

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

Date: 9/18/13 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** 5.49 ft high tide at 9:01 AM **Skipper:** Robert Sloan

Birders who actively contributed to the count: Deana Collins, Sharon Harrow, Nancy Kenyon, Ce & Chuck Leavell, Chuck Nichols, Darrell Wilson. **Comments:** It was overcast when we started the trip but the fog lifted rather quickly. We saw a number of Heermann's Gulls flying around along with a few Western Gulls and Brown Pelicans, but no Western Grebes anywhere. Double-crested Cormorants and Western Gulls decorated some of the buoys along the way. Because of the high tide, there were no mud flats; instead, we found large flocks of shorebirds packed tightly together in a few high spots. The first area, which often has an interesting collection of shorebirds, was the big island just north of the PCH bridge. A large flock of some 250+ Black-bellied Plovers was packed tightly together on the top of the island; all were in basic plumage except for two with partial black bellies. In front of them was a lower mass of 300+ Western Sandpipers. One of the Great Blue Herons was in "his" usual spot by a large bush at the upper end of the island and a few other shorebirds were also seen in the area. As we neared the Back Bay Science Center, Ce Leavell spotted a Little Blue Heron standing on the bluff by the Newport Dunes launch ramp. As our boat got closer, "he" flew off out of sight behind the Science Center building. At Rocky Point below Big Canyon, we were surprised to find a group of 12 Song Sparrows and 5 Savannah Sparrows hopping around on the rocks and in the bushes next to the shore. Because of the high tide and the lack of any wading birds along the shore, we were able to keep a sharp eye out for possible Clapper Rails in the emergent vegetation, and were finally rewarded when Sharon Harrow spotted 5 rails, 3 of which were close together in the cord grass at the water's edge, across from the salt dike, on the east side of the bay. They weren't moving around much so everyone got really good looks at them. After our boat turned around and we were headed back, we came upon another large flock of birds on a raised sand bar on the west side of the channel. There we found Marbled Godwits, Willits, Least & Western Sandpipers, and Black Skimmers. Further along, we watched Long-billed Curlews that were wandering around in the grass feeding and saw that some of them had shorter bills - more like Whimbrels - than the others. After checking our field guides, we found that males and juveniles have noticeably shorter bills. Chuck Leavell spotted a Loggerhead Shrike on the east shore past Big Canyon and we got an excellent view of a perched Belted Kingfisher as we approached the PCH bridge. It was quite a morning and we had a great time!

Geese & Ducks	
5	Mallard
8	Lesser Scaup
Grebes	
4	Pied-billed Grebe
Cormorants & Pelicans	
8	Double-crested Cormorant
13	Brown Pelican
Hérons & Egrets	
8	Great Blue Heron
11	Great Egret
8	Snowy Egret
1	Little Blue Heron
Diurnal Birds of Prey	
6	Turkey Vulture
2	Osprey
1	Red-shouldered Hawk (heard)
1	Red-tailed Hawk
1	American Kestrel
Rails	
7	Clapper Rail
Coots	
1	American Coot
Plovers	
250	Black-bellied Plover
3	Killdeer
Sandpipers	
1	Spotted Sandpiper
280	Willet

13	Long-billed Curlew
2	Whimbrel
123	Marbled Godwit
602	Western Sandpiper
50	Least Sandpiper
Gulls, Terns, & Skimmers	
15	Heermann's Gull
19	Western Gull
1	Caspian Tern
33	Black Skimmer
Pigeons & Doves	
7	Rock Pigeon
Kingfishers	
3	Belted Kingfisher
Flycatchers	
6	Say's Phoebe
1	Cassin's Kingbird
Shrikes	
1	Loggerhead Shrike
Crows & Ravens	
8	American Crow
Swallows	
2	Barn Swallow
Mockingbirds	
1	Northern Mockingbird
Sparrows & Grosbeaks	
7	Savannah Sparrow
12	Song Sparrow