

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

Date: 3/19/14 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** 3.88 ft. high tide at 11:31 AM **Skipper:** George
Counters: It was a great group of birders who went out on the boat; everyone was interested and eager to see all the birds. Our regular counters: Sally Menzel, Sharon Harrow, Chuck Nichols, Deana Collins, Chris Johnson, Darrell Wilson, & Nancy Kenyon, were assisted by Teri Bergin & Taite Pauley. (Teri had a brand new pair of binoculars and she was spotting birds left and right, often before anyone else ever saw them.)
Comments: It was incredibly cold out on the water even though there was no breeze and it didn't warm up much during the trip. As we were returning to the dock, Darrell checked his phone & found it to be only 59 degrees!

Geese & Ducks	
66	American Wigeon
6	Mallard
5	Blue-winged Teal
11	Cinnamon Teal
9	Green-winged Teal
13	Lesser Scaup
6	Surf Scoter
52	Bufflehead
1	Red-breasted Merganser
18	Ruddy Duck
Grebes	
4	Pied-billed Grebe
10	Horned Grebe
3	Eared Grebe
24	Western Grebe
2	Clark's Grebe
Cormorants & Pelicans	
45	Double-crested Cormorant
5	Brown Pelican
Hérons & Egrets	
4	Great Blue Heron
3	Great Egret
15	Snowy Egret
1	Little Blue Heron
2	Reddish Egret
Diurnal Birds of Prey	
7	Turkey Vulture
2	Osprey
1	Northern Harrier
3	Red-tailed Hawk
Rails & Coots	
94	American Coot
Plovers	
39	Black-bellied Plover
Avocets	
56	American Avocet
Sandpipers	
2	Spotted Sandpiper
1	Greater Yellowlegs

228	Willet
22	Whimbrel
3	Long-billed Curlew
223	Marbled Godwit
1000	Western Sandpiper
47	Least Sandpiper
25	Long-billed Dowitcher
24	peeps (<i>flew by too quick to count</i>)
Gulls, Terns & Skimmers	
24	Western Gull
12	Caspian Tern
10	Forster's Tern
73	Black Skimmer
Pigeons & Doves	
6	Rock Pigeon
4	Mourning Dove
Kingfishers	
1	Belted Kingfisher
Hummingbirds	
1	Anna's Hummingbird
Flycatchers	
2	Black Phoebe
1	Say's Phoebe
2	Cassin's Kingbird
Crows & Ravens	
15	American Crow
1	Common Raven (calling)
Swallows	
4	Barn Swallows
4	Cliff Swallows
Mockingbirds	
4	Northern Mockingbird
Sparrows	
22	Savannah Sparrow
5	Song Sparrow
Finches	
11	House Finch

See the following page for more comments about the birds we saw.

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As we left the dock, a couple of nesting Rock Pigeons hurriedly flew out of the bottom portion of our boat where they set up their nesting activities every year. As we passed the Santa Inez Spit, we noticed that the spit was decorated with the webs of the Funnel Spiders, laden with dew and sparkling in the morning light. We watched a Great Blue Heron slowly stalking fish in the shallows and a Savannah Sparrow burst into song as our boat passed by. One of the Eared Grebes was showing some breeding plumage with the bright feathers on the side of his head. At the Osprey nesting platform by the Back Bay Science Center, the pair of Ospreys were in attendance on what probably was a nest of eggs. A Mourning Dove was harassing the Osprey which evidently was flying too close to its nest. A small flock of 10 peeps zipped past our boat, much too quickly for us to properly identify them. We watched 2 Black Skimmers in motion, skimming along the shore in proper skimmer fashion, their lower mandible dipped in the water. One of the Snowy Egrets was decked out in breeding plumage, his head feathers waving in the breeze. 5 more peeps zipped past our boat and from the shore we heard a raven calling. As the sky cleared, the clouds and blue sky were reflected in the water. Along the road, we could again see more Funnel Spiders' webs laden with dew. A Reddish Egret doing its "dance" – running in the shallows, leaping up and flapping its wings; it was quite a performance! Several times, we saw a large mullet leap out of the water. A large flock of Western Sandpipers were spooked by a passing Northern Harrier. They arose from the water, wheeling back and forth, and then flew on down the channel. We saw 12 or more Willets, on top of the grass. Forster's Terns were diving in the water; one dove from quite a ways up – and caught a fish! American Avocet, Marbled Godwit, and one Black-bellied Plover were coming into breeding plumage. On the way back at the pipe boom near the Newport Aquatic Center, we saw 22 Double-crested Cormorants, an Eared Grebe, a Brown Pelican, a Forster's Tern, and a Little Blue Heron – all sitting on the floating pipes! When we returned to the dock, the Rock Pigeons hurriedly took up residence again in the bottom portion of our boat. It was quite a morning!