

Birding Reports (April 2015)

April 30, 2015 — The month of May is the peak month for the remaining migrants like Warblers, Orioles, Tanagers, Grosbeaks and Hummingbirds. Here are the few new arrivals for the area: Solitary Sandpiper, Pine Warbler and Broad-wing Hawk. One odd observation that was reported was a Peregrine Falcon eating a Woodduck in Downtown Brainerd at the courthouse. I mentioned a short list of birds that are currently nesting a new one to add from this week is Phoebe and Red-bellied Woodpecker. Other bird sightings for the area include; Bluebird, Tree Swallow, Chipping Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Junco, Pine Siskin, Goldfinch, House Finch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Raven, Killdeer, Sandhill Crane, Great-blue Heron, Common Loon, Ring-neck Duck, Mallard, Geese, Woodduck, Hooded Merganser, Bald Eagle (10), Turkey Vulture (15), Red-tail Hawk (1), Kestrel (2), Cooper's Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-winged Blackbird, Trumpeter Swan, Turkey, Song Sparrow, Belted Kingfisher, Grackle, Cowbird and Ruffed Grouse. Happy Birding!

April 22, 2015 — Cooler weather halted bird migration across the Brainerd Lakes area this past week. Despite the current conditions, I found several birds nesting Bluebirds, Tree Swallows and Trumpeter Swans. Also the Ospreys have returned to the platform located at Central Lakes College in Brainerd ([live camera of the platform](#)). The other popular camera to watch is the [MN DNR Eagle Camera](#).

New arrivals this week include: White-throated Sparrow, Lincoln Sparrow, Pied-billed Grebe, Rusty Blackbird and Canvasback. Bird sightings for the week include; Bald Eagle (10), Turkey Vulture (15), Red-tailed Hawk (1), American Kestrel (3), Northern Harrier (3), Sharp-shinned/Coopers Hawk (2), Osprey (7), Red-winged Blackbird, Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Raven, Song Sparrow, Junco, Fox Sparrow, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Bluebird, Great-blue Heron, Woodduck, Ring-neck Duck, Red-head, Mallard, Geese, Trumpeter Swan, Lesser/Greater Scaup, Blue-wing Teal, Buffle head, Common Loon, Hooded Merganser, Yellow Legs, Kill Deer, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ring-billed Gull, Robin, Belted Kingfisher, Tundra Swan, Green-winged Teal, Pine Siskin and Turkey.

Birds found at Rice Lake along Co Rd 11 (Birds of the Byway) include: Common Loon, Red-head, Ring-neck Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Woodduck, Blue-winged Teal, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Buffle Head, Scaup and Geese. The Trumpeter Swans that I have been watching the past 3 years are again nesting!

Saturday's trip to watch dancing Sharp-tailed Grouse from a blind was a success! The group watched two males display in front of the blind and lots of great photographs were taken. (see above) I plan on reserving the blinds again next year. Happy Birding!

April 16, 2015 — The area is finally at the peak of the waterfowl migration with high numbers now found on the region's bigger lakes. One example from last week saw an estimated 5,000 Tundra Swans in Aitkin County. New arrivals this week include: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Tree Swallow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White Pelican and Purple Martin. Other sightings include; Junco, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Robin, Bluebird, Pine Siskin, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-chinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Kestrel, Common Loon, Hooded Merganser, Ring-neck Duck, Mallard, Geese, Woodduck, Trumpeter Swan, Turkey, Killdeer, Great-blue Heron and Northern Harrier Happy Birding!

April 9, 2015 — This was a great week for bird sightings with lots of birds to report. The waterfowl (ducks, geese and swans) in the area are now at its peak. The number of Bald Eagles have been very surprising as well, with around 45 birds counted just in the past several days. Here is this week's new arrivals to the area: Coots, Canvasback, Wigeon, Pintail, Gadwall, Meadowlark, Bittern, Song Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Blue-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Belted Kingfisher, Hermit Thrush Common Loon, Osprey, Red Head and Scaup. Some of these ducks were in seen in high numbers -- some being in the hundreds.

April 9, 2015, cont.

Other sightings include: Bluebird, Great-blue Heron, Red-winged Blackbird, Grackle, Junco, Fox Sparrow, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Goldfinch, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Turkey Vulture (30) Red-tailed Hawk (4) Kestrel (5) Northern Harrier (3) Sandhill Crane, Geese, Robin, Raven, Ring-billed Gull, Turkey, Flicker and Trumpeter Swan.

April 2, 2015 — Spring migration will improve over the next few days with southern winds and continued mild weather. The shorelines are starting to open up which will attract more waterfowl away from the rivers as they continue to push through. Our State bird, the Common Loon, should be here very soon -- keep an eye out. The new arrivals this week include: Fox Sparrow, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Kill Deer, Woodduck, Red-shouldered Hawk and Ring-neck Duck. Other birds observed include: Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Mallard, Geese, Great-blue Heron, Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk, Raven, Redpoll, Pine Siskin, Junco, Northern Harrier, Purple Finch, Goldfinch, Flicker, Robin, Hooded Merganser, Trumpeter Swan, Sandhill Crane, Pileated Woodpecker, Turkey, Bald Eagle and Red-winged Blackbird.

At the US Army Corp of Engineers Campground dam in Crosslake, a Common Merganser was spotted, as well as Geese, Common Goldeneye, Geese, Junco, Bald Eagle, Flicker, Brown Creeper, Robin, Crow and Downy Woodpecker.

Several eagles were together at Hole-in the Day Bay (Nisswa) along Hwy 371. About 30 total were observed, most were immature birds, with some adults that appeared to be babysitting the younger ones. I am guessing that they were feeding on winter kill fish some were actually trying to punch through the ice to get the fish just below the melting ice.

— Judd Brink, bird guide/owner, [MN Backyard Birds](#) & [BirdsoftheByway.com](#)