

Ontario

by Sarah Rupert

Ontario had 106 counts, with new counts from Holiday Beach and Uxbridge. Snow was recorded in the majority of count circles, and in most locations temperatures were below freezing. In total, 2707 people were in the field and an additional 1768 people watched feeders. Blenheim led the species total field this year with 111 species, followed by Long Point with 105 and Point Pelee and Kingston, each with 103.

A Le Conte's Sparrow, a new species for Canadian bird counts, was reported and photographed in Kingston this year. A lone endangered Barn Owl was found on the St. Clair National Wildlife Area count, a hopeful sign for the recovery of this species in the area. An invasion of Black-capped Chickadees that began in the fall resulted in a whopping total of 75,589 tallied across the province.

In the northwest, Sturgeon Lake led the area with 49 species. Significant sightings included a Wood Duck at Sturgeon Lake, a Double-crested Cormorant at Fort Francis, single Horned Larks at Sturgeon Lake and Thunder Bay, a count-week Townsend's Solitaire at Thunder Bay, 150 American Robins at Thunder Bay, and a Savannah Sparrow at Thunder Bay.

Sault Ste. Marie led the northeast area again this year with 57 species, followed by Sudbury with 39, and Marathon with 27. Waterfowl sightings were concentrated in Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury again this year. Significant sightings for the area included: a Gadwall and count-week Harlequin Duck at Sault Ste. Marie, a count-week American Coot at Sault Ste. Marie, a Wilson's Snipe at Marathon, a Thayer's Gull, and a Nelson's Gull (Glaucous x Herring hybrid) at Sault Saint Marie.

Peel-Halton led the central west zone again this year with 75 species, followed by Cambridge with 71 and Kitchener with 69. Noteworthy sightings in the area included a count-week Cackling Goose at Woodstock, two Red-throated Loons in Warton, a Black-crowned Night-Heron at Cambridge, a Marsh Wren at Woodstock, a Varied Thrush at Owen Sound, a Brown Thrasher at Mindemoya, a Field Sparrow at Kitchener, and two Savannah Sparrows at Peel-Halton.

Kingston led the counts in the central east area with 103 species, followed by Ottawa-Gatineau with 78. North Bay provided the largest work force, with 629 feederwatchers. Significant sightings included a Cackling Goose at Kingston, a hybrid Barrow's cross Common Goldeneye at Ottawa-Gatineau, a Pacific Loon at Kingston, a Common Moorhen at Kingston, a count-week Eastern Towhee at Huntsville, single Field Sparrows at Presqu'ile and Kingston, 3 Vesper Sparrows in Kingston and 1 in Presqu'ile, the aforementioned Le Conte's Sparrow at Kingston, and a Yellow-headed Blackbird at Presqu'ile.

Finally, in the south, Blenheim had the most species again this year with 111, followed by Long Point with 105 and Point Pelee with 103. The majority of waterfowl were in the western end of Lake Ontario (e.g., 24,304 Long-tailed Duck in Hamilton). Sparrows were abundant in the area this year, with record numbers for many species reported and a great diversity of species found. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued their upward trend, with 645 counted.

Highlights in the south included a Greater White-fronted Goose at Fisherville, 3 Cackling Geese at Cedar Creek, a Harlequin Duck at Toronto; a Barrow's Goldeneye at Hamilton and Point Pelee, a Purple Sandpiper at Kettle Point, a Barn Owl at St. Clair National Wildlife Area, a House Wren at Point Pelee, single Pine Warblers at Blenheim and Point Pelee, single Lincoln's Sparrows at Holiday Beach and London, a Harris' Sparrow at Point Pelee, and a Dickcissel at West Elgin.