod, the Deagles, the Levesque duo, and the McKerchers. The Red-necked Grebe was noted near Sunset

Park by the Levesque pair.

Very few Double-crested Cormorants were still here but were spotted by Steve. Likewise with Turkey Vultures - very few were still in the vicinity, but were noticed by Bill and Carol Fleming and the Anderson pair

The elegant Great Blue Heron was followed by Faye Oei, Steve, and Garry.

Canada Geese remained very plentiful and were observed by many.

Trumpeter Swans were identified near Sturgeon Falls by the Levesque pair.

Now to the “puddle ducks”: Some were still about, including Wood, Northern Shoveler, and Green-winged Teal noticed by the Anderson duo. Green-wings in large numbers were also watched by the Levesque pair and the Deagles. Mallards were very commonplace and spotted by many, while Blacks were on the lists of Chris, the Anderson pair, and the Levesque pair. A Northern Pintail was also seen by the Levesque duo, while Blacks and Green-wings were seen by the McKerchers.

Diving ducks seemed more prominent, with Ring-necked, Bufflehead, and Common Goldeneye all spotted by the McKerchers, the Levesque pair, and the Anderson duo. Lesser Scaup and Common Goldeneye by the Sparks; Goldeneye by Greg; Lesser Scaup and Bufflehead by Denise; Bufflehead by Faye; Greater and Lesser Scaup and Bufflehead by Chris and the Deagles; Lesser Scaup by the McKerchers; Ring-necked and Common Merganser by the Deagles; Common Merganser by Greg and Faye; Ring-necked, Lesser Scaup, Hooded and Common Mergansers by Katharine; Hooded Merganser and Lesser Scaup by the Levesque duo; Bufflehead, Goldeneye, and Hooded Merganser by Keith, Chris, and Steve; Hooded and Common Mergansers by Garry and the Anderson duo; ten Common Mergansers by your compiler on Trout Lake; and finally the White-winged Scoter by the McKerchers, Greg, and the Levesque pair.

Now getting along to the predators, surprisingly a young Osprey was still at Lake Nosbonsing and spotted by the Anderson pair. Northern Harriers remained about and were noted by the Deagles and the Levesque pair. Imperious Bald Eagles were watched by Garry, the Sparks, Greg, Denise, Chris, the Levesque duo, and the Anderson pair. Red-tailed Hawks were fairly widespread being noted by John Levesque, the Deagles, the McKerchers, the Anderson and Levesque pairs, and Chris, who also spotted a Rough-legged Hawk. A Merlin was observed by the Deagles and Garry. No American Kestrels were found.

Ruffed Grouse were located by Donna Demarco, Garry, the Anderson duo, Katharine, the Flemings, Faye, Denise, and the Sparks.

Wild Turkeys were watched only by Keith.

American Coots were discovered by the McKerchers, one at Powassan Lagoon, and many at Cache Bay by Chris.

No Sandhill Cranes were found.

Now to those often hard-to-distinguish shorebirds. We start with the Greater Yellowlegs. It was spotted by the McKerchers, Denise, the Deagles, the Anderson duo, and the Levesque pair, who also saw the Lesser Yellowlegs (at Verner Lagoon). A Pectoral Sandpiper was noted by the Levesque duo at Powassan Lagoon, along with lots of Dunlin and some Stilt Sandpipers. Dunlins were also identified by Denise, the Anderson pair, the Deagles, and the McKerchers.

Ring-billed Gulls and Herring Gulls were fairly widely dispersed and spotted by most participants. Rock Pigeons also!

The Mourning Dove was spotted only by Keith and Faye.

Keith also came upon a Barred Owl, the only owl identified.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were widely identified this month. The Pileated continued to put in its presence and was noted by the McKerchers, Chris, Garry, the Levesque duo, the Deagles, and the Sparks.

Not present since March, the Canada Jay finally put in an appearance for Keith. Blue Jays were spotted by almost everyone, as were American Crows and Common Ravens.

The Horned Lark had arrived and was found at Verner Lagoon by the Deagles.

The Black-capped Chickadee remained one of our most popular birds and was seen by most participants.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch was noted by Dale Duncan, John, Steve, Garry, Faye, Chris, the Levesque duo, Denise, and the Anderson duo, while this month the White-breasted seemed to be a bit less outgoing, but was noted by Greg, Chris, the Flemings, Katherine, Steve, and Dale.

The Brown Creeper was discovered by Dale, Faye, and Denise.

Kinglets are often present late in the year, and so the Golden-crowned was noted by Chris and Faye, while the Ruby-crowned was spotted by the Anderson duo.

The only thrush to still be present was the wonderful American Robin, spotted by Brittany Tartaglia, Garry, the Deagles, yours truly, and Chris.

European Starlings remained ubiquitous.

Some American Pipits were about and seen by Chris, the Deagles, and the Anderson duo.

One warbler, the Yellow-rumped, was spotted by Dale.

Of sparrows, the American Tree was the most numerous, being located by Katharine, Keith, the Anderson pair, John, the Flemings, the Levesque duo, Chris, and Denise. The White-throated was discovered by the Flemings and Dale. The White-crowned was on the list only of the Levesque duo. The Dark-eyed Junco was watched by the Sparks, Dale, Faye, Garry, Keith, and Brittany.

Snow Buntings were located by the Anderson pair, Garry, the Deagles, Renee, and Chris.

Pleasingly, the Northern Cardinal seemed to have become somewhat more widespread and was observed by Dale and the McKerchers.

Some Red-winged Blackbirds were still around and were seen by Brittany, Steve, Chris, and the Levesque pair.

Common Grackles were also still about but generally in smaller numbers and were noted by the Levesque duo, Donna, the Deagles, Keith, the Anderson pair, Katharine, and Steve.

The Pine Grosbeak was discovered only by Garry.

The Purple Finch was on the lists of Keith, the Flemings, Dale, and Chris.

Red Crossbills were found only by Chris who also noted very early Common Redpolls. He also saw Pine Siskins, as did Renee and the Anderson duo.

American Goldfinches seem to have become more common recently and were spotted by the Anderson pair, the McKerchers, Katharine, Brittany, Denise, Keith, the Flemings, Dale, and Chris.

The Evening Grosbeak was spotted only by Dale.

And finally, the often maligned House Sparrow was watched by the Levesque pair, Chris, and the Anderson duo.

That concludes a very superior effort by many active participants. As previously mentioned, we discovered a record number for a November Bird Bash during our 21 years of consecutive counting. Congrats to all!

Put aside the weekend of **December 2-3** for the December effort - it might produce another record?