

Tommy Thompson Park/Leslie Street Spit

# BIRD CHECKLIST

4th edition, 2014



**Tommy Thompson Park**

Toronto's Urban Wilderness

Tommy Thompson Park/Leslie Street Spit is Toronto's Urban Wilderness, and one of the best places in the city to enjoy bird watching. To date, 316 bird species have been recorded at the park. When the first checklist, *Birds of the Leslie Street Spit*, was produced by Friends of the Spit in 1988, 284 species had been recorded.

In 2000 Tommy Thompson Park/Leslie Street Spit was declared an "Important Bird Area" by BirdLife International. The site is globally significant for the numbers of breeding colonial waterbirds and nationally significant for the concentrations of waterfowl that occur during spring and fall migration and in the winter, depending on ice conditions. Also notable are the large concentrations of songbirds during spring and fall migration.

From the late 1950s to present day, a combination of harbour dredging and lake filling activities created the 500 hectare Spit. Through natural succession, as well as habitat enhancement and creation efforts, the park now includes a diverse mosaic of habitats that support native plant and animal communities. Three of the park's four western peninsulas (Peninsulas A, B, and C) are home to breeding colonial waterbirds, including the largest colony of Double-crested Cormorants in the Great Lakes region, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Great Egrets, Ring-billed Gulls, Herring Gulls and Caspian Terns. Common Terns nest on manmade reef-rafts and engineered islands in the park's wetlands and embayments.

The Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station (TTPBRS) is dedicated to the understanding, protection and awareness of birds in Toronto. Staff and volunteers monitor songbird migration through standardized observations and banding on Peninsula D from April through June and August through November. TTPBRS is a Canadian Migration Monitoring Network member, providing data to Bird Studies Canada to help further bird conservation at the regional and continental levels.

Bird watching is a year round activity at the Spit. Thousands of birds of over 100 species pass through during spring and fall migration; breeding occurs during the summer; and winter brings waterfowl and owls. Bird watchers are reminded to stay on designated trails and to never disturb wildlife, particularly roosting owls – do not approach and never use a camera flash when photographing them. Please see the Tommy Thompson Park Wildlife Viewing and Reporting Policy on p.14.

Tommy Thompson Park is managed by Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) and the City of Toronto.

Sightings of birds that are regionally or provincially rare should be documented and the information submitted to the Ontario Bird Records Committee (ORBC), care of TRCA ([www.ttpbrs.ca](http://www.ttpbrs.ca)) and/or The Friends of the Spit ([www.friendsofthespit.ca](http://www.friendsofthespit.ca)).

Enjoy the park, tread softly, take only memories, and return often. And, please remember the park is Toronto's only car-and-pet-free urban wilderness

**[www.tommythompsonpark.ca](http://www.tommythompsonpark.ca)**  
**[www.ttpbrs.ca](http://www.ttpbrs.ca) • [ttp@trca.on.ca](mailto:ttp@trca.on.ca)**

Questions or comments?  
Call 311

# Tommy Thompson Park/Leslie Street Spit

## BIRD CHECKLIST

**Seasons** (set according to migration patterns)

<b>S</b>	<b>Spring</b> (March 1 - May 31)
<b>SU</b>	<b>Summer</b> (June 1 - August 15)
<b>F</b>	<b>Fall</b> (August 16 - November 30)
<b>W</b>	<b>Winter</b> (December 1 - February 28)

### Abundance Codes

<b>VC</b>	<b>Very common:</b> Expected to be observed every day in suitable habitat.
<b>C</b>	<b>Common:</b> Likely to be observed most days in suitable habitat.
<b>U</b>	<b>Uncommon:</b> Not expected daily but observed occasionally, usually in low numbers, except flocking species which are sometimes numerous.
<b>R</b>	<b>Rare:</b> Present in very low numbers but observed most years.
<b>A</b>	<b>Accidental:</b> Status based on very few records. Often out of geographic range. Requires documentation.
<b>*</b>	Species has bred at Tommy Thompson Park/Leslie Street Spit.

Migratory birds are only expected to be observed during their migratory period.

