

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

Date: 12/21/16. **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon. **Tide:** 3.59 AM - HIGH TIDE at 4.6 ft; 10:34 AM - LOW TIDE at 1.9 ft.
Skipper: Robert Sloan. **Birders who actively contributed to the count:** Sally Menzel, Sharon Harrow, Jeff Bray, Calvin Hardcastle, Mark Kincheloe, Monte Taylor, Chris Johnson, & Nancy Kenyon.

Geese & Ducks		Pelicans & Cormorants		6	Long-billed Curlew
29	Mallard	10	Brown Pelican	97	Marbled Godwit
1	Gadwall	17	Double-crested Cormorant	325	Western Sandpiper
163	Green-winged Teal	Herons, Egrets & Ibis		300	Least Sandpiper
627	American Wigeon	3	Great Blue Heron	16	Dunlin
82	Northern Pintail	16	Great Egret	225	Long-billed Dowitcher
34	Northern Shoveler	20	Snowy Egret	Gulls, Terns & Skimmers	
31	Blue-winged Teal	1	Green Heron	13	Heermann's Gull
2	Cinnamon Teal	Diurnal Birds of Prey		15	Ring-billed Gull
5	Redhead	7	Osprey	20	Western Gull
140	Lesser Scaup	1	Northern Harrier	50	California Gull
9	Surf Scoter	1	Red-tailed Hawk	2	Caspian Tern
71	Bufflehead	2	American Kestrel	5	Forster's Tern
2	Hooded Merganser	Rails & Coots		40	Black Skimmer
3	Red-breasted Merganser	193	American Coot	Pigeons & Doves	
17	Ruddy Duck	Plovers		12	Rock Pigeon
Loons		114	Black-bellied Plover	Kingfishers	
2	Pacific Loon	7	Semipalmated Plover	3	Belted Kingfisher
Grebes		9	Killdeer	Flycatchers	
8	Pied-billed Grebe	Avocets		1	Black Phoebe
9	Horned Grebe	24	American Avocet	4	Say's Phoebe
4	Eared Grebe	Sandpipers		Crows & Ravens	
74	Western Grebe	2	Spotted Sandpiper	9	American Crow
5	Clark's Grebe	1	Greater Yellowlegs	Waxwings	
		97	Willet	50	Cedar Waxwing
		1	Whimbrel		

We began our trip under cloudy skies and a recent shower. The water was very calm in the beginning with gentle ripples and good reflections until the storm moved in halfway through the trip and it began to rain. It was an interesting trip because of the approaching storm and the fact that the tide was going out. We had 15 species of ducks with American Wigeon being the most abundant, 10 species of shorebirds, 4 species of gulls including 13 Heermann's. (We never get that many Heermann's Gulls, so that was quite a surprise!) We saw a large group of Western Grebes with 5 Horned Grebes swimming with them inside the group. In another area, a pair of Western Grebes were doing their head bobbing routine, swimming close together and bobbing their heads in unison. I was surprised to see them do that in December! A Belted Kingfisher was sitting hunched down on what must have been a tiny flat spot on a cliff face overlooking the bay; usually they are perched in an upright position on a snag or tree branch. Two Osprey were on the nesting platform by the Back Bay Science Center on what looked like a nest. A third Osprey showed up and tried to land on the platform also, but there just wasn't enough room. "He" circled round and round that platform, but finally gave up and flew away. Further up the channel, we saw another Osprey carrying nesting material, headed in a different direction, so I guess it was time for them to start their nest building. . .As we approached our turn-around point, a rain cloud descended on us, making bird visibility poor, and the rain blew into the boat from the sides, causing many of the group to stand in the middle to keep themselves and their gear from getting wet. Of course, the birds didn't appear to mind a little moisture on their backs. In spite of the rain, it was beautiful out there as we headed back, surrounded by a gray misty cloud. The birds looked like dark shadows on the water and along the shore, and the Western Grebes were calling to each other.