

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

Date: 10/16/13 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** 5.64 ft high tide at 7:57 AM **Skipper:** Eric Walker
Birders who actively contributed to the count: Sally Menzel, Sharon Harrow, Chuck Nichols, Deana Collins, Nancy Kenyon, Sandrine Biziaux, and Karen Terry

Comments: The weather was perfect – clear, calm, and warm. Due to the high tide, there were no exposed mud flats on which the shorebirds could feed, so they were forced to seek higher ground on which to wait it out. We encountered them in the usual three areas where they were packed tightly together resting and waiting for the tide to change. The first area, which often has an interesting collection of shorebirds, was the big island known as Santa Ynez Spit, which is just north of the PCH bridge. Sure enough there was a flock of Black-bellied Plovers on top of the island with a mass of Western Sandpipers in front of them lower down. The resident Great Blue Heron was in “his” usual spot by a large bush at the upper end of the island along with a variety of egrets and shorebirds. In fact, he “posed” very nicely for us right in front of the bush. Forster’s Terns were flying up and down the bay making spectacular aerial dives into the water. The Belted Kingfishers were active and we saw five of them. Further up the bay, we encountered 3 groups of Eared Grebes swimming close together in tight formation. In the shoregrass, we saw several Great Egrets, standing like silent sentinels, probably waiting for an unwary frog to show its head; in other areas, Great Blue Herons and Snowy Egrets were slowly stalking their prey. As the tide changed, a large flock of peeps rose into the air and circled several times before flying off, their wings shimmering in the sunlight. We were treated to the sound of several Clapper Rails calling from the grass at the water’s edge, but though we searched diligently, we never were able to spot them.

Geese & Ducks	
45	American Wigeon
16	Mallard
1	Cinnamon Teal
Loons	
1	Common Loon
Grebes	
2	Pied-billed Grebe
1	Horned Grebe
27	Eared Grebe
17	Western Grebe
1	Clark’s Grebe
Cormorants	
13	Double-crested Cormorant
Pelicans	
1	Brown Pelican
Herons & Egrets	
10	Great Blue Heron
10	Great Egret
15	Snowy Egret
Diurnal Birds of Prey	
4	Turkey Vulture
1	Osprey
1	White-tailed Kite
2	Northern Harrier
1	Red-tailed Hawk
2	American Kestrel
Rails & Coots	
5	Clapper Rail (heard)
90	American Coot
Plovers	
53	Black-bellied Plover
18	Killdeer

Sandpipers	
133	Willet
5	Whimbrel
2	Long-billed Curlew
126	Marbled Godwit
450	Western Sandpiper
100	Least Sandpiper
37	Dunlin
6	Long-billed Dowitcher
Gulls, Terns & Skimmers	
2	Heermann’s Gull
2	Ring-billed Gull
8	Western Gull
12	Forster’s Tern
5	Black Skimmer
Pigeons & Doves	
6	Rock Pigeon
5	Mourning Dove
Kingfishers	
5	Belted Kingfisher
Flycatchers	
2	Black Phoebe
4	Say’s Phoebe
Crows & Ravens	
16	American Crow
Mockingbirds	
3	Northern Mockingbird
Sparrows	
17	Savannah Sparrow
1	White-crowned Sparrow (heard)
Blackbirds	
4	Red-winged Blackbird
3	Western Meadowlark