

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

Date: 4/10/13 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon

Tide: incoming high tide

Skipper: Captain Gib

Birders who contributed to the count: Deana Collins, Chris Johnson, Nancy Kenyon, Mike & Kim King, Chuck Nichols, and Darrell Wilson. **Comments:** The tide was high so there were very few mudflats. We saw 5 large groups of birds on areas of higher ground. Our first group sighting was on the island below the PCH bridge where we saw a flock of some 200 Western Sandpipers packed closely together on the top most portion of the island which was decorated with the bright yellow blossoms of Beach Primrose plants. Another group of birds was spotted on a small mudflat below the Back Bay Science Center where we saw 84 Black Skimmers sharing the ground with 34 Caspian Terns, 6 Elegant Terns, and a variety of sandpipers. One of the more interesting sights along the way was a lone Great Blue Heron which appeared to be practicing Bird Yoga; it was perched on a piece of wood above the pickleweed and posed in a variety of unheron-like postures including one which made him look like a bittern. Ducks were in short supply but there were plenty of coots. Another interesting sight was watching a tern dive into the water directly in front of a man on a paddleboard. We missed seeing the Reddish Egret on this trip, but did spot a Red-throated Loon in basic plumage, swimming in the main channel near the Sea Base. Mockingbirds and Savannah Sparrows were very much in evidence; the mockingbirds were heard singing and the Savannah Sparrows were scattered all over the pickleweed in strategic locations, also singing. The Eared Grebes were in alternate plumage, their golden "ear" feathers showing up well against their dark heads. Several of the Great and Snowy Egrets were also in alternate plumage with beautiful white plume-like feathers showing to full advantage. A couple of Western Gulls were posturing in the water, calling to each other and dipping their heads. The weather was perfect for our trip – clear and sunny with no breeze until we approached the sea base dock on our return. In the upper bay, the water was so calm that we were able to see a perfect reflection of the shoreline on the return trip as well. It was a wonderful morning to be out birding!

Geese & Ducks	
9	Mallard
6	Blue-winged Teal
1	Redhead
2	Red-breasted Merganser
13	Bufflehead
5	Ruddy Duck
Loons	
1	Red-throated Loon
Grebes	
2	Pied-billed Grebe
5	Eared Grebe
39	Western Grebe
1	Clark's Grebe
Pelicans & Cormorants	
16	Double-crested Cormorant
Hérons & Egrets	
9	Great Blue Heron
26	Great Egret
16	Snowy Egret
Diurnal Birds of Prey	
1	Turkey Vulture
2	Osprey
1	Red-tailed Hawk
Coots	
104	American Coot
Plovers	
4	Killdeer (3 heard, 1 visual)
Avocets	
1	American Avocet
Sandpipers	
1	Spotted Sandpiper
1	Greater Yellowlegs (heard)
202	Willet

5	Whimbrel
1	Long-billed Curlew
52	Marbled Godwit
227	Western Sandpiper
Gulls, Terns & Skimmers	
11	Western Gull
37	Caspian Tern
11	Forster's Tern
6	Elegant Tern
154	Black Skimmer
Pigeons & Doves	
7	Rock Pigeon
Kingfishers	
1	Belted Kingfisher
Crows & Ravens	
19	American Crow
1	Common Raven
Swallows	
8	Barn Swallow
Mockingbirds	
7	Northern Mockingbird (heard)
Warblers	
1	Orange-crowned Warbler (heard)
1	Common Yellowthroat (heard)
Towhees & Sparrows	
3	California Towhee (heard)
18	Savannah Sparrow (visual & heard)
6	Song Sparrow (heard)
Finches	
5	House Finch (heard)