

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

**Date:** 7/16/14

**Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon

**Tide:** Low but incoming

**Skipper:** Robert Sloan

**Birders who actively contributed to the count:** Mark Kincheloe, Chuck Nichols, Chris Johnson, Deana Collins, Robin and Sam Margolis, and Nancy Kenyon.

**Comments:** We began the trip at low tide with an abundance of mudflats. The weather was kind of sultry, with an overcast sky and warm humid air. Unlike past trips, we were never cold. The clouds cast a pale grey hue over the mudflats causing the birds which populated them to look pale gray also, making it difficult for those of us counting the birds to even find them. This was especially true of the Black-bellied Plovers which showed up like small pale gray blobs on the wet mud. Several of the plovers, however, were quite noticeable with black bellies and one was stunning in full breeding regalia, a sight we don't get to enjoy very often here in Orange County! The Marbled Godwits and Willets were also in varying degrees of breeding plumage. One of the godwits which flew across the channel in front of our boat was a beautiful reddish gold color which almost glowed as it flew by.

The birds were taking advantage of the mudflats and available food there. We saw a Willet pick up a 2 inch crab and attempt to eat it; a striking Green Heron stalked prey at the water's edge; a large Sea Lion peered at us from the water; a group of Caspian Terns sat on a mudflat, their large red bills were very bright against the subdued light of the mud; a Snowy Egret was darting around in the shallows with flapping wings, running back and forth, trying to scare up a meal; and two Clapper Rails were seen at the water's edge, one running along the edge of the cordgrass while the other was lurking in the grass, peering out, his reddish-brown body quite noticeable amidst the green grass. Forster's Terns were flying overhead calling and a lone Osprey was perched high on top of the nesting platform. Flocks of Western Sandpipers flew from spot to spot searching for good feeding areas, and small groups of Snowy Egrets waded in the shallows.

<b>Geese &amp; Ducks</b>	
2	Mallard
<b>Grebes</b>	
3	Pied-billed Grebe
1	Western Grebe
<b>Cormorants &amp; Pelicans</b>	
17	Double-crested Cormorant
<b>Hérons &amp; Egrets</b>	
6	Great Blue Heron
5	Great Egret
21	Snowy Egret
1	Green Heron
<b>Diurnal Birds of Prey</b>	
2	Turkey Vulture
1	Osprey
<b>Rails</b>	
2	Clapper Rail
<b>Plovers</b>	
17	Black-bellied Plover
1	Semipalmated Plover
3	Killdeer
<b>Sandpipers</b>	
220	Willet
4	Whimbrel
3	Long-billed Curlew

78	Marbled Godwit
274	Western Sandpiper
16	Least Sandpiper
55	Long-billed Dowitcher
<b>Gulls</b>	
7	Western Gull
<b>Terns</b>	
10	Caspian Tern
13	Forster's Tern
22	Least Tern
1	Elegant Tern
<b>Skimmers</b>	
3	Black Skimmer
<b>Pigeons &amp; Doves</b>	
11	Rock Pigeon
1	Mourning Dove
<b>Crows &amp; Ravens</b>	
4	American Crow
<b>Swallows</b>	
28	Barn Swallow
<b>Sparrows</b>	
1	Savannah Sparrow