

Fish Point census report April 16-30, 2021

Ephemeral spring flowers were at least a couple of weeks early: the forest floor was completely carpeted with fully blooming Dutchman's Breeches, White Trilliums, violets, Cut-leaved Toothworts, and other flowers. Sweet Cicely and Wild Leeks were also easy to find, giving census walkers a tasty trailside nibble. An early spring for flowers, however, didn't speed up the bird migration at all and while new birds were arriving daily, it seemed that numbers were generally low. In particular, sparrow species, which should have been abundant, were almost nonexistent.

On April 16, the first Purple Martins and Barn Swallows arrived to join the dozens of Tree Swallows that were already forming territories around Fox Pond. A lone female Hooded Merganser showed up on the pond and on several subsequent days, but no mate was ever seen. The first Great Egrets made their debut for daily sightings on the pond. Three Lesser Yellowlegs flew over the pond on the 20th and the Blue-winged Teal population had increased to 10 birds.

A pair of Brown Thrashers were observed skulking in the brush near the tip on April 22 and a Merlin flew over a couple of days later. A pair of Greater Scaup was observed on the lake on April 26.

The weather event of the period was undoubtedly the late snowstorm that hit on April 21. Overnight, several centimeters of sticky white snow fell, covering the woodland flowers and trees in a thick blanket of white. It was a magical scene with tree buds encrusted in cherry blossoms made of snow. The following day, all the snow had melted, and the trilliums and 'breeches' looked as if nothing had happened.

One could almost always see a Bald Eagle or two sitting on the sandbar just south of the Fish Point tip but on the 24th, there were 13 young eagles hanging out together. There were another three adults flying around nearby for a total of 16 eagles! Often on the census, eagles were one of the most common birds counted!

There was a light 'reverse' migration on the 27th with a few grackles, redwings, cowbirds, and a dozen or so Yellow-rumped Warblers observed flying south off the tip.

April 28 was the first warm day and several new species made their first appearances including Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, House Wren, Ovenbird, Solitary Sandpiper, Yellow Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, and many Blue Jays. A Common Yellowthroat showed up the following day and on the 30th, there was a Warbling Vireo and a Black-and-White Warbler near the tip. A pair of Northern Shovelers on Fox Pond capped off the last census day of April.

*** Apologies for this late report, there is no snow on Pelee Island at this time!**

The summary was written by Rob Tymstra.
Pelee Island covered in snow by Rob Tymstra

