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



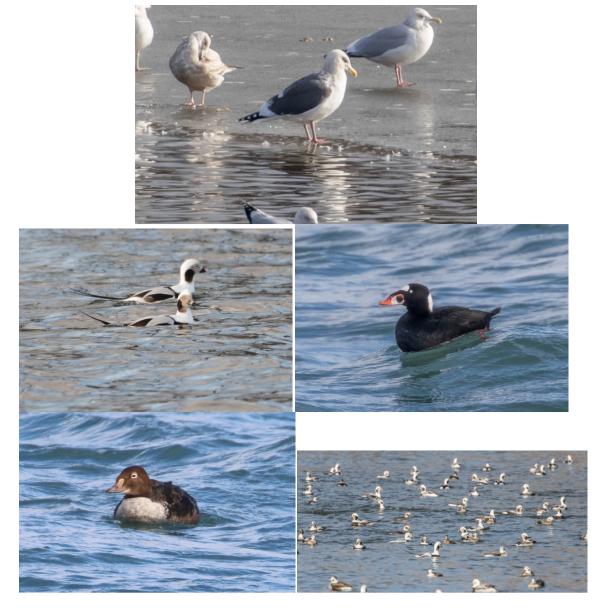


this time of year). As we headed north to the highway, we saw a field with lots of geese. Upon





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