

Backlands bird inventory

Spryfield 2020

Fulton Lavender: Bird ID expert consultant to Backlands Coalition

Dates: February 6; March 1; March 2; March 11; March 15 & 16; April 19; and July 5th, 2020

February through April 2020

The whole Backlands are a “Flyway Corridor” for migration and specifically are a good raptor migration zone. Of special note this season were:

- Immature male Peregrine falcon (Feb 6th)
- Adult female Peregrine falcon (March 11th)
- Long-eared owls: group of 4 flying from Kidston Lake to Colpitt Lake, perhaps to nest around Flat Lake (March 11th)
- Rusty Blackbird sighted March 11th, headed for the Backland bogs with streams and brooks, our Boreal wetlands
- Black-backed Woodpecker: fresh workings of feeding while passing through on its way to the fire-burn area (March 11th)
- Golden Eagle: March 15 a sub-adult (possibly 3rd year) food searching on migration
- Rough-legged Hawk: March 16th, a high arctic taiga species, passing through to northern Quebec or Labrador
- April 19th (best spring raptor migration day)
 - 6 Turkey vultures (attempting to nest);
 - 6 Ospreys;
 - 5 Bald eagles;
 - 1 Eurasian Kestrel (immature)

Church of Christ lands (Gateway to Backlands)

In the forest on the granite batholith - Mixed Forest growing on granite, often extremely thick underbrush with, for example: globally rare Jack pine and Broom crowberry association; Red pine; Black spruce; Tamarack; Grey birch (or Wire birch); Large-toothed Aspen; Red spruce; Scotch pine (1 volunteer); Huckleberry; Bayberry; Winterberry; Kalmia angustifolia (Sheep's laurel); Wild Raisin; Red oak; Red Maple

*Key historical bird data: The Church of Christ lands are one of only two microhabitat regions in Canada to have all three eastern North American Goatsuckers/Nightjars either as nesters or summer residents in our last two decades (the other location is the southern tip of Ontario).

- Common night hawk – currently nesting
- Whip-poor Will – still a potential nester
- Chuck Will's Widow – last nested in 2015, potentially still nesting

July 5, 2020

- White throated sparrows
- Black capped chickadees: some alone, some pairs defending nests against our presence
- Hermit thrush: Many Hermit thrushes that were on distinct territories. They were with their second nest this season. These thrushes are one of the first species affected by a loss of insects.
- Robin
- Barred Owl
- Black & White Warbler
- Ovenbird
- Great Horned Owl: At least 1 pair, quite vocal
- Loons: extended calling and responding on Williams Lake below
- Common Yellowthroat: First 3 then quite a few in one area of mixed forest. Forages for insects in shrubby, wet areas, marshes and forest edges. Short distance migrant.
- American crows: occasional flyovers
- Mourning doves: after dawn
- Ruffed grouse: seen darting across our path
- Nashville warbler - 2
- Yellow warbler: several along edges of forest
- Red-eyed Vireo: insect eating, foraging
- American Redstart
- Northern Parula
- Northern Flicker
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Turkey Vultures – pair roosting and prospecting for nest site

Edge of the feeder stream between Colpitt and Williams Lakes

- Black Ducks – nesting pair (March 2, 2020)
- Common Loons – nesting pair (March 11, 2020)

Off the granite batholith, forested wetlands beside Colpitt Lake, closed-canopy forests, particularly deciduous and mixed deciduous-coniferous woods. Boreal wetland and conifer climax species suffer most from the double threats of habitat destruction and climate change.

- Ovenbird
- Brown creeper
- Eastern Wood-Pewee

Report recorded by Martha R Leary