

TASL News September 1995



Take a Second Look
42 Baker Avenue
Lexington, MA 02173

*Remaining TASL shorebird censuses:
September 24, October 22
Next TASL water bird census:
November 19
for more information, call (617) 863-2392 or (617) 268-7571*

AUGUST 20, 1995 TASL CENSUS

Sites	Pines R. Marsh	Pines River	Point of Pines	Belle Isle Oasis	Winthrop Beach	Snake Is.	Governors Is.	Harbor Islands	Squantum Long Island	World's End Weymouth	TOTALS
TIME (AM-PM)	7:45	10:00-1:00	11:15	6:30-10:15	11:00	9:00	7:45-8:30	11:45-2:00	7:00-9:30	11:30-4:30	
TIDE	HI	MID-LO	LO	HI	LO	HI	HI	LO	HI	LO-MID	
D-C CORMORANT	45	15		7	74		57			314	512
GREAT BLUE HERON	7			2		4			4	3	20
GREAT EGRET	3			21						1	25
SNOWY EGRET	5	7		165	1				19	30	227
GREEN HERON				1						5	6
BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON				5					1		6
GLOSSY IBIS	1			3							4
GREEN-WINGED TEAL				4							4
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK			5	23			6			20	54
MALLARD			1								1
TURKEY VULTURE										1	1
OSPREY										2	2
AMERICAN KESTREL				1							1
MERLIN				1							1
PEREGRINE				1							1
BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER	290	165	104	23	3	77	27	15	12	23	739
SEMPALMATED PLOVER	76	175	358	64	50	15	1	12	125	73	949
KILLDEER	3	1		8		5					17
AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER							3	1			4
GREATER YELLOWLEGS	18	6				13		2	103	15	157
LESSER YELLOWLEGS	36	11							8		55
YELLOWLEGS (sp)				140							140
WILLET						1					1
SPOTTED SANDPIPER				4				9			13
WHIMBREL								3			3
HUDSONIAN GODWIT			1	5		6					12
RUDDY TURNSTONE			2			8	4	27	1		42
SANDERLING	1	3	325					2		2	333
SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER	246	393	221	174		115		9	350		1508
LEAST SANDPIPER	17			5					2		24
WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER			2								2
PEEP (sp)	14			1						226	241
SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER	21	4	172	51		10		1	17	1	277
LAUGHING GULL			2	4	35	17			4	2	64
BONAPARTE'S GULL			2		65					1	68
COMMON TERN	13	3		3					2	9	30
LEAST TERN				2							2
BELTED KINGFISHER	1									3	4
CEDAR WAXWING				8							8
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD				6							6

Weather: Clear, sunny Wind: NE 5 mph
Temperature: 65-80°F, 18-25°C High tide: 7:35 AM

TASL (Take a Second Look) is organized and staffed entirely by volunteers. This newsletter is produced by Soheil Zende.

FYI

In the weeks preceding the August 20 census, migrant adult shorebirds moved through here in large numbers:

7/23. Rosie's Pond, Belle Isle Marsh: 560 Semi. Sandpiper
Squantum Cove, Wollaston: 150 Semi. Sandpiper

7/30. Point of Pines, Revere: 115 Semi. Plover; 500 Sanderling; 2000+ Semi. Sandpiper; 180 S.-B. Dowitcher

8/3. Pines River Marsh, Revere: 180 B.B. Plover; 700 Semi. Sandpiper

On July 23 most of the excitement revolved around a molting adult Stilt Sandpiper seen at Squantum.

Rosie's Pond Watch

In early August Conal Foley and Soheil Zendehe began a three-times-a-week census of Rosie's Pond. We intend to carry this through the middle of September, documenting the fluctuations in shorebird counts. So far the results have shown a steady decline in Semipalmated Sandpiper and Short-billed Dowitcher numbers, a steady and slow rise in Greater Yellowlegs numbers, and the passage of several species such as Hudsonian Godwit (max 8 on 8/20); Western Sandpiper (3 on 9/5); White-rumped Sandpiper (2 on 8/27); and Least Sandpiper (a few throughout August). On September 5 over 200 Laughing Gulls arrived at dusk to roost at Rosie's.

