

Birdathon 2017

by Geoff Carpentier

This year's adventure was very challenging as the weather impacted both the day and the season. A cold, wet spring meant that many birds were widely dispersed (e.g. waterfowl were in fields and remote ponds, and not in traditional staging locations). Shorebirds were almost non-existent and many flycatching species were late or in very low numbers. Consequently I missed many "easy" species on the adventure. That said, I still found 155 species on the official day, which is a bit below my 30 year average and well below my personal high count of 174 species.



But here's where it got interesting .. I actually did my Big Day **twice**. On May 26-27 and then again 24 hours later on May 28-29 I headed out for these 24-hour marathons with different companions to test what was around. On the first adventure I found 155 species with Peter Hogenbirk as we travelled through Durham Region and up onto the Carden Alvar. On the second adventure, I birded with Brian Henshaw, Kim Baker and

Jay Vandergast and found 157 species. Both outings held surprises for me as I was introduced to several wonderful Durham sites I hadn't been to before and found lots of great birds. The composite list for the two events totaled 173 species.

In total, thanks to the donations of so many generous people, I raised almost \$1900, 25% of which will come back to North Durham Nature. A complete list of all the birds we saw on both trips will be posted on the NDN website so check it out to see what's around this fabulous area in late May!

Species List:

Alder Flycatcher (<i>Empidon alnorum</i>)
American Bittern (<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>)
American Crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)
American Goldfinch (<i>Spinus tristis</i>)
American Kestrel (<i>Falco sparverius</i>)
American Redstart (<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>)
American Robin (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)
American Woodcock (<i>Scolopa minor</i>)
Baltimore Oriole (<i>Icterus galbula</i>)
Bank Swallow (<i>Riparia riparia</i>)
Barn Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)
Barred Owl (<i>Strix varia</i>)
Belted Kingfisher (<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>)
Black Tern (<i>Chlidonias niger</i>)
Black-and-white Warbler (<i>Mniotilta varia</i>)
Black-billed Cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>)
Blackburnian Warbler (<i>Setophaga fusca</i>)
Black-capped Chickadee (<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>)
Black-crowned Night-Heron (<i>Nycticora nycticora</i>)
Blackpoll Warbler (<i>Setophaga striata</i>)
Black-throated Green Warbler (<i>Setophaga virens</i>)
Blue Jay (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>)
Blue-winged Teal (<i>Anas discors</i>)
Blue-winged Warbler (<i>Vermivora cyanoptera</i>)

Bobolink (<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>)
Broad-winged Hawk (<i>Buteo platypterus</i>)
Brown Thrasher (<i>Toostoma rufum</i>)
Brown-headed Cowbird (<i>Molothrus ater</i>)
Canada Goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>)
Canada Warbler (<i>Cardellina canadensis</i>)
Caspian Tern (<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>)
Cedar Waving (<i>Bombocilla cedrorum</i>)
Chestnut-sided Warbler (<i>Setophaga pensylvanica</i>)
Chimney Swift (<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>)
Chipping Sparrow (<i>Spizella passerina</i>)
Clay-colored Sparrow (<i>Spizella pallida</i>)
Cliff Swallow (<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>)
Common Gallinule (<i>Gallinula galeata</i>)
Common Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>)
Common Grackle (<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>)
Common Loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>)
Common Nighthawk (<i>Chordeiles minor</i>)
Common Raven (<i>Corvus cora</i>)
Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)
Common Yellowthroat (<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>)
Double-crested Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>)
Downy Woodpecker (<i>Picoides pubescens</i>)
Eastern Bluebird (<i>Sialia sialis</i>)
Eastern Kingbird (<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>)
Eastern Meadowlark (<i>Sturnella magna</i>)
Eastern Phoebe (<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>)
Eastern Screech-Owl (<i>Megascops asio</i>)
Eastern Towhee (<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>)
Eastern Whip-poor-will (<i>Antrostomus vociferus</i>)
Eastern Wood-Pewee (<i>Contopus virens</i>)
European Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)
Field Sparrow (<i>Spizella pusilla</i>)
Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)
Golden-crowned Kinglet (<i>Regulus satrapa</i>)
Golden-winged Warbler (<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>)
Grasshopper Sparrow (<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>)
Gray Catbird (<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>)
Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>)