*Cover Photo: Double-crested Cormorant on a ground nest by Dr Gail Fraser. The goal of TRCA's Cormorant Management Strategy is to achieve a balance between the continued existence of a healthy, thriving cormorant colony and the other ecological, educational, scientific and recreational values of TTP. One of the methods to accomplish this is to encourage cormorant ground nesting.*

Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
DUCKS, GEESE & SWANS								
A	Greater White-fronted Goose							
	Snow Goose	R		R				
	Brant	R		R				
	Cackling Goose	R		R				
*	Canada Goose	VC	VC	VC	VC			
*	Mute Swan	VC	VC	VC	VC			
	Trumpeter Swan	U	U	U	U			
	Tundra Swan	U		R	R			
*	Wood Duck	U	U	U				
*	Gadwall	VC	VC	VC	VC			
A	Eurasian Wigeon							
	American Wigeon	C		C	C			
*	American Black Duck	C	U	C	C			
*	Mallard	VC	VC	VC	VC			
*	Blue-winged Teal	U		U				
	Northern Shoveler	C		C				
	Northern Pintail	R		U	R			
	Green-winged Teal	C		C	R			
*	Canvasback	C	C	C	R			
*	Redhead	C		C	VC			
	Ring-necked Duck	U		U	R			
	Greater Scaup	C		VC	VC			
	Lesser Scaup	U		U	R			
A	King Eider							
	Harlequin Duck			R	R			
	Surf Scoter	U		U	U			
	White-winged Scoter	C		C	C			
	Black Scoter	R		R	R			
	Long-tailed Duck	VC		C	VC			
	Bufflehead	VC		C	VC			
	Common Goldeneye	VC		C	VC			
A	Barrow's Goldeneye							
	Hooded Merganser	C	U	C	C			
	Common Merganser	C	U	C	VC			
	Red-breasted Merganser	VC		VC	VC			
	Ruddy Duck	U		U				

Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
PARTRIDGES, GROUSE & TURKEYS								
A*	Ring-necked Pheasant							
A	Ruffed Grouse							
A	Wild Turkey							
LOONS								
	Red-throated Loon	R		R				
	Common Loon	C	R	C	R			
GREBES								
	Pied-billed Grebe	R		R				
	Horned Grebe	U		U	R			
	Red-necked Grebe	C		C	R			
A	Eared Grebe							
A	Western Grebe							
GANNETS								
A	Northern Gannet							
CORMORANTS								
*	Double-crested Cormorant	VC	VC	VC	R			
A	Great Cormorant							
PELICANS								
A	American White Pelican							
HERONS & BITTERNS								
	American Bittern	R		R				
	Least Bittern	R						
*	Great Blue Heron	C	C	C	R			
*	Great Egret	C	C	C				
A	Snowy Egret							
A	Tricolored Heron							
A	Cattle Egret							
*	Green Heron	U	R	U				
*	Black-crowned Night-Heron	VC	VC	C				
A	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron							
IBISES & SPOONBILLS								
A	Glossy Ibis							
VULTURES								
A	Black Vulture							
	Turkey Vulture	U	R	U				
OSPREY								
	Osprey	R		R				

Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
HAWKS, KITES & EAGLES								
	Bald Eagle			R	R			
	Northern Harrier	C		C	U			
	Sharp-shinned Hawk	C	U	C				
	Cooper's Hawk	C	U	C	U			
	Northern Goshawk	R		R	R			
	Red-shouldered Hawk			R				
	Broad-winged Hawk			R				
	Red-tailed Hawk	U	R	U	C			
	Rough-legged Hawk			R	R			
A	Golden Eagle							
RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS								
A	Yellow Rail							
A	King Rail							
*	Virginia Rail	R		R				
*	Sora	R		R				
	Common Gallinule	R		R				
	American Coot	U		U	U			
CRANES								
	Sandhill Crane	R						
PLOVERS								
	Black-bellied Plover	U	U	U				
	American Golden-Plover			R				
	Semipalmated Plover	C	R	C				
A	Piping Plover							
*	Killdeer	VC	VC	VC				
STILTS & AVOCETS								
A	Black-necked Stilt							
A	American Avocet							
SANDPIPERS & PHALAROPES								
*	Spotted Sandpiper	VC	VC	C				
	Solitary Sandpiper	R						
	Greater Yellowlegs	C		C				
A	Willet							
	Lesser Yellowlegs	C		C				
A	Upland Sandpiper							
	Whimbrel	U		R				
A	Hudsonian Godwit							

Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
<b>A</b>	Marbled Godwit							
	Ruddy Turnstone	<b>U</b>		<b>U</b>				
<b>A</b>	Red Knot							
	Sanderling	<b>R</b>		<b>R</b>				
	Semipalmated Sandpiper	<b>U</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>U</b>				
<b>A</b>	Western Sandpiper							
	Least Sandpiper	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>C</b>				
	White-rumped Sandpiper	<b>R</b>		<b>R</b>				
<b>A</b>	Baird's Sandpiper							
	Pectoral Sandpiper	<b>R</b>		<b>R</b>				
	Purple Sandpiper			<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>			
	Dunlin	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>C</b>				
<b>A</b>	Stilt Sandpiper							
<b>A</b>	Buff-breasted Sandpiper							
	Short-billed Dowitcher	<b>U</b>		<b>U</b>				
	Long-billed Dowitcher			<b>R</b>				
	Wilson's Snipe	<b>U</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>U</b>				
<b>*</b>	American Woodcock	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>U</b>				
<b>A*</b>	Wilson's Phalarope							
<b>A</b>	Red-necked Phalarope							
<b>A</b>	Red Phalarope							
<b>GULLS, TERNS &amp; SKIMMERS</b>								
<b>A</b>	Black-legged Kittiwake							
<b>A</b>	Ivory Gull							
	Bonaparte's Gull	<b>R</b>		<b>R</b>				
<b>A</b>	Black-headed Gull							
<b>A</b>	Little Gull							
<b>A</b>	Laughing Gull							
<b>A</b>	Franklin's Gull							
<b>A</b>	Heermann's Gull							
<b>*</b>	Ring-billed Gull	<b>VC</b>	<b>VC</b>	<b>VC</b>	<b>VC</b>			
<b>A*</b>	California Gull							
<b>*</b>	Herring Gull	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>VC</b>			
	Thayer's Gull	<b>R</b>			<b>R</b>			
	Iceland Gull	<b>U</b>			<b>U</b>			
	Lesser Black-backed Gull				<b>R</b>			
	Glaucous Gull	<b>R</b>			<b>R</b>			

GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS - Continues on page 8.

Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS - Continued from page 7								
*	Great Black-backed Gull	U		U	U			
*	Caspian Tern	C	C	U				
A	Black Tern							
*	Common Tern	VC	VC	U				
A	Forster's Tern							
SKUAS, JAEGERs								
A	Pomarine Jaeger							
A	Parasitic Jaeger							
PIGEONS & DOVES								
*	Rock Pigeon	C	C	C	C			
*	Mourning Dove	C	C	C	U			
CUCKOOS & ANIS								
	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	R	R	R				
*	Black-billed Cuckoo	U	U	U				
TYPICAL OWLS								
A	Eastern Screech-Owl							
	Great Horned Owl	R		U	C			
	Snowy Owl	R			R			
A	Northern Hawk Owl							
	Barred Owl			R	R			
A	Great Gray Owl							
	Long-eared Owl	R		R	U			
	Short-eared Owl	R		R	R			
A	Boreal Owl							
	Northern Saw-whet Owl	U		C	U			
GOATSUCKERS								
	Common Nighthawk	R		R				
A	Eastern Whip-poor-will							
SWIFTS								
	Chimney Swift	C	C	U				
HUMMINGBIRDS								
	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	U	R	U				
KINGFISHERS								
*	Belted Kingfisher	C	C	C				
WOODPECKERS								
A	Red-headed Woodpecker							
	Red-bellied Woodpecker	R		R				



Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	C		C				
*	Downy Woodpecker	C	C	C	VC			
	Hairy Woodpecker	U		U	VC			
*	Northern Flicker	C	C	C	R			
A	Pileated Woodpecker							
<b>CARACARAS &amp; FALCONS</b>								
*	American Kestrel	U	U	U	R			
	Merlin	U		U	R			
A	Gyrfalcon							
	Peregrine Falcon	U	U	U	U			
<b>TYRANT FLYCATCHERS</b>								
	Olive-sided Flycatcher	R		R				
*	Eastern Wood-Pewee	C	C	C				
	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	U	R	U				
A	Acadian Flycatcher							
	Alder Flycatcher	U	U	U				
*	Willow Flycatcher	VC	VC	C				
*	Least Flycatcher	C	C	C				
	Eastern Phoebe	C		C				
	Great Crested Flycatcher	U	R	U				
A	Western Kingbird							
*	Eastern Kingbird	VC	VC	C				
<b>SHRIKES</b>								
A	Loggerhead Shrike							
	Northern Shrike			R	R			
<b>VIREOS</b>								
A	White-eyed Vireo							
A	Yellow-throated Vireo							
	Blue-headed Vireo	U		U				
*	Warbling Vireo	VC	VC	C				
	Philadelphia Vireo	R		R				
	Red-eyed Vireo	C	U	C				
<b>CROWS &amp; JAYS</b>								
	Blue Jay	C	R	C				
*	American Crow	U	U	U	R			
A	Common Raven							
<b>LARKS</b>								
*	Horned Lark	U		U	R			

Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
SWALLOWS								
	Purple Martin	U	U	U				
*	Tree Swallow	VC	VC	C				
*	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	C	C	C				
*	Bank Swallow	C	C	C				
	Cliff Swallow	U	U	U				
A	Cave Swallow							
*	Barn Swallow	VC	VC	C				
CHICKADEES & TITMICE								
*	Black-capped Chickadee	C	C	C	VC			
A	Boreal Chickadee							
A	Tufted Titmouse							
NUTHATCHES								
	Red-breasted Nuthatch	U	R	U				
	White-breasted Nuthatch	U		U				
CREEPERS								
	Brown Creeper	C		C	R			
WRENS								
*	House Wren	U	U	U				
	Winter Wren	C		C				
A	Sedge Wren							
A	Marsh Wren							
A	Carolina Wren							
GNATCATCHERS								
*	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	C	C	R				
KINGLETS								
	Golden-crowned Kinglet	C		C	R			
	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	C		C				
THRUSHES								
	Eastern Bluebird	U		U				
A	Townsend's Solitaire							
	Veery	U	R	U				
	Gray-cheeked Thrush	U	R	U				
*	Swainson's Thrush	C	U	C				
	Hermit Thrush	C	R	C				
	Wood Thrush	U		U				
*	American Robin	VC	VC	VC	R			
A	Varied Thrush							

Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS								
*	Gray Catbird	C	C	C				
	Northern Mockingbird	C	C	C	C			
*	Brown Thrasher	C	U	U				
STARLINGS								
*	European Starling	VC	VC	VC	C			
PIPITS								
	American Pipit	U		U				
WAXWINGS								
A	Bohemian Waxwing							
*	Cedar Waxwing	C	C	C				
LONGSPURS & SNOW BUNTINGS								
	Lapland Longspur	R		R				
	Snow Bunting	U		U	U			
WOOD-WARBLEDERS								
	Ovenbird	C		C				
A	Worm-eating Warbler							
A	Louisiana Waterthrush							
	Northern Waterthrush	U	R	U				
	Golden-winged Warbler	R		R				
	Blue-winged Warbler	R		R				
	Black-and-white Warbler	U		U				
A	Prothonotary Warbler							
	Tennessee Warbler	U		U				
	Orange-crowned Warbler	R		R				
	Nashville Warbler	C		C				
	Connecticut Warbler	R						
	Mourning Warbler	U		U				
A	Kentucky Warbler							
*	Common Yellowthroat	C	U	C				
A	Hooded Warbler							
	American Redstart	C		C				
A	Kirtland’s Warbler							
	Cape May Warbler	U		U				
A	Cerulean Warbler							
	Northern Parula	U		U				
	Magnolia Warbler	C		C				
	Bay-breasted Warbler	U		U				

WOOD-WARBLEDERS - Continues on page 12.

Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
WOOD-WARBLERS - Continued from page 11								
	Blackburnian Warbler	U		U				
*	Yellow Warbler	VC	VC	U				
	Chestnut-sided Warbler	C		C				
	Blackpoll Warbler	C	R	C				
	Black-throated Blue Warbler	C		C				
	Palm Warbler	C		C				
	Pine Warbler	R		R				
	Yellow-rumped Warbler	VC	R	VC				
A	Yellow-throated Warbler							
A	Prairie Warbler							
	Black-throated Green Warbler	C		C				
	Canada Warbler	U		U				
	Wilson's Warbler	C		C				
A	Yellow-breasted Chat							
SPARROWS								
	Eastern Towhee	C		U				
	American Tree Sparrow	C		C	VC			
	Chipping Sparrow	U		U				
A	Clay-colored Sparrow							
	Field Sparrow	U		R				
A	Vesper Sparrow							
A	Lark Sparrow							
*	Savannah Sparrow	C	C	U				
A	Grasshopper Sparrow							
A	Henslow's Sparrow							
A	Le Conte's Sparrow							
A	Nelson's Sparrow							
	Fox Sparrow	U		U				
*	Song Sparrow	VC	VC	VC	C			
	Lincoln's Sparrow	U		U				
	Swamp Sparrow	C		U	R			
	White-throated Sparrow	VC		VC	R			
	White-crowned Sparrow	C		C				
	Dark-eyed Junco	C		C	U			
CARDINALS & ALLIES								
A	Summer Tanager							
	Scarlet Tanager	U		U				
*	Northern Cardinal	VC	VC	VC	C			

