

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

Date: 11/19/14 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** 5.46 ft. high tide at 6:34 AM; 0.32 ft low tide at 1.30 PM

Skipper: Eric Walker **Birders who actively contributed to the count:** Deana Collins, Sharon Harrow, Chris Johnson, Nancy Kenyon, Sally Menzel, and Chuck Nichols.

Comments: We were surprised to find that there were no shorebirds on top of the Santa Ynez Spit; usually it is covered by a flock of Black-bellied Plovers. The Surf Scoters were again in evidence, swimming around right before the PCH bridge, providing us with great views of their colorful bills. We saw 3 Ospreys perched on poles like statues and a handsome Western Gull was also posing like a statue, but on a boat. The pipe booms were out again in their customary spot by the Aquatic Center and were being well used by a Western Grebe, 4 Double-crested Cormorants, 2 Western Gulls, 2 Forster's Terns, and 3 Brown Pelicans. We saw 2 female Bufflehead doing "synchronized swimming" side by side. Usually the Willets are hidden from view in the tall grass, but this morning their heads were sticking up, making counting a little easier. As we got further up the channel, we found that the tide had dropped considerably, exposing large areas of mudflats along the shore on which the busily feeding shorebirds were scattered. Several large flocks of Western and Least Sandpipers flew back and forth along the edge; I guess they were trying to find the best feeding area. We were surprised to find so many Spotted Sandpipers (7), but the most surprising sight of all on this trip was a Northern Harrier eating a Snowy Egret! She was starting her meal when we passed her on the way up the channel, and had finished when we returned, leaving behind only a mass of white feathers. It was a very interesting trip with large numbers of birds.

Geese & Ducks	
76	American Wigeon
2	Blue-winged Teal
2	Northern Pintail
11	Green-winged Teal
14	Surf Scoter
68	Bufflehead
13	Ruddy Duck
Grebes	
5	Pied-billed Grebe
2	Horned Grebe
13	Eared Grebe
35	Western Grebe
Pelicans & Cormorants	
6	Double-crested Cormorant
17	Brown Pelican
Hérons & Egrets	
7	Great Blue Heron
3	Great Egret
15	Snowy Egret
Diurnal Birds of Prey	
8	Turkey Vulture
3	Osprey
2	Northern Harrier
2	Red-tailed Hawk
Rails & Coots	
40	American Coot
Plovers	
86	Black-bellied Plover
1	Semipalmated Plover
23	Killdeer
Avocets & Stilts	
7	American Avocet
Sandpipers	
7	Spotted Sandpiper
6	Greater Yellowlegs
371	Willet

Sandpipers	
4	Whimbrel
12	Long-billed Curlew
212	Marbled Godwit
616	Western Sandpiper
47	Least Sandpiper
44	Long-billed Dowitcher
Gulls, Terns & Skimmers	
6	Heermann's Gull
8	Ring-billed Gull
24	Western Gull
9	Forster's Tern
Pigeons & Doves	
21	Rock Pigeon
1	Mourning Dove
Kingfishers	
5	Belted Kingfisher
Flycatchers	
2	Black Phoebe
7	Say's Phoebe
Crows & Ravens	
5	American Crow
Mockingbirds	
1	Northern Mockingbird
Towhees & Sparrows	
2	Savannah Sparrow