

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

Monday, August 28, 2023

Public Engagement

- There were 13 people on the beach during the shift and 7 were approached. Everyone was interested to hear about the birds and all interactions were positive.
- 4 leashed dogs and 1 unleashed dog was observed on the beach. The owner of the unleashed dog was distant and left before I got to that end of the beach. One couple with their dog saw the shorebirds before I got to them and turned around and when I met them later, they said they had spoken with volunteers before. Direct evidence that the education component is working.

Counts

Saints Rest – Main Beach

- Several large groups of peeps were seen roosting on the beach. Birds counted included 974 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 42 Least Sandpipers, 15 Semipalmated Plovers, 1 Ruddy Turnstone, and 4 Sanderlings were observed. 150 “peeps” were also counted.
- Other birds counted included 4 Horned Grebes, 2 Common Loons, and 1 Herring Gull. The Herring Gull was observed flying down the beach right over the groups of resting shorebirds and disturbing them.

Saints Rest – East Beach

- 2 groups of birds were observed roosting and totaled 16 Semipalmated Plovers and 6 Semipalmated Sandpipers.
- 2 Cormorants and a Red-throated Loon were also counted.
- 2 Greater Yellowlegs and 4 Canada Geese flew over the beach from the marsh.

Flats – Observed as the tide began to fall

- An estimate of peeps feeding across the mud flats was 1450.
- Other birds included: 123 gulls, 7 Great Blue Herons, 19 Cormorants, 1 Eider, 1 Merlin, and 1 Osprey.

Marsh

- 236 groups of “peeps” were seen. Groups able to be identified included 319 Semipalmated Sandpipers, and 46 Least Sandpipers.
- Other birds counted included 2 Savannah Sparrows, 7 Greater Yellowlegs, 1 Lesser Yellowlegs, 4 Great Egrets, 8 Mallard/Black Ducks, 12 Great Blue Herons, 1 Dowitcher, 1 Common Yellowthroat, 1 Whimbrel, 2 Eiders, 2 Blue Winged Teals, 3 Northern Shovelers, and 1 Harrier.

Beach Surveys

Beaches east of Irving Nature Park were scouted for feeding shorebirds and to assess roost site potential.

- Courtney Bay Mud Flats – A few hundred shorebirds were observed feeding as I drove past.
- Marsh beside east wastewater treatment plant – observed multiple species foraging in the mud – 20 Semipalmated Plovers, 15 “peeps,” 3 Dowitchers, and 1 Greater Yellowlegs.
- Beach across from east wastewater treatment plant – 30 “peeps” (appeared mostly Semipalmated Plovers) and 1 Ruddy Turnstone observed.
- Bean Beach off Anthony’s Cove Road – no shorebirds observed. The beach is mostly sand and shingle with some cobble. Does not appear to be a preferred feeding site but could provide adequate roosts.
- Mispec – No shorebirds observed – All sand and well used by people so not likely to be used by birds.

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