

Report created by Erin Brown, Shorebird Counter and Public Educator for the Shorebird Conservation and Education Project with the Saint John Naturalists Club.

Tuesday, August 22, 2023

Public Engagement

- There were 44 people on the beach during the shift and 8 were approached. Most were interested to hear about the birds and all interactions were positive. Some people avoided me and others were busy or did not look up when I went by.
- 3 leashed dogs and 3 unleashed dogs were observed on the beach. The owners of the unleashed dogs were approached with the owners of 2 dogs responding kindly but not leashing their dogs afterward. The owners of the third dog leashed the dog in response.

Counts

Saints Rest – Main Beach

- 291 birds were counted: 273 were flying flocks of “peeps”. 4 were Semipalmated Sandpipers, 3 Least Sandpipers, 1 Semipalmated Plover, and 1 Sanderling were observed.
- Other birds counted included 7 Gulls, 1 Bald Eagle, and a Merlin. The Merlin flushed most of the shorebirds on the beach and many scattered to other roosts such as the marsh.

Saints Rest – East Beach

- Scattered small groups birds were observed roosting or walking along the tide line and totaled 23 Semipalmated Plovers and 26 Semipalmated Sandpipers.
- Other birds seen included 2 Bald Eagles, 1 Spotted Sandpiper, 3 Gulls, and 2 Crows.

Flats

- An estimate of “peeps” feeding across the mud flats was 1700.
- Black Bellied Plovers were absent.
- Other birds included: 137 Gulls, 9 Great Blue Herons, 3 Cormorants, 2 Black Ducks, 3 Merlins, 1 Crow, 2 Great Egrets, 1 Harrier, and 5 diving ducks too distant to identify.

Marsh – Before High Tide

- 335 “peeps” were seen. This included a group of around 200 that were found roosting on the bank of the stream that flows through the marsh. These were later identified as Semipalmated Sandpipers. 13 Least Sandpipers and 1 Semipalmated Plover were identified.
- Other birds counted included 13 Greater Yellowlegs (some may have been recounted), 3 Lesser Yellowlegs, 4 Crows, 2 Gulls, 3 Cormorants, and 15 Great Blue Herons.

Marsh – After High Tide

- This count was added due to growing evidence that the “peeps” are increasing their usage of the marsh as a roost at high tide. An estimated number of 1,000 birds were seen either emerging from the grass to fly toward the mud flats or flying down the stream toward the flats. The majority of these were flushed by predators: 1 Merlin and 1 Harrier.
- Other birds seen included 3 Greater Yellowlegs, 2 Lesser Yellowlegs, 8 Great Egrets, 12 Great Blue Herons, 21 Mallard/Black Ducks, 1 Cormorant, 2 Bald Eagles, 2 Merlins, 1 Harrier, and 1 Peregrine Falcon.

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