

Birding Reports (May 2013)

May 27, 2013 — The peak bird migration is finally here, but won't last very long as many birds are getting ready to nest. The Ospreys are now nesting at most of their usual locations, as well as the Loons. Along the Byway at the Lowell/Rice Lake WMA, the following birds were viewed: Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbirds, Ring-neck Duck, Mallard, Geese and Trumpeter Swan. Last year at this location, Trumpeter Swans nested successfully and appear to be using this site this year. Along Stewarts Bay on Pelican Lake, a family of eagles were observed soaring overhead that included 3 Immatures and the adults. This is a great year for Orioles and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks which can be found easily at bird feeders. Here are a few birds that are in the area: Sandhill Crane, Nighthawk, Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, Trumpeter Swan, Ring-neck Duck, Belted Kingfisher, Whip-poor-Will, Bald Eagle, Indigo Bunting, Towhee, White-throated Sparrow, Turkey, Harris Sparrow, Great-horned Owl, Great-blue heron, Woodduck, Bluebird, Tree Swallow and Turkey Vulture. Happy Birding!

May 13, 2013 — Are you ready for the next big wave of birds this spring? Many raptors and waterfowl can still be seen in our area, but some have already left northward. The new arrival of colorful songbirds is underway. New birds are being reported across the state and soon your favorite birding location will be active with songs and colors. This week, I receive a second hand report of a Painted Bunting found in Aitkin County (rare) this bird is one of the most colorful birds in the North America! New arrivals include: Field Sparrow, Great Egret, Pine Warbler, Palm Warbler, Spotted Sandpiper, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Whip-poor-will, Horned Grebe and Tern species. Birds found at the Crosslake Dam include: Common Loon, Woodduck, Mallard and Yellow-rumped Warbler. The Hair After in Crosslake overlooks Big Pine Lake where Common Loons (5) Horned Grebe (7) Ring-neck Duck, Bald Eagle and a swan. Happy Birding!

May 6, 2013 — This has been one of most unusual springs that I can remember (and hope to forget soon) related to the return of our spring birds. With the cool weather, birders like myself have been feeding bluebirds live mealworms while others fling crickets into the air with a spoon for purple martins in hopes of saving them from near freezing temperatures in May. Despite the weather, new birds have made the push to our lakes and woods including: Brown-headed Cowbird, Northern Flicker, Tree Swallows, Broad Wing Hawk, Common Grackle, White-throated Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, Phoebe, Sora Rail, Common Snipe, Woodcock, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Swamp Sparrow, Red-breasted Mergansers, Yellowlegs and solitary Sandpiper.

On Big Pine lake near Crosslake, there were a good numbers of swans (75) and white Pelicans (64) along with one immature and one adult Bald Eagle. The other thing that was a little unusual was seeing shorebirds feeding along the ice. At the Rice Lake/Lowell WMA, the ice is now just starting to break from the shore that has attracted Ring-neck Duck, Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead, Canada Goose, Mallard and Red-winged Blackbird.

I found 15 Common Loons at the Gull Lake boat ramp across from Zorbaz's and they were very vocal! Among the loons were Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Ring-billed Gull, Hooded Merganser. Birds that have been reported in past reports but still can be found in the area include Osprey, Bald Eagle, Swans, Pelicans, Sandhill Cranes, Waterfowl, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and many others. A few good places to find birds include any open water and the Northland Arboretum. Happy Birding!

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