

St. Marys River IBA Waterbird Survey – April 15, 2018

By Carter Dorscht

The Sault Naturalists conducted the first waterbird survey of the St. Marys River Important Bird Area (IBA) of the year this morning. Obviously, spring wasn't predicted to be this delayed when the date was scheduled back in December! However, six participants braved the cold wind before the snow started to fall and went out to see what they could find.



Ring-necked Ducks in Echo Bay - Carter Dorscht

When it came to waterbirds, three Ring-necked Ducks, three Common Goldeneyes and two Hooded Mergansers were observed from the bridge on Highway 17B in Echo Bay in a little sliver of open water. Many Canada Geese were observed over the course of the morning, but the usual Mallards and American Black Ducks had not arrived to the fields for the day yet. One Herring Gull was observed flying overhead.

Other highlights within the IBA were a Ring-necked Pheasant and a Peregrine Falcon at the west end of Calabogie Road in Laird Township. Many blackbirds were seen at this location too. Some common feeder birds like American Goldfinches, Common Redpolls,

American Tree Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos were observed in various locations. Snow Buntings, American Robins, Bald Eagles, Turkey Vultures and Sandhill Cranes were observed as well.

During a quick trek outside of the IBA to the Bar River Flats, a couple participants briefly heard a couple Lapland Longspurs on Lake George Road. This field also had 80+ Sandhill Cranes and hundreds of Canada Geese. No Cackling Geese or Snow Geese yet!



Sandhill Cranes and Canada Geese on Lake George Road – Val Walker

In total, only 24 species were observed within the IBA this morning, which is incredibly low for mid-April, but not terrible considering the weather today. This time last spring, there were thousands of ducks observed throughout the IBA, so it is quite the difference this year!

To learn more about the St. Marys River IBA, click [here](#).

The next St. Marys River IBA Waterbird Survey is scheduled for this upcoming Saturday, April 21st. Hopefully a few more birds show up by then and the weather is a little nicer! If you wish to participate, please RSVP with Carter at 705-297-0677 (text or call) or carterdorscht@hotmail.com.

There's a few more photos on the second page!



Centennial Park at Pumpkin Point - Val Walker



Old train bridge in Echo Bay - Val Walker



Echo Bay viewing platform - Val Walker