

## Sea & Sage Audubon UNB Monthly Boat Trip/Bird Count from aboard the Newport Sea Base Pontoon Boat

**Date:** 4/18/12 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** outgoing **Skipper:** Mary Allyson

**Birders:** Deana Collins, Barbara Demory, Sharon Harrow, Nancy Kenyon, Sally Menzel, Darrell Wilson.

**Comments:** While we were waiting to get on the boat, we saw a couple of Rock Pigeons fly into openings below the boat's deck, surmising they had chosen those spots for nest sites. Sure enough, when we returned to the dock after our trip was over, we were greeted by frantic parents who wasted no time in flying to their hidden nest sites. We were surprised to see a Common Loon in basic plumage swimming in the channel by the Sea Base. As we passed the island below the PCH bridge, we saw a ground squirrel and wondered how he got there since the island is surrounded by fairly deep water. The 3 Great Blue Herons were busy feeding on stuff in the ice plant and there were a number of plastic water bottles on the island, supposedly blown there by last week's wind. On an exposed mud flat below Shellmaker, we saw a large flock of Elegant & Caspian Terns, Black Skimmers, and Western Sandpipers packed closely together on that small piece of land. A sea lion with an orange flipper tag was sunning himself on one of the floating docks and in the distance we saw a Red-tailed Hawk kiting in the wind. Both the Double-crested Cormorants and Brown Pelicans were making good use of the buoys as perch sites and 13 pelicans were perched in a row on a floating pipe. On the little island above the salt dike, 25 skimmer decoys had been placed in a row to help encourage the skimmers to nest there. Hopefully, the decoys looked more realistic to the live skimmers! To us, they looked very unnatural, especially since they were facing in the wrong direction. Though it was incredibly cold out there, spring was definitely in the air. Most of the avocets were in alternate plumage as were the Eared Grebes and the pelicans, and a pair of Forster's Terns were getting a head start on nesting season by mating. The ducks were paired off, a Western Grebe was calling, and at the nesting platform on Shellmaker, we saw 3 chicks in the Osprey nest. (We also noticed the absence of nesting material on the platform and figured it had been blown away by last week's wind.) It was a great morning with lots of interesting things to see.

<b>Geese &amp; Ducks</b>	
3	Gadwall
6	Mallard
11	Blue-winged Teal
5	Cinnamon Teal
5	Northern Shoveler
2	Green-winged Teal
1	Bufflehead
10	Ruddy Duck
<b>Loons</b>	
1	Common Loon
<b>Grebes</b>	
2	Pied-billed Grebe
6	Eared Grebe
9	Western Grebe
<b>Pelicans &amp; Cormorants</b>	
18	Brown Pelican
11	Double-crested Cormorant
<b>Hérons &amp; Egrets</b>	
6	Great Blue Heron
1	Great Egret
19	Snowy Egret
2	Black-crowned Night-Heron
<b>Diurnal Birds of Prey</b>	
2	Turkey Vulture
3 adults	Osprey (+ 3 chicks in nest)
4	Red-tailed Hawk
<b>Coots</b>	
76	American Coot
<b>Plovers</b>	
1	Black-bellied Plover ( <i>heard</i> )
1	Killdeer ( <i>heard</i> )
<b>Avocets</b>	
42	American Avocet

<b>Sandpipers</b>	
1	Greater Yellowlegs ( <i>heard</i> )
162	Willet
3	Whimbrel
47	Marbled Godwit
258	Western Sandpiper
15	Long-billed Dowitcher
<b>Gulls, Terns &amp; Skimmers</b>	
3	Ring-billed Gull
21	Western Gull
49	Caspian Tern
49	Forster's Tern
30	Elegant Tern
71	Black Skimmer
<b>Pigeons</b>	
12	Rock Pigeon
<b>Flycatchers</b>	
1	Black Phoebe
<b>Crows &amp; Ravens</b>	
12	American Crow
4	Common Raven
<b>Swallows</b>	
2	Barn Swallows
<b>Mockingbirds</b>	
1	Northern Mockingbird
<b>Warblers</b>	
1	Yellow-rumped Warbler
<b>Sparrows</b>	
1	California Towhee ( <i>heard</i> )
2	Savannah Sparrow ( <i>heard</i> )
7	Song sparrow
<b>Finches</b>	
4	House Finch ( <i>heard</i> )