

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

Thursday, August 31, 2023

Public Engagement

- There were 17 people on the beach during the shift and 8 were approached. Most were interested to hear about the birds and all interactions were positive. Most others were too distant to be approached.
- 1 unleashed dog and 1 leashed dog were observed on the beach.

Counts

Flats

- An estimate of “peeps” feeding across the mud flats was 2000. Of those, 36 Semipalmated Plovers and 7 Semipalmated Sandpipers were close enough to identify easily.
- Other birds included: 277 Gulls, 16 Black Ducks, 40 Cormorants, 4 Great Egrets, 13 Great Blue Herons, 39 Surf Scoters, 2 Common Loons, 12 Common Eiders, 2 Ravens, 2 Bald Eagles, 1 Osprey, 1 Peregrine, and 2 Canada Geese.

Boardwalk

- 425 “peeps” were counted mostly flying through the marsh in the direction of the beach.
- Other birds counted included 6 Black Ducks, 2 Mallards, 1 Raven, 1 Bald Eagle, 1 Peregrine, 8 Great Egrets, 5 Great Blue Herons, 13 Canada Geese, 2 Greater Yellowlegs, 2 Gulls, and 1 Common Eider.

Marsh

- 189 “peeps” flew over the marsh. A few that were likely Least Sandpipers roosted in the marsh.
- Other birds included 2 Great Egrets, 5 Gulls, 6 Great Blue Herons, 2 Greater Yellowlegs, 1 Harrier, 1 Peregrine, 7 Black Ducks, 2 Mallards, and 1 Crow.

East Beach – The tide was very high (8.2 m) and at 40 minutes before high tide, there was only a narrow strip of land with very little exposed cobble.

- 9 “peeps” flew along the beach. Identified shorebirds included 50 Semipalmated Sandpipers and 29 Semipalmated Sandpipers.
- Other birds counted included 1 Gull.

Main Beach

- The number of “peeps” was estimated to be 1200, all resting in the high cobble closest to the grasses. 24 Sanderlings were also seen foraging.
- Other birds seen included 3 Gulls and 2 Savannah Sparrows.

Other Observations

- Due to the high tide, I walked back from the East beach by climbing the bank to the area of the Sheldon’s Point trail and walking through the gravel pit. In one area, a group of about 20 “peeps” flew around a bend in the trail ahead of me.
- As I was leaving the park, a flock of about 30 “peeps” flew over the Irving Barn.
- Due to reports of birds seen at the beach beside the ferry terminal, I checked it and found 12 Semipalmated Sandpipers and 15 Semipalmated Plovers were there. This was an hour and a half after high tide so there may have been more birds earlier.

This project was made possible with the support from our funders at the Environment and Climate Change Canada. We would like to thank our partners at Irving Nature Park and NatureNB.