

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

**Date:** 7/20/11 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Skipper:** Eric Walther

**Tide:** incoming. **Birders who conducted the count:** Nancy Kenyon, Deana Collins, Darrell Wilson, Chuck Nichols & Greg Griffin.

**Comments:** The morning started out completely overcast, but the clouds dissipated as we progressed further up the bay. When we returned to the area near the Sea Base, we were surprised the fog had not lifted there at all. During the first hour, we had the bay to ourselves and the birds, the water was relatively still with only faint ripples on it from the morning breeze, and the birds were pretty quiet. The shorebirds were in full to partial breeding plumage, so we used body shape & bill length to differentiate the species rather than using their colors & plumage patterns. One of the godwits had large splotches of brown on its body which really made it look strange. We had a little difficulty identifying one of the Great Blue Herons because he was hunched way down in the cordgrass at the water's edge. We saw a large crab sunning itself on the shore and further on we saw five of the Black Skimmers sitting on a mudflat, their black & white bodies and bright orange legs & feet making a stunning contrast with the dark mud. We heard a few of the Willets calling and the call notes of the Greater Yellowlegs reverberated throughout the marsh. The Least Terns were actively diving into the water and the Caspian & Forster's Terns were flying up and down the channel. We found a brightly colored inflatable beach ball floating in the water and everyone agreed it needed to be removed, so Eric skillfully maneuvered the boat in the right position and Chuck was able to pluck it from the water. In one area, the cordgrass at the water's edge was festooned with large batches of white-colored dead algae which had been washed up during high tide. On a distant post in the water, we spotted an Osprey eating a fish and at closer range we saw one of the clean-looking Western Gulls perched on a buoy. It was a great morning to be out on the bay.

<b>Ducks</b>	
24	Mallard
<b>Grebes</b>	
3	Pied-billed Grebe
4	Western Grebe
<b>Cormorants</b>	
15	Double-crested Cormorant
<b>Hérons &amp; Egrets</b>	
2	Great Blue Heron
1	Great Egret
22	Snowy Egret
<b>Diurnal Birds of Prey</b>	
2	Turkey Vulture
1	Osprey
<b>Plovers &amp; Avocets</b>	
3	Black-bellied Plover
2	Semipalmated Plover
1	American Avocet
<b>Sandpipers</b>	
1	Greater Yellowlegs
99	Willet
4	Whimbrel
4	Long-billed Curlew
64	Marbled Godwit
96	Western Sandpiper
4	Long-billed Dowitcher
41	Peeps (too distant to ID species)

<b>Gulls, Terns &amp; Skimmers</b>	
8	Western Gull
9	Caspian Tern
6	Forster's Tern
3	Least Tern
11	Black Skimmer
<b>Pigeons &amp; Doves</b>	
14	Rock Pigeon
3	Mourning Dove
<b>Crows</b>	
33	American Crow
<b>Swallows</b>	
11	Barn Swallow
3	Tree Swallow
<b>Mockingbirds</b>	
1	Northern Mockingbird
<b>Starlings</b>	
12	European Starling
<b>Sparrows</b>	
1	Song Sparrow
2	Savannah Sparrow
<b>Finches</b>	
14	House Finch