

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

Friday, August 25, 2023

Counts

Flats

- An estimate of peeps feeding across the mud flats was 1800.
- 162 Black Bellied Plovers were counted.
- Other birds included: 287 gulls, 5 Great Blue Herons, 8 Cormorants, 34 Black/Mallard Ducks, 3 Great Egrets, 1 Common Loon, and 1 Bald Eagle.

Pocket Beaches

Beaches were scouted early in the tide cycle due to the late high tide (7:00 p.m.) which caused the counting shift to be moved to earlier in the day.

- A: 45 “peeps” flew past toward the mud flats. 1 Eider was feeding just offshore.
- B: 1 Spotted Sandpiper was seen.
- C: 7 Surf Scoters fed offshore.
- D: No shorebirds observed.
- Beach between D and E: No shorebirds observed.
- E: 18 Cormorants sat on the rocks offshore. 1 Eider fed offshore.
- Inaccessible Beaches: No shorebirds observed.

Beach Scouting

The rest of the day was spent scouting more area beaches.

McLarens Beach – 1 Semipalmated Plover standing on the beach. 2 “peeps” flew past. A small beach with mostly cobble and some sand. Easy public access.

Duck Cove – 13 Semipalmated Plovers and 15 Semipalmated Sandpipers were counted. Most of this beach is sand though there is light cobble cover near the waterline and on the ends of the beach. This is mainly a small community beach with only 1 access – a set of stairs down a steep bank.

Bayshore Beach – 11 Semipalmated Plovers rested on the beach and 1 Ruddy Turnstone was seen foraging. This beach is a mixture of sand and cobble and has easy public access so is likely well used.

Maguires Cove – No shorebirds were observed. This beach is only accessible through ATV trails. It is all cobble, though most of the rock is larger than what the birds tend to prefer.

Black Beach – 1 Semipalmated Plover and 2 Semipalmated Sandpipers were seen foraging where a stream exits onto the beach. The beach is mostly sand and not likely to be useful for the birds to roost due to the dark colour of the sand that would make them stand out. However, from the beach I was able to look at the Musquash Ledges off the end of Musquash Island and found an estimated 300-400 “peeps” on a sandbar between the larger rocks. More flew around the rocks looking to land. The main rocks were occupied by Gulls and Cormorants. As the tide came in, the sand began to be covered by water and the “peeps” flew toward the beach on the opposite side. This is next to Hepburn Basin. According to signage at Black Beach, there are large tidal mud flats in the Musquash Harbour that the shorebirds are likely to be using to feed.

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