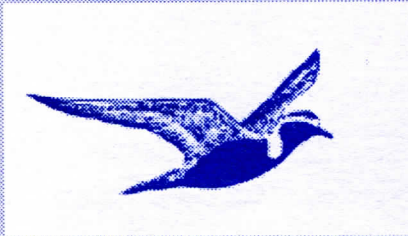




Take a Second Look
42 Baker Avenue
Lexington, MA 02173

TASL Shorebird Censuses:
August 21, September 18, October 16
(all Sundays)



Shorebird Census Compilers

Marge Rines (617-643-6128): Lynn Beach, Point of Pines

Soheil Zendei (617-863-2392): Winthrop, East Boston

Bob Stymeist (617-926-3603): Harbor Islands

We need volunteers!

On the dates listed above we will census the harbor's shorebirds starting close to low tide (about 8 AM on August 21), and ending four hours later, at about high tide. If you have not been shorebirding around Boston Harbor, we might have a few surprises for you.

So, please call the compilers and volunteer.

What, another census? Why?

Flip the page: look at last August's TASL Census. Here are some good reasons why: 2000 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Lynn Beach; 800 Semipalmated Plovers at Point of Pines; 145 Snowy Egrets at Belle Isle Marsh; a Pied-billed Grebe and 6 Hudsonian Godwits at Snake Island; A Whimbrel and 5 American Oystercatchers at Governor's Island, Logan Airport.

These are species and counts that aren't going to be tallied and reported consistently—or at all—unless we get out there and count them. So it is the same old reason that we have for doing winter harbor censuses: to look at and document the birds in our collective backyard.

A Different Approach

A few differences with the winter counts:

We did not count ducks of any species last summer; nor cormorants; nor the big gulls (Ring-billed, Herring, Great Black-backed.)

We assumed that in the early part of the season Double-crested Cormorants breeding in the outer harbor were censused by Professor Jeremy Hatch (UMass, Boston). Whether this assumption is correct or not, we also knew that most of the cormorants would not be visible from the land-based observation spots we were using. So we decided to skip that group.

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REMINISCING

Killer Canoe

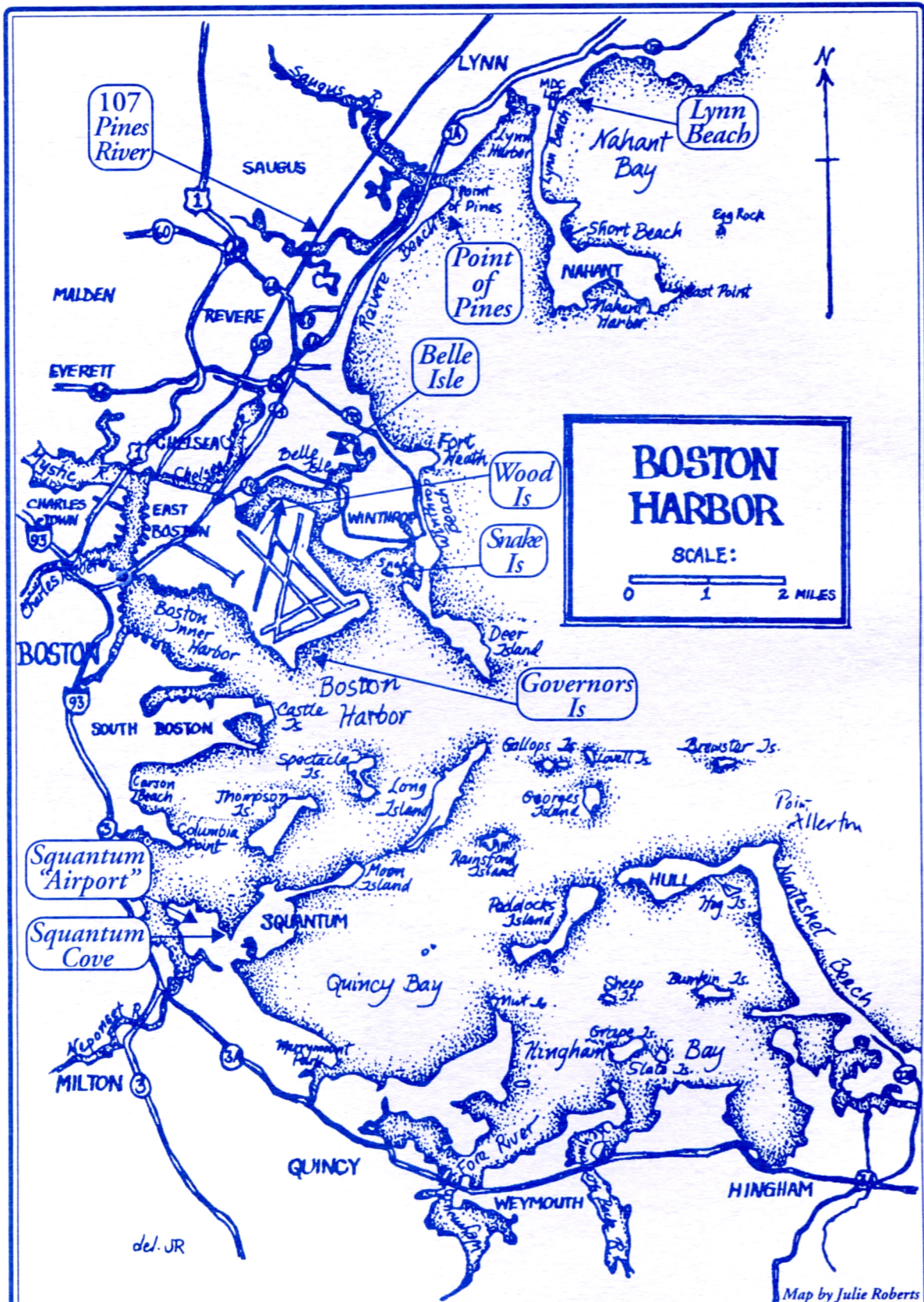
On last year's shorebird census, Marge Rines and I covered a lot of territory. I mean, *a lot!* Starting at 7:30 AM, we walked my canoe to the edge of the water in Winthrop and floated out to Snake Island on a rising tide. By the time we got back to the mainland the tide was full and we could float the canoe to a mini-dock near a friend's house; we tied it there for our second trip at low tide.

