

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

Date: 3/16/16 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** 4.6 ft. HIGH TIDE at 4.20 AM; 0.1 ft LOW TIDE at 11:59 AM
Skipper: Eric Walker **Birders who actively contributed to the count:** Mark Kincheloe, Sally Menzel, Darrell Wilson, Chuck Nichols, Sharon Harrow, Jim Stacy, Sandy Smith and Nancy Kenyon.

Comments: We were watching for the Great Blue Herons which like to perch on the chimneys of houses overlooking the bay, but instead we just saw a plastic owl on one of the chimneys; even from below, that owl looked like a poor imitation and I doubt that it fooled many of the birds. There were a large number of Surf Scoters both in the main channel and further up in the bay, and, of course, there were also lots of Buffleheads swimming in formation, bobbing up and down in the water, or diving for food. A Red-throated Loon by the Back Bay Science Center was obviously in poor health; we watched him leave the water and struggle up onto dry land. Two Ospreys were on the nesting platform but we were unable to spot any chicks in the nest. A small flock of 12 Western Sandpipers flew past our boat. The lighting was terrible. It was very glary, causing the birds to be backlit; this made spotting and identifying them rather difficult since we didn't want to peer into the glare with our binoculars. However, the water was very still and we got beautiful reflections of the shoreline further up the bay. The Western Grebes were calling to each other, and we also heard the calls of the Black Phoebes, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plovers, Song Sparrows, Black Skimmers, and Northern Mockingbirds. Several of the birds were in breeding plumage: the Black-bellied Plovers had black bellies; a couple of Eared Grebes were in full breeding plumage, and an American White Pelican had the fibrous "horn" or "bulb" on its upper mandible. After counting the skimmers in a large flock on a mudflat, we were able to get views of them in action as one flew alongside our boat, skimming the water. A Forster's Tern dove into the water right in front of our boat, but I don't think he caught anything; in another area, we watched a Snowy Egret stalk its prey along the shore and successfully catch something. The boom by the Aquatics Center was being well used by a perching Double-crested Cormorant, 6 Forster's Terns, a Brown Pelican, and a Great Blue Heron. We saw an amazing number of 10 Whimbrels and thought they might be mobilizing for their upcoming migration north.

Geese & Ducks		1	Green Heron	1	Royal Tern
280	American Wigeon	Diurnal Birds of Prey		81	Black Skimmer
21	Mallard	1	Turkey Vulture	Pigeons & Doves	
11	Blue-winged Teal	2	Osprey	2	Rock Pigeon
5	Cinnamon Teal	1	Red-tailed Hawk	1	Mourning Dove
34	Green-winged Teal	3	American Kestrel	Kingfishers	
73	Lesser Scaup	Rails & Coots		2	Belted Kingfisher
89	Surf Scoter	147	American Coot	Hummingbirds	
101	Bufflehead	Plovers		3	Anna's Hummingbird
1	Red-breasted Merganser	9	Black-bellied Plover	Flycatchers	
26	Ruddy Duck	5	Killdeer	3	Black Phoebe
Loons		Avocets		Crows & Ravens	
1	Red-throated Loon	4	American Avocet	9	American Crow
Grebes		Sandpipers		Swallows	
1	Pied-billed Grebe	1	Spotted Sandpiper	2	N. Rough-winged Swallow
10	Eared Grebe	1	Greater Yellowlegs	2	Barn Swallow
27	Western Grebe	142	Willet	Wrens	
2	Clark's Grebe	10	Whimbrel	1	House Wren
Pelicans & Cormorants		4	Long-billed Curlew	Mockingbirds	
3	Brown Pelican	105	Marbled Godwit	5	Northern Mockingbird
1	American White Pelican	383	Western Sandpiper	Towhee & Sparrows	
16	Double-crested Cormorant	9	Least Sandpiper	13	Savannah Sparrow
Hérons, Egrets, Ibis		Gulls, Terns & Skimmers		7	Song Sparrow
5	Great Blue Heron	10	Western Gull	Finches	
4	Great Egret	2	Caspian Tern	3	House Finch
21	Snowy Egret	10	Forster's Tern		