

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

Date: 9/19/12 **Trip Leader:** Nancy Kenyon **Tide:** High; incoming **Skipper:** Eric Walker
Birders who took part in the count: Sharon Harrow, Darrell Wilson, Chris Johnson, Chuck Nichols, Deana Collins, and Nancy Kenyon. Keith Colmar was actively engaged and helped when he could.

Comments: It was a wonderful morning to be out in the bay! The weather was warm and comfortable, not too hot or too cold. The water was still as glass, providing perfect reflections. Due to the high tide, there were very few mudflats, so the shorebirds were bunched tightly together on the few available spots of land. We again saw a large flock of Black-bellied Plovers, Willets, and Western Sandpipers packed tightly together on the reddish ice plant-clad island near the PCH bridge, looking like small jagged gray rocks from a distance. (We figured they were waiting for the tide to change.) An American Kestrel was perched on top of a flag pole. Chris Johnson and Darrell Wilson spotted 2 different Clapper Rails in the Cord Grass and Darrell found the bird of the day for us — an American Bittern. It was in the “Narrows” area opposite the Dover Cliffs, on the east side of the channel, only visible from the water. At first the bittern was in the classic bittern pose with beak pointing upward, but then “he” went into his stalking mode, neck outstretched in a slanted position, and we got great views of his large feet as he slowly moved forward. (As is usually the case with the birds we see from the boat, he paid no attention to us or our boat.) At a small island-like protuberance along the west shore near Constellation Dr, we found a tight mass of Marbled Godwits, Willits, Black Skimmers, and a couple of Snowy Egrets. We saw evidence of recent migratory bird arrivals: 4 Spotted Sandpipers were close together in one spot, and we saw a total of 44 very active Eared Grebes, some of which were still in groups. All of us agreed this was one of the best mornings we have ever had in Upper Newport Bay on the pontoon boat! Next month, we expect to see more ducks, more species of shorebirds, and more raptors.

Geese & Ducks	
7	Mallard
Grebes	
6	Pied-billed Grebe
44	Eared Grebe
7	Western Grebe
Pelicans & Cormorants	
9	Brown Pelican
19	Double-crested Cormorant
20	American White Pelican (in flight)
Bitterns	
1	American Bittern
Hérons & Egrets	
7	Great Blue Heron
15	Great Egret
22	Snowy Egret
Diurnal Birds of Prey	
2	Turkey Vulture
2	Osprey (seen & heard)
1	Cooper’s Hawk
1	American Kestrel
Rails & Coots	
2	Clapper Rail
1	American Coot
Plovers	
150	Black-bellied Plover
2	Killdeer
Sandpipers	
4	Spotted Sandpiper
307	Willet

1	Whimbrel
6	Long-billed Curlew
118	Marbled Godwit
765	Western Sandpiper
Gulls	
2	Heermann’s Gull
10	Western Gull
Terns	
3	Forster’s Tern
Skimmers	
8	Black Skimmer
Pigeons & Doves	
3	Rock Pigeon
1	Mourning Dove
Kingfishers	
5	Belted Kingfisher (seen & heard)
Flycatchers	
2	Black Phoebe
1	Say’s Phoebe
Crows & Ravens	
6	American Crow
Mockingbirds	
1	Northern Mockingbird (heard)
Starlings	
7	European Starling
Sparrows	
8	Savannah Sparrow