

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

Date: 12/16/15 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** 2.49 ft. LOW TIDE at 6:03 AM; 4.65 ft HIGH TIDE at 11:42 AM
Skipper: Robert Sloan. **Birders who regularly contribute to the count:** Darrell Wilson, Sharon Harrow, Chuck Nichols and Nancy Kenyon. They were aided by Pete Robertshaw, Marie Connors & Margaret Renton, Marchia Morey, Richard Martyn, Portia Artunian and Peter Bryant who was active with his camera. Alyce & Ed did not join the count, but had a good time watching the birds from their seat. **Comments:** The weather was crystal clear, very cold, and so calm that we were able to have good reflections the entire trip. It was great to see some of the Brown Pelicans in their usual spot under the PCH bridge again, kind of like a greeting committee, welcoming us to the Upper Bay. At the Santa Ynez Spit, one Brown Pelican was perched on the top of the spit, the white feathers of his crown stood up like a crest, backlit against the sun. Near the PCH bridge, the Pelagic Cormorant was still there, perched on one of the buoys. A Great Blue Heron was standing on one leg on top of a pole near the water, showing off his balancing skill. Because of the great abundance of waterfowl, the incoming tide and the calm water, many of the birds were not in their usual locations, which kept us on our toes. We saw an unusually high count of loons: 1 Red-throated, 5 Pacific, and 4 Common. Though there was only 1 Turkey Vulture aloft, we observed NINE Red-tailed Hawks, most of which were stationed on the ground. The American Kestrel was again perched on his pole and the Northern Harrier was doing his hunting, low to the ground. American Wigeons appeared to be everywhere, but one crow was definitely out of place; it was hunkered down on the trunk of a very long palm, halfway up the tree. Eared Grebes kept bobbing up near our boat and we got excellent close-up views of them. Large flocks of Western Sandpipers kept rising up from distant mudflats and flying off to other feeding locations. We were delighted to see so many of the graceful Northern Pintails but surprised to find so few Ruddy Ducks. The air was filled with the soft call of the wigeons and the clear call of the Black-bellied Plovers feeding at the water's edge. On our return trip, we saw 29 Forster's Terns perched on one boat and a flock of 35 Ring-billed Gulls floating near the Sea Base. We had a wonderful group of birders on board this morning, many of whom really helped us with our count.

Geese & Ducks		7	Great Egret	Gulls, Terns & Skimmers	
268	American Wigeon	18	Snowy Egret	4	Heermann's Gull
22	Mallard	8	White-faced Ibis	44	Ring-billed Gull
5	Northern Shoveler	Diurnal Birds of Prey		12	Western Gull
80	Northern Pintail	1	Turkey Vulture	19	California Gull
23	Green-winged Teal	4	Osprey	35	Forster's Tern
118	Lesser Scaup	1	Northern Harrier	12	Black Skimmer
31	Surf Scoter	9	Red-tailed Hawk	Pigeons & Doves	
159	Bufflehead	1	American Kestrel	6	Rock Pigeon
10	Red-breasted Merganser	Rails & Coots		Kingfishers	
5	Ruddy Duck	88	American Coot	4	Belted Kingfisher
Loons		Plovers		Woodpeckers	
1	Red-throated Loon	143	Black-bellied Plover	1	Northern Flicker
5	Pacific Loon	1	Semipalmated Plover	Flycatchers	
4	Common Loon	3	Killdeer	2	Black Phoebe
Grebes		Avocets		2	Cassin's Kingbird
4	Pied-billed Grebe	30	American Avocet	Crows & Ravens	
3	Horned Grebe	Sandpipers		7	American Crow
18	Eared Grebe	2	Spotted Sandpiper	2	Common Raven
40	Western Grebe	1	Greater Yellowlegs	Mockingbirds	
1	Clark's Grebe	135	Willet	1	Northern Mockingbird
Pelicans & Cormorants		2	Long-billed Curlew	Warblers	
18	Brown Pelican	90	Marbled Godwit	1	Common Yellowthroat
15	Double-crested Cormorant	620	Western Sandpiper	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler
1	Pelagic Cormorant	18	Least Sandpiper	Towhee & Sparrows	
Hérons, Egrets, Ibis		3	Dunlin	3	Savannah Sparrow
5	Great Blue Heron	28	Long-billed Dowitcher		