

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

**Date:** 8/21/15 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** 2.04 ft low tide at 7:16 AM — 4.37 ft high tide at 2:08 PM

**Skipper:** Robert Sloan **Birders who actively contributed to the count:** Darrell Wilson, Mark Kincheloe, Sally Menzel, Sharon Harrow, Nancy Kenyon, Chuck Nichols, Ingo Vogelsang and Ann Burk. The youngest birder, Lara, was actively involved also.

**Comments:** It was heavily overcast the entire trip and the birds blended in to the mud flats along the shore so well that it was difficult to find them. We had to be continually vigilant to look for moving objects which turned into birds as we got closer. We watched a Snowy Egret slowly stalking prey with a perfect reflection beneath him in the still water. Here and there we saw Mullet jumping. We were pleased to see that the shorebirds were definitely returning and some, like the Black-bellied Plovers, Willets & Marbled Godwits still had remnants of breeding plumage. Single Black Skimmers flew past us, skimming the surface of the water with their red and black beaks, while small flocks of Western Sandpipers and other shorebirds flew across the channel in front of us. We saw only 2 raptors: an Osprey spooking a mixed flock of shorebirds when he flew low over them, and a Red-shouldered Hawk with prey that he had to continually defend from a troublesome crow lurking near by. A couple of young Caspian Terns flew by, calling with a very high-pitched cry which we didn't associate with Caspian Terns at all until we actually saw them doing it, and a Forster's Tern sitting low on a mudflat really puzzled us. We again saw the juvie Pelagic Cormorant; this time he had moved up the bay a little to the east end of the Santa Ynez Spit next to the beginning of the marina. We also saw two Surf Scoters again in the Upper Bay. Two Western Gulls were perched on the Channel Closed sign in the upper bay where two WEGU had nested earlier in the season. Because it was low tide, we saw many more birds which were spread out rather than the fewer tightly packed masses of birds we see when the tide is high. This kept us very alert because we never knew which species we were going to see next.

<b>Geese &amp; Ducks</b>	
2	American Wigeon
8	Mallard
2	Surf Scoter
<b>Grebes</b>	
2	Pied-billed Grebe
<b>Pelicans &amp; Cormorants</b>	
1	Brown Pelican
6	Double-crested Cormorant
1	Pelagic Cormorant (juv)
<b>Hérons &amp; Egrets</b>	
4	Great Blue Heron
9	Great Egret
8	Snowy Egret
<b>Diurnal Birds of Prey</b>	
1	Osprey
1	Red-shouldered Hawk
<b>Plovers</b>	
79	Black-bellied Plover
13	Semipalmated Plover
4	Killdeer
<b>Sandpipers</b>	
3	Spotted Sandpiper
222	Willet
10	Whimbrel
6	Long-billed Curlew

197	Marbled Godwit
389	Western Sandpiper
32	Short-billed Dowitcher
1	Wilson's Phalarope
<b>Gulls, Terns &amp; Skimmers</b>	
12	Western Gull
6	Caspian Tern
5	Forster's Tern
11	Black Skimmer
<b>Pigeons &amp; Doves</b>	
23	Rock Pigeon
3	Mourning Dove
<b>Flycatchers</b>	
5	Black Phoebe
<b>Crows &amp; Ravens</b>	
6	American Crow
<b>Swallows</b>	
1	Barn Swallow
1	Cliff Swallow
<b>Warblers</b>	
1	Common Yellowthroat
<b>Towhees &amp; Sparrows</b>	
2	Savannah Sparrow
<b>Finches</b>	
1	House Finch