

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

Date: 12/18/13 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** 5.70 ft. high tide at 8:44 AM **Skipper:** Eric Walker

Birders who actively contributed to the count: Sharon Harrow, Chuck Nichols, Nancy Kenyon, Deana Collins, Susen Kay, and Karen Terry. **Comments:** The tide this morning was very high so the mudflats were completely covered by water. This ruled out any good habitat for small shorebirds, and, as a result, we saw no small sandpipers or even any dowitchers. The water in the bay was very calm and the surface had a silvery sheen to it, dappled with reflections of the shore. The cottonwoods and sycamores were in glorious autumn color illuminated by the morning light. There were a lot of dabbling ducks swimming around in the shallow water and cord grass. In one area, we saw a group of American Wigeons dabbling upside down in the water, with only their white bellies showing. In the Constellation area, we saw five Clapper Rails, two out in the open, perched on a long horizontal stick, and the other three lurking in the tall cord grass at the water's edge. Small groups of Buffleheads were bobbing around in the water and Western Grebes were scattered throughout. We had an abundance of Horned Grebes – 14 in all! In the distance, we watched graceful Great Egrets foraging in the pickleweed. A male Northern Harrier was on a log having “breakfast” while a low-flying female harrier flushed a small group of Green-winged Teal from the water. We got great looks at a female Belted Kingfisher perched on a fence overlooking the water and an Osprey on the nesting platform (by a good sized nest) at the Back Bay Science Center. A row of Double-crested Cormorants and Forster's Terns were perched in a row on a couple of floating pipes by the Aquatic Center. Along with all the great views of our native birds in the bay, we also saw 6 bright pink life-sized (plastic) flamingos, a pelican weathervane, 2 fake Great Horned Owls, and a huge dinosaur which was standing on board one of the moored boats wearing a red and green Christmas hat. The bay was definitely full of surprises this morning!

Geese & Ducks	
9	Gadwall
161	American Wigeon
26	Mallard
3	Northern Shoveler
15	Northern Pintail
30	Green-winged Teal
74	Lesser Scaup
6	Surf Scoter
136	Bufflehead
4	Ruddy Duck
Grebes	
5	Pied-billed Grebe
14	Horned Grebe
7	Eared Grebe
75	Western Grebe
1	Clark's Grebe
Pelicans & Cormorants	
15	Brown Pelican
10	Double-crested Cormorant
Hérons & Egrets	
13	Great Blue Heron
10	Great Egret
3	Snowy Egret
Diurnal Birds of Prey	
1	Turkey Vulture
4	Osprey
3	Northern Harrier
3	Red-tailed Hawk
2	American Kestrel
Rails & Coots	
6	Clapper Rail (all visual!)
93	American Coot
Plovers	
12	Black-bellied Plover

Avocets & Stilts	
35	American Avocet
Sandpipers	
248	Willet
6	Long-billed Curlew
1	Whimbrel
52	Marbled Godwit
Gulls, Terns & Skimmers	
5	Heermann's Gull
4	Ring-billed Gull
10	Western Gull
13	California Gull
62	gull sp. (in flight, high above us)
11	Forster's Tern
2	Black Skimmer
Pigeons & Doves	
6	Rock Pigeon
Kingfishers	
4	Belted Kingfisher
Woodpeckers	
1	Northern Flicker (heard)
Flycatchers	
2	Black Phoebe
4	Say's Phoebe
2	Cassin's Kingbird
Crows & Ravens	
19	American Crow
Thrushes	
3	Western Bluebird (in parking lot)
Mockingbirds	
1	Northern Mockingbird (heard)
Finches	
4	House Finch (in parking lot)