Algae and Shorebirds

Hurricane Felix was in the air for a week before the August census. Our coast received steady and strong but dry NE winds from the 16th through the 19th. John Quigley, who covers Lynn/Nahant Beach intensively throughout the year, claims that storm conditions, or the easterly winds associated with storms, pull the red algae away from the beach, whereupon the shorebirds have nothing to feed on and go elsewhere. As late August and September has traditionally produced a major shorebird peak at Lynn Beach, we were curious to see the effects of the Northeast Blow on our census areas.

Big John was quite correct in his prediction. The Lynn Beach shorebird counts from this year are much lower than the August 1993 or 1994 counts. Big John also predicted that it might take months for the algae to return to the beach after such an event, and therefore the shorebird counts from Lynn Beach could *remain* depressed throughout the fall. So far he seems to be quite right: The first week of September usually brings a very large flight of peep and other shorebirds to Lynn Beach; this has not been the case this year.

Governors Island

Last year we established the importance of the pebble bar at Governors Island off Logan Airport. At high tide on the August and September census dates the number and variety of birds on this bar was impressive. For example, in August 1994, in addition to 15 Black-bellied Plovers, 100 Semipal-

mated Plovers, 1 Spotted Sandpiper, 5 Red Knots, 250 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 8 Least Sandpipers, and 90 Common Terns, there were 2 American Oystercatcher, 40 Ruddy Turnstone, and 2 White-rumped Sandpiper roosting on the bar itself, with a small mix of Pectoral, Buff-breasted and Upland Sandpipers in the vicinity of the bar or roosting on the runways. In September 1994 the highlights were 32 American Golden Plover and 1 Western Sandpiper. This August, due to heightened security measures at the airport, we were not able to census this area by land, but were able to get a peek at the pebble bar by boat. As it turned out, the bar was fairly devoid of birds, with the exception of a few Black-bellied Plovers and three oystercatchers.

Educating Ourselves

Shorebird identification has been giving a number of censusers fits; your compiler has also been having fits over some peculiar reports. Clearly, everyone will benefit from a refresher course in shorebirds. The first thing we will do is provide a minimum reading list and reference guide; then we will schedule a shorebird seminar for next summer, before the next series of censuses.

As many of you know, this is still a pilot study, so that we can figure out where and how to use our resources most effectively to keep tabs on the shorebirds passing through our region. It is also an educational effort to draw more people into looking at the environment they share with the wild creatures around them; and to deepen shorebirding skills in those so interested.

With the completion of this season's summer/fall census series and the execution of next summer's shorebird seminar, we should be able to move into the real data-gathering phase of this project. I hope you stay with it.

Participant notes:

Dennis Oliver and **Greg Long** covered Lynn/Nahant Beach, and also helped in the Pines River Marsh.

Fay and **Peter Vale** had the primary responsibility for the Pines River—mudflats at low tide and salt pans at high tide. They also covered Point of Pines, Revere.

Paula Chasan, **Bob Meyer**, **Jane Nalwalk** and **Ed Sullivan** covered four sites at Belle Isle (Oasis, Rosie's Pond, Belle Isle Park, Key) and Winthrop Beach. Earlier in the day, I conducted a heron census at Rosie's Pond. I combined my counts with theirs for the final tallies.

Mike Fager, **Kathy Foley**, **Tink Martin**, **Joe** and **Renee Pike**, and **Soheil Zendehe** covered Snake and Governors Islands. The Pikes graciously allowed the use of their boat for the survey.

Tom Cameron, **Paul Fitzgerald** and **Alan Lapey** covered Squantum Cove and went out to Long Island.

Shawn Carey, a new TASL participant, covered a brand new area: World's End and the Weymouth marshes.

Thanks to all participants. Please make sure I have the correct address for you so you can be on the mailing list.

Soheil Zendehe