Great Crested Flycatcher (<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>)
Great Horned Owl (<i>Bubo virginianus</i>)
Green Heron (<i>Butorides virescens</i>)
Hairy Woodpecker (<i>Picoides villosus</i>)
Hermit Thrush (<i>Catharus guttatus</i>)
Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)
Hooded Merganser (<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>)
Hooded Warbler (<i>Setophaga citrina</i>)
House Finch (<i>Haemorhous meicanus</i>)
House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)
House Wren (<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>)
Indigo Bunting (<i>Passerina cyanea</i>)
Killdeer (<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>)
Least Bittern (<i>Iobrychus eilis</i>)
Least Flycatcher (<i>Empidon minimus</i>)
Lesser Scaup (<i>Aythya affinis</i>)
Lincoln's Sparrow (<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>)
Loggerhead Shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)
Long-tailed Duck (<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>)
Magnolia Warbler (<i>Setophaga magnolia</i>)
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)
Marsh Wren (<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>)
Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)
Mourning Dove (<i>Zenaid macroura</i>)
Mourning Warbler (<i>Geothlypis philadelphia</i>)
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)
Nashville Warbler (<i>Oreothlypis ruficapilla</i>)
Northern Cardinal (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)
Northern Flicker (<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)
Northern Mockingbird (<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)
Northern Rough-winged Swallow (<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>)
Northern Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)
Northern Waterthrush (<i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>)
Olive-sided Flycatcher (<i>Contopus cooperi</i>)
Orange-crowned Warbler (<i>Oreothlypis celata</i>)
Orchard Oriole (<i>Icterus spurius</i>)
Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)
Ovenbird (<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>)
Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)
Pied-billed Grebe (<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>)
Pileated Woodpecker (<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>)

Pine Warbler (<i>Setophaga pinus</i>)
Piping Plover (<i>Charadrius melodus</i>)
Purple Finch (<i>Haemorhous purpureus</i>)
Purple Martin (<i>Progne subis</i>)
Red-bellied Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)
Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)
Red-breasted Nuthatch (<i>Sitta canadensis</i>)
Red-eyed Vireo (<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>)
Redhead (<i>Aythya americana</i>)
Red-tailed Hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)
Red-throated Loon (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)
Red-winged Blackbird (<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)
Ring-billed Gull (<i>Larus delawarensis</i>)
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (<i>Columba livia</i> (Feral Pigeon))
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>)
Ruby-throated Hummingbird (<i>Archilochus colubris</i>)
Ruddy Duck (<i>Oyura jamaicensis</i>)
Ruddy Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>)
Ruffed Grouse (<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>)
Savannah Sparrow (<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>)
Sedge Wren (<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>)
Semipalmated Plover (<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>)
Semipalmated Sandpiper (<i>Calidris pusilla</i>)
Sharp-shinned Hawk (<i>Accipiter striatus</i>)
Short-billed Dowitcher (<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>)
Song Sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)
Sora (<i>Porzana carolina</i>)
Spotted Sandpiper (<i>Actitis macularius</i>)
Swainson's Thrush (<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>)
Swamp Sparrow (<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>)
Tennessee Warbler (<i>Oreothlypis peregrina</i>)
Tree Swallow (<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>)
Trumpeter Swan (<i>Cygnus buccinator</i>)
Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)
Upland Sandpiper (<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>)
Veery (<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>)
Vesper Sparrow (<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>)
Virginia Rail (<i>Rallus limicola</i>)
Warbling Vireo (<i>Vireo gilvus</i>)

White-breasted Nuthatch (<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>)
White-throated Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>)
White-winged Scoter (<i>Melanitta fusca</i>)
Wild Turkey (<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>)
Willow Flycatcher (<i>Empidona traillii</i>)
Wilson's Snipe (<i>Gallinago delicata</i>)
Wilson's Warbler (<i>Cardellina pusilla</i>)
Wood Duck (<i>Ai sponsa</i>)
Wood Thrush (<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>)
Yellow Warbler (<i>Setophaga petechia</i>)
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)
Yellow-rumped Warbler (<i>Setophaga coronata</i>)



Photos I took along the way:

Female Wood Duck with chicks and Black Tern

Btw – the observant amongst you will notice there are 156 species in the list, but I missed the Ruffed Grouse, so can't claim that amongst my own list of 155.