

Wallace Memorial Birdathon 2020

Bonebakker Nature Reserve - David Geale - 2020 May 14



For most of April and May this year, it had been cool, with snow falling in Cobourg as late as May 10. But by May 14th, virtually all our resident species had returned and the forecast looked promising for migrants - so at 5:30 a.m. I rang the Bonebakker's doorbell and found Tyne and Joanne ready to head out for a nice morning walk.

As we entered the reserve, I heard several Grasshopper Sparrows in the surrounding fields, along with Savannah Sparrows and a Wild Turkey gobbling in the distance. There were plenty of other species singing as the sun rose, including Wood Thrush and Ovenbird, and four Double-crested Cormorants flew by, soon followed by a Common Loon. Our first hedgerow produced Eastern Towhee, Brown Thrasher, and House Wren before we headed into the beautiful deciduous forest in the northern quarter of the property. However, it was quiet in the woods; a pair of White-breasted Nuthatches and a singing Rose-breasted Grosbeak were about all we found on that first pass through.

Emerging on the edge of a field, we found a small flock of warblers including Black-throated Green Warbler and Northern Parula; a Chipping Sparrow sang in a bare tree nearby and a Pileated Woodpecker sounded off in the forest we'd just left behind. From there, we worked our way south, slowly adding species though the morning had turned cool and cloudy and it never really felt as if a "dawn chorus" happened. A Pine Warbler sang above us, Canada Geese honked somewhere to the north, and a pair of Eastern Kingbirds fluttered by. Our last chance (for now) at woodland birds produced two woodpeckers - Red-bellied and Hairy - as well as a White-throated Sparrow.

Joanne headed home for a virtual meeting - a staple of these times - before Tyne and I moved into the cattle pastures, and quickly added to our list with Field Sparrow, Eastern Phoebe, and Eastern Meadowlark. We found a Scarlet Tanager (my first of the year) and a Clay-coloured Sparrow before entering the dense White Cedar forest that dominates the southern section of the reserve; there we found Cedar Waxwing (right), Hermit Thrush, Blackburnian Warbler, and Red-breasted Nuthatch before climbing back into open pastureland. We finished the morning session heading back towards the Bonebakker residence, adding Bobolink, Barn Swallow, and a pair of American Kestrels checking out potential nest sites. Before saying goodbye, Tyne spotted a flock of gulls



soaring waaaay to the south, but thankfully one of them was a Great Black-backed Gull, and easy to identify from 10 km. away!

Before I headed home for a mid-day break, I checked out the deciduous forest again but it was still quiet; I did have a Wilson's Snipe winnowing overhead, and by scanning a distant pond I was able to add Mallard, Killdeer, and Lesser Yellowlegs, bringing the morning's total to 65.



I returned late in the afternoon, and immediately added a Turkey Vulture, but the next 2 hours produced only a Blue-headed Vireo and, among a large flock of mostly Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Nashville Warblers (left), a single Lincoln's Sparrow. My final pass through the deciduous forest was relatively productive, with Least and Great Crested

Flycatchers, a Broad-winged Hawk, and a Veery calling at dusk. I waited around for an hour as dusk fell and night came, but I heard not a single woodcock, owl, or goatsucker... Still, it had been a very enjoyable day and I went home happy with my list of 71 species.

The full list:

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| 1 Canada Goose | 22 Eastern Phoebe |
| 2 Mallard | 23 Least Flycatcher |
| 3 Wild Turkey | 24 Great Crested Flycatcher |
| 4 Rock Pigeon | 25 Eastern Kingbird |
| 5 Mourning Dove | 26 Blue-headed Vireo |
| 6 Killdeer | 27 Blue Jay |
| 7 Wilson's Snipe | 28 American Crow |
| 8 Lesser Yellowlegs | 29 Common Raven |
| 9 Ring-billed Gull | 30 Black-capped Chickadee |
| 10 Great Black-backed Gull | 31 Barn Swallow |
| 11 Common Loon | 32 Ruby-crowned Kinglet |
| 12 Double-crested Cormorant | 33 Red-breasted Nuthatch |
| 13 Turkey Vulture | 34 White-breasted Nuthatch |
| 14 Broad-winged Hawk | 35 House Wren |
| 15 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | 36 European Starling |
| 16 Red-bellied Woodpecker | 37 Brown Thrasher |
| 17 Downy Woodpecker | 38 Hermit Thrush |
| 18 Hairy Woodpecker | 39 Veery |
| 19 Pileated Woodpecker | 40 Wood Thrush |
| 20 Northern Flicker | 41 American Robin |
| 21 American Kestrel | 42 Cedar Waxwing |

- 43 American Goldfinch
- 44 Grasshopper Sparrow
- 45 Chipping Sparrow
- 46 Clay-coloured Sparrow
- 47 Field Sparrow
- 48 White-crowned Sparrow
- 49 White-throated Sparrow
- 50 Savannah Sparrow
- 51 Song Sparrow
- 52 Lincoln's Sparrow
- 53 Eastern Towhee
- 54 Bobolink
- 55 Eastern Meadowlark
- 56 Baltimore Oriole
- 57 Red-winged Blackbird
- 58 Brown-headed Cowbird
- 59 Common Grackle
- 60 Ovenbird
- 61 Black-and-white Warbler
- 62 Nashville Warbler
- 63 Common Yellowthroat
- 64 Northern Parula
- 65 Blackburnian Warbler
- 66 Pine Warbler
- 67 Yellow-rumped Warbler
- 68 Black-throated Green Warbler
- 69 Scarlet Tanager
- 70 Northern Cardinal
- 71 Rose-breasted Grosbeak