Species		S	SU	F	W	Dates		
	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	U		U				
A	Blue Grosbeak							
	Indigo Bunting	U		U				
A	Dickcissel							
BLACKBIRDS								
	Bobolink	U		U				
*	Red-winged Blackbird	VC	VC	VC				
*	Eastern Meadowlark	C	U	R				
A	Yellow-headed Blackbird							
	Rusty Blackbird	U		U				
A	Brewer's Blackbird							
*	Common Grackle	VC	VC	C				
*	Brown-headed Cowbird	VC	C	U				
*	Orchard Oriole	U	U					
*	Baltimore Oriole	VC	VC	C				
FINCHES								
A	Pine Grosbeak							
	Purple Finch	R		U				
*	House Finch	C	C	U	R			
A	Red Crossbill							
	White-winged Crossbill				R			
	Common Redpoll	U		U	U			
A	Hoary Redpoll							
	Pine Siskin			U				
A	Lesser Goldfinch							
*	American Goldfinch	VC	VC	VC	U			
A	Evening Grosbeak							
OLD WORLD SPARROWS								
*	House Sparrow	VC	VC	VC	VC			
NEW RECORDS								

## **Tommy Thompson Park Wildlife Viewing and Reporting Policy**

To protect wildlife and ensure that the park's ecological integrity, the following policies will be enforced:

- Do not engage in any activities that disturb or affect the natural behaviours of wildlife.
- Pets are not permitted in the park.
- Access to colonial waterbird nesting sites is strictly restricted from April to September.
- The use of recordings (playbacks) is not permitted.
- Feeding or baiting of wildlife is strictly prohibited.
- Do not interfere with research operations.
- Watercraft are restricted from the confined disposal facilities (CDFs).
- All boaters are to refrain from approaching waterfowl.
- Do not approach animals that you believe to be sick or orphaned. See [www.torontowildlifecentre.com](http://www.torontowildlifecentre.com) or call 416-631-0662 for advice.
- When observing or photographing wildlife stay at least 5 metres away (12 metres for owls).
- When photographing owls never use flash.
- When observing wildlife, especially owls, observe in small groups, move slowly and speak quietly.
- Do not report same day sightings of species at risk on the internet or birding hotlines. Species at Risk should be reported to the MNR Natural Heritage Information Centre ([www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/NHIC](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/NHIC))
- Do not report sightings of breeding/overwintering sites (i.e., bird nests, den sites, hibernacula, etc.) on the internet or birding hotlines at anytime.
- If you see a person or group disturbing wildlife call the TTP staff line (416-990-8058 during public open hours) or the TRCA general line (416-661-6600 press "0" for immediate assistance). Wildlife crimes can also be reported to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

## Tommy Thompson Park Urban Wilderness Principles

- All actions must be in accord with the Tommy Thompson Park Revised Master Plan, 1992
- Park activities do not have an overall negative impact on the natural resources, and passive recreational activities are the focus;
- Ecological communities are formed through natural succession with strategic habitat enhancements;
- Appropriate adaptive management takes place to ensure habitat and species protection, while minimizing human disturbance;
- General visitor experiences are natural and self-guided;
- Signage and amenities are minimal;
- What you carry in with you is also carried back out;
- Unauthorized private motor vehicle access is prohibited;
- Pets are prohibited; and
- Admission is free.

Tommy Thompson Park / Leslie Street Spit Bird Checklist 4th Edition  
Committee Members: *John Carley, Ann Gray, Don Johnston, Anne Marie Leger, Karen McDonald, Garth Riley and Ian Sturdee.*

The publication of this checklist is made possible through the generous donations from several private donors and Friends of the Spit ([www.friendsofthespit.ca](http://www.friendsofthespit.ca)), an advocacy organization that has been involved with the Spit for many years.



*Tommy Thompson Park is open weekends and holidays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. April to October, and 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. November to March. Motorized vehicles and pets are not permitted.*