We then raced over to the airport where we were met by a cordial security guard who escorted us to the two big marshes off Logan. Wood Island, off the northeast shore of East Boston, was beautiful but not all that productive for shorebirds. We hit the jackpot at Governors Island: the pebble-bar, mudflat and marsh there were loaded with a delightful variety of shorebirds waiting to move out into the larger harbor mudflats once those became accessible.

After this we were off to a variety of places, including Byron Street in East Boston, overlooking Wood Island Marsh again, and Route 107 in Saugus where Pines River Marsh is located. Finally, 7 hours after we started we went back to Snake Island, this time at low tide. The return trip involved walking the canoe up a long slope of pebbled beach to get to the car.

I was very pleased with the day's census results, although

Continued on page 4



Some of the major shorebird areas as we know them. Through these censuses we hope to pinpoint other shorebird hot spots.

Boston Harbor Shorebird & Heron Census: 14 August 1993

Area	Belle Isle Marsh				Logan				Squantum										TOTALS*										
	Site	Rosie's Puddle	Belle Isle Park	The "Key"	Oasis (Suffolk Downs)	Lynn Beach	Point of Pines	Snake Island	Governors Island	Wood Island	Pines River (Rte 107)	Wood Island (Byron St)	Snake Island	Squantum "Airport"	Barge off Jordan Marsh	Elks Lodge Field	Squantum Cove	Boat yard	Barge off Jordan Marsh	Elks Lodge Field	Mosunnett Hammock	Squantum Cove	Squantum Bar	High tide	Mid tide	Low tide			
Time	7:30	8:15	9-9:30	8:30	10:20	11:15-1:15	8-9:30	10-11:20	11:30	12:05	12:30-12:45	1:30-2:30	7:30	8:15	8:45	8:40	9:00	9:20	9:40	9:50	10-11:05	11:30	7:30-11:20	9:50-10:20	10am-2:30				
Species	tide	high	high	high	high	mid	low	high	high	low	low	low	high	high	high	high	high	high	high	mid	low	low	am	am	pm				
GT BLUE HERON		1						1	2															4	0	0			
GREAT EGRET		1		2																				3	0	0			
SNOWY EGRET		145		65				20		3	2	6	7							1		3	2	233	1	23			
GREEN HERON																				1				0	1	0			
B-C NT-HERON		1			2			2																5	0	0			
GLOSSY IBIS		23																						26	0	0			
OSPREY																								2	0	0			
AM KESTREL									4															4	0	0			
B-B PLOVER		6		65		12	19	4	100	1	24	12	52	2										177	12	108			
SEMPAL PLOVER		24		8		6	800	5	90	7		1	175				1	2	196				5	64	8	330	6	1055	
KILLDEER		1		4						1	5			4										10	0	6			
AM OYSTERCAT									5				2											5	0	2			
G YELLOWLEGS		75	22	13				45		2	13	1	4		65	1			80					235	0	20			
L YELLOWLEGS		25		36	10			7			8	1	29											81	0	39			
WILLET								1																1	0	0			
WHIMBREL									1																	1			
HUDS GODWIT		1						5					6											6	0	6			
R TURNSTONE							2		30				60											3	30	0	65		
SANDERLING						25	56		1				20											1	25	76			
SEMPAL SAND		900		185		2000	450	200	350	8	9	1	250			5		74		85		82		1794	2000	800			
LEAST SANDPIPER		1			12			23	6		1		4	8		2	2			7		5		59	0	10			
W-RUMPED SAND								1					2											1	0	2			
STILT SANDPIPER				1	2																			3	0	0			
SH-BILLED DOW		27		6			36	8				1	30											41	0	67			
LAUGHING GULL		9					1	7	4				5											21	20	0	27		
BON GULL						107																3	3	0	110	3			
COMMON TERN		1					4	5	1															7	0	4			
FORSTER'S TERN							1																	0	0	1			
LEAST TERN								2	1															3	0	0			

*High, low and, especially, mid tide times are somewhat dependent on locality. In most places in Boston Harbor, high tide birds are at roost and low tide birds are feeding. Lynn Beach is different in that most birds are seen at mid-tide, feeding on the immense piles of algae.

Participants: Jim Barton, Michelle Parham, East Boston-Revere-Nahant
Marge Rines, Soheil Zende, Logan Airport-Saugus-Winthrop
Dave Lange, Mimi Murphy, Squantum.

Weather: Foggy early, then clear
Wind: Calm to light SE
Temperature: 75F, 24C

Another Census (Continued from page 1)

Ducks, such as American Black and Mallard, though common breeders throughout the harbor, are found in many more marshes and inland locations than the immediate edges of the harbor. We weren't sure our counts in the harbor would have any significance.

To clarify this point, consider this: we are pretty confident that, for example, the 76 Sanderlings tallied at Point of Pines last August 14 were a significant proportion, possibly all, of the Sanderlings in the harbor. In this case, Sanderling is a very site-specific species, so the point I am making is exaggerated. But by contrast, you might see a couple up to a dozen American Black Ducks scattered in fifty or a hundred different locations in the city, completely at random, the counts being dependent on whether you bother to stop and look or not. In the case of the Sanderling you have a pretty good *absolute* count, whereas in the case of the black duck you have a *sample* count. We thought that for most species the former was worth trying for and the latter was really part of a different project—not ours!

The big gulls we don't count for the same reason as above and also for the same reason in the winter—they move around too much.

The reasoning for this methodology might or might not make sense to you. Please let us know where you stand on this.

Guesswork

On the question of how to count and report shorebirds,

there is the following dilemma: When Manomet Observatory for Conservation Sciences (formerly Manomet Bird Observatory) first designed the International Shorebird Surveys (ISS), part of their instructions said, in effect, "Don't guess." In a group of 2000 small peep milling about a beach, if you identify 50 Semi Sandpipers and you guess that the rest are also Semis, ISS still wants you to report what you "know": 50 Semis and 1950 "small *calidrids*."

We, on the other hand, are allowing you to guess, as long as you are being sensible! But maybe that's not such a good census technique. Who knows what is sensible and what is not? Should we assume that all dowitchers reported are Short-billed? Long-bills certainly should be here by late August. Should we then just report dowitcher *sp.* unless we have positive ID? I don't know. What do you think?

On the Islands

Bob Stymeist reports meeting a number of Boston birders out on the Harbor Islands this summer. Polly Stevens, Dennis Oliver, Bob Kelley, Ed Crowley, John Nove, *et al.* have discovered the pleasures of relatively cool summer temperatures in the city—on the islands. They have also been turning up some good shorebird spots. Turnstones, Whimbrels, oystercatchers, Spotted Sandpipers, and Least Terns are all easier to see on the islands than anywhere on the mainland. If you'd like to cover some of the islands for the census days please let Bob know.

Soheil Zendeh

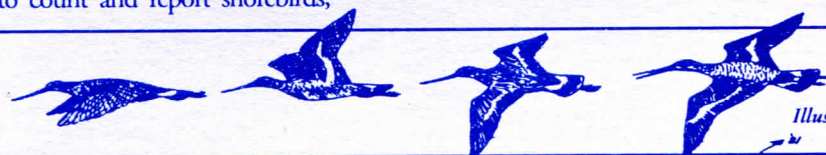


Illustration by Denise Braunhardt Cabral

Killer Canoe (Continued from page 1)

the level of effort had been high. Marge, too seemed to be quite happy with our finds: nothing spectacular, but a fine mix of shorebirds in substantial numbers.

This year, when planning the shorebird census, naturally I called Marge to ask her for what I assumed would be an enthusiastic repeat of last year's adventure. Imagine my horror when she said she had not been able to walk the day after carrying the canoe, and had been seeing a chiropractor weekly ever since that day! I hadn't had a clue!

Let me explain about this canoe: It is a Mad River; it is very safe! I have taken three people in it to Monomoy Island. I have taken five people in it to Snake Island. It's really solid! Margie found out.

I got it by trading an old Volvo for it—my friend gave it to me plus \$700 in exchange for the Volvo. He must have known something.

In the early days of going to Snake Island I used to volunteer my wife to go so she would help me with the

canoe. It nearly broke up our marriage.

Just two weeks ago I was going to Snake Island with three other friends. Bruce, a strapping young man, who has been living in Australia for the last seven years, was helping me unload the canoe from the roof of the car. As we lifted it and began to flip it to put it on the ground, Bruce lost his balance and went into a wild dance. He did not drop the canoe—don't ask me why—but by the time it was placed on the ground he was in agony; he had pulled a groin muscle and limped the rest of the day.

On and on it goes. Marge wants me to burn the killer canoe.

The problem is, I have a census or two coming up, so I have to hang on to it a while longer yet.

Any volunteers?



Soheil Zendeh

TASL (Take a Second Look) is organized and staffed entirely by volunteers. TASL data is compiled by Maury Hall. This newsletter is produced by Soheil Zendeh.