

December 6-8, 2019 – Niagara Falls

Leader: Don Burlett, Jim Koppin

The Niagara Falls trip this year began with a drive to Niagara Falls across Ontario on Friday. Our first stop, Blenheim waste water facility, had several duck species, A Bald Eagle and a Peregrine Falcon. It was cold and windy and made finding birds challenging. After an unsuccessful stop at Shrewsbury to search for a Purple Sandpiper, we headed to the base of the Rondeau peninsula. In a puddle along the road, we found a Red Phalarope, two Killdeer and a Dunlin (nice birds for



this time of year). As we headed north to the highway, we saw a field with lots of geese. Upon



further inspection we found 18 Cackling Geese, 2 Greater White-fronted Geese and hundreds of Canada Geese. We then proceeded to Brantford in search of a Slaty-backed Gull spotted earlier. When we first arrived, an Eagle had scattered all the gulls present. Upon waiting for 20 minutes, the gulls came back and there he was. Then, we were off to Hamilton to check the Lake Ontario waterfront for ducks and other birds. Here, we came upon hundreds of Long-tailed Ducks and other ducks along with Surf, White-winged and Black Scoters. We also found a young male King Eider.



The next day, we began our traditional trip from Fort Erie (on Lake Erie) to Lake Ontario at Niagara-on-the-Lake. There many ducks and a Common Loon along the way. The other big stop was at the Whirlpool where we searched for and found a Black-headed Gull (with notable black



under the primaries). We also saw Greater Black-backed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, ring-billed Gull and Herring Gull. At the Queenston boat launch, we observed a Little Gull amongst the Bonaparte's Gull with its dark underwing. We finished the day watching the thousands of Bonaparte's Gulls heading out onto Lake Ontario.

On Sunday, we did some land birding to add some species like the "rare" Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren. As we left the area, we searched for and found a Snowy Owl in the grassy fields west of St. Catherines. Then it was time to head home after a successful weekend.



In total, we saw 75 species with a number of them within the list as very good birds. The complete list of species seen is provided below. The pictures provided in this report were taken by Bob Bochenek, Larry Urbanski and Spencer Vanderhoof. Many thanks to them for documentation of these great species.

Greater White-fronted Goose
Cackling Goose
Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Trumpeter Swan
Tundra Swan
Gadwall
American Black Duck
Mallard
Northern Shoveler
Redhead
Greater Scaup
King Eider
Surf Scoter
White-winged Scoter
Black Scoter
Long-tailed Duck
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser
Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Common Loon
Horned Grebe
Red-necked Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Blue Heron
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Bald eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Killdeer
Dunlin
Red Phalarope
Bonaparte's Gull
Black-headed Gull
Little Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Iceland Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Slaty-backed Gull
Glaucous Gull

Great Black-backed Gull
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Snowy Owl
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
American Kestrel
Peregrine Falcon
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Carolina Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet
American Robin
European Starling
American Tree Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow