

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

**Date:** 12/22/14    **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon    **Tide:** 7 ft. (King) high tide at 8:25 AM    **Skipper:** Robert Sloan  
**Birders who actively contributed to the count:** Sally Menzel, Deana Collins, Darrell Wilson, Sharon Harrow, Mark Kincheloe, Chris Johnson, Valerie Glass, Jean Suan and Nancy Kenyon.

**Comments:** When we started out on the trip this morning, the tide was the highest we had ever experienced in the 14 years we have been doing the pontoon boat trip counts. The usual "islands" we saw along the way were almost submerged with only their tops showing. There were few mudflats anywhere. The upper bay was littered with debris, such as shredded bark and other tree parts, Styrofoam cups, plastic bottles, wood pallets, a football and a basketball, and even a red Mylar balloon. The ducks, grebes, and coots were milling around in the littered water and it was difficult to distinguish their heads from the floating Styrofoam cups and other debris. The water was calm, with good reflections and a faint haze of fog. Two Ospreys were perched on the nesting platforms by the Back Bay Science Center, Buffleheads were bobbing like corks in the water, a huge flock of Western Sandpipers wheeled above one of the islands and then settled down on the point where there was a small mudflat, looking just like a mass of small pointy rocks. A Western Gull was comfortably "sitting" on the awning of a small boat, a flock of 10 Black Skimmers flew gracefully past us, and Belted Kingfishers were spotted on various posts above the water. The floating pipe boom by the Newport Aquatic Center was being well used by 6 Forster's Terns perched in a row, 5 cormorants, 2 Brown Pelicans, and a Heermann's Gull. A Northern Harrier was in the pickleweed with only her tawny upper body showing. A Whimbrel and a couple of Long-billed Curlews flew across the channel, providing us with great views of them. Unfortunately, the tide was too high for us to find any rails, though we certainly searched. The highlights of the trip were seeing 3 different species of loons, a Little Blue Heron, a Hooded Merganser, and a Cassin's Kingbird trying unsuccessfully to dislodge an Osprey off "his" perch atop a tall pine tree on the hillside. Besides the birds, we also saw 8 pink Flamingos & 2 pink pigs wearing Santa Claus hats, a fake Great Horned Owl, and a Sea Lion eating a fish.

<b>Geese &amp; Ducks</b>	
187	American Wigeon
18	Mallard
31	Northern Pintail
12	Green-winged Teal
1	Redhead
69	Lesser Scaup
13	Surf Scoter
89	Bufflehead
1	<i>Hooded Merganser</i>
5	Ruddy Duck
<b>Loons</b>	
1	<i>Red-throated Loon</i>
1	Pacific Loon
1	Common Loon
<b>Grebes</b>	
5	Pied-billed Grebe
7	Horned Grebe
11	Eared Grebe
82	Western Grebe
1	Clark's Grebe
<b>Pelicans &amp; Cormorants</b>	
16	Brown Pelican
13	Double-crested Cormorant
<b>Hérons &amp; Egrets</b>	
11	Great Blue Heron
15	Great Egret
14	Snowy Egret
1	<i>Little Blue Heron</i>
<b>Diurnal Birds of Prey</b>	
3	Turkey Vulture
4	Osprey

1	Northern Harrier
2	Red-tailed Hawk
2	American Kestrel
<b>Rails &amp; Coots</b>	
69	American Coot
<b>Plovers</b>	
24	Black-bellied Plover
21	Killdeer
<b>Sandpipers</b>	
1	Spotted Sandpiper
219	Willet
2	Whimbrel
5	Long-billed Curlew
290	Marbled Godwit
1000+	Western Sandpiper
<b>Gulls, Terns &amp; Skimmers</b>	
3	Heermann's Gull
2	Ring-billed Gull
18	Western Gull
14	Forster's Tern
10	Black Skimmer
<b>Pigeons &amp; Doves</b>	
42	Rock Pigeon
<b>Kingfishers</b>	
7	Belted Kingfisher
<b>Hummingbirds</b>	
1	Allen's Hummingbird
<b>Woodpeckers</b>	
1	Northern Flicker
<b>Flycatchers</b>	
8	Black Phoebe
10	Say's Phoebe

1	Cassin's Kingbird
<b>Crows &amp; Ravens</b>	
4	American Crows
<b>Swallows</b>	
2	Barn Swallow
<b>Warblers</b>	
3	Yellow-rumped Warbler
<b>Towhees &amp; Sparrows</b>	
1	California Towhee (heard)
5	Savannah Sparrow
2	Song Sparrow (heard)