

TASL News Summer 1996



Take a Second Look
42 Baker Avenue
Lexington, MA 02173

1996 TASL Shorebird Census Dates:

Sunday, August 25

Sunday, September 22

Sunday, October 20

for more information, call (617) 863-2392

Get up to speed!

A Selection of Shorebird Courses

Intermediate Yellowlegs, Most Least Sandpipers, and Black-and-White-and-Brown Plovers throwing you for a loop? All will be much clearer and easier to identify if you take any of these courses this summer:

Lecture with slides—Wednesday, July 17, 7-9:30 PM: at Massachusetts Audubon Endicott Regional Center, 346 Grapevine Road, Wenham, MA

Field trip—Saturday, July 20, 7:30AM-1:30PM: location to be announced at lecture (*rain date for field trip: Sunday, July 21*)

Teacher: Paul Roberts

Cost: \$25/MAS members, \$30/non-members

Sponsor: Ipswich River Sanctuary, 87 Perkins Row, Topsfield, MA 01983, (508) 887-9264

Limited to 20

Lecture with slides—Tuesday, July 23, 7:30-9:30 PM: at Habitat Education Center

Field trip—Saturday, July 27, 7:30AM-1:30PM: location to be announced at lecture (*rain date for field trip Sunday, July 28*)

Teacher: Paul Roberts

Cost: \$32/MAS members, \$38/non-members

Sponsor: Habitat Education Center and Wildlife Sanctuary, 10 Juniper Road, Belmont, MA 02178, (617) 489-5050

Limited to 15

Paul is best known around here for founding Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch. He has offered his shorebird courses for a number of years, concentrating on behavior. These courses are for beginners and intermediates. Most birds encountered during the field trips will be adults.

Teaser: TASL now owns two one-hour videocassettes on shorebirds. We will show them in an informal gathering of

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CORRESPONDENCE

16 December 1995

Big John wrote:

It seems to me that [in 1995] the *Pilayella* algae was absent more than in previous years; specifically on TASL count dates. The reason for this I previously described to you. [See *TASL News, September 1995.*] The active hurricane season certainly had its effect on Lynn Beach.

Still, there were many good days that you typically associate with Lynn Beach. Greater White-fronted Goose, Western Sandpipers, Least and Forster's Terns were some interesting sightings.

Shorebirding at Lynn Beach is very contingent on the presence of the algae. Otherwise you would only go there if you wanted to see Sanderlings. The emphasis at Lynn Beach seems to be its *shore* birds. However, when the algae is suspended in the water, large numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls feed by picking from the algae while swimming. They do not feed on beach-deposited algae as shorebirds do. (When Bonaparte's Gulls land on shore it is to preen and rest.) This same feeding behavior is shared by Red and Red-necked Phalaropes. Lynn's unique conditions could attract these very rare (for Lynn) species. As you know, many species of varying degree of rarity can be found amongst the Bonaparte's Gulls. The impressive list of gulls and terns is greater than the list of shorebirds! Peregrine Falcons are regularly seen from late summer to fall, scaring the shorebirds and gulls into wonderful schools of flying birds.

On August 26 [1995], I discovered a first summer/second winter Black-legged Kittiwake and an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull. The former was my first record of kittiwake for Lynn! The latter was an earlier record than usual. The LBBG usually arrives two to three hours after high tide. Serendipitous was the MDC field trip that same day led by Geoff Wood that I showed these two birds to.

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Boston Harbor TASL Census: 20 August 1995

Species	Nahant Bay Lynn Harbor	Pines River Marsh	Pines River	Point of Pines	Belle Isle Oasis	Winthrop Beach	Snake Island	Governors Island	Harbor Islands	Squantum Long Island	Weymouth Worlds End	Totals
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT	26	45	15		7	74		57		314		538
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	4
AMERICAN KESTREL					1							1
MERLIN					1							1
PEREGRINE					1							1
BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER	4	290	165	104	23	3	77	27	15	12	23	743
SEMPALMATED PLOVER	48	76	175	358	64	50	15	1	12	125	73	997
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	81	1	3	325					2		2	414
SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER	126	246	393	221	174		115		9	350		1634
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	3			2	4	35	17			4	2	67
BONAPARTE'S GULL	195			2		65					1	263
COMMON TERN	2	13	3		3					2	9	32
FORSTER'S TERN	1											1
LEAST TERN					2							2
BELTED KINGFISHER		1									3	4
CEDAR WAXWING					8							8
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD					6							6
TIME	9:30 AM	7:40 AM	10 AM	11 AM	6:30 AM	11 AM	9 AM	7:40 AM	11 AM	7:30 AM	11 AM	6 AM-3 PM
TIDE	MID	HI	MID	LO	HI	LO	HI	HI	LO	HI	LO	HI=7:35 AM

WEATHER: Sunny WIND: Northeast at 5 MPH

Shorebird Courses (continued)

TASLers at my house, 42 Baker Avenue, Lexington, on Saturday, August 3, at 7 PM. A donation of \$5/person to cover costs of the tapes will be requested. *Limited to 12 people, so please call (617) 863-2392 in advance.* You are considered a TASLer if you've done at least one TASL census in the last twelve months; summer or winter doesn't matter.

Lectures with slides—Tuesdays, August 13 & 20; Thursdays, August 15 & 22: We'll use videotapes and listen to CDs, including Dick Walton's. Meet at Jim Barton's, 130 Appleton Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, (617)354-7435.

Field trips to South Beach, Chatham—Saturdays, August 31 and September 7: all day

Teacher: Jim Barton; assisted by Soheil Zende

Cost: \$60/1996 TASL Shorebird Census volunteers, \$90/everyone else; plus \$10 for boat ride to South Beach. If you paid \$5 to see the videotapes (see Teaser, above) that will be applied toward the course fee.

Checks should be made out to Massachusetts Audubon and sent to Jim Barton. *For more information, call Jim at (617)354-7435 after July 29.*

Sponsor: Boston Program Office, Massachusetts Audubon, Hathaway Library, Great South Road, Lincoln, MA 01773, (617) 259-9807

Field trips limited to 12

Jim is one of the original TASL volunteers, and has been teaching birding courses for at least a decade. The announced course will take us right into the thick of juvenile shorebird migration, so it is *not* for beginners. On the other hand, if you are a beginner, there is nothing like jumping right into the middle of it all! You can crank up your speed by participating in our TASL shorebird censuses.

Remember...



The environmental movement is the new home of the socialist Communist movement of the world since the fall of the Soviet Union.

—Rush Limbaugh, April 4, 1995

Boston Harbor TASL Census: 24 September 1995

Species	Nahant Bay Lynn Harbor	Pines River Marsh	Pines River	Point of Pines	Belle Isle Oasis	Winthrop Beach	Snake Island	Governors Island	Squantum Long Island	Weymouth World's End	Totals
COMMON LOON						2				3	
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT	98	24	13			134		160		75	504
GREAT BLUE HERON		4	2	2			4		6	1	19
GREAT EGRET		3			3					1	7
SNOWY EGRET		30	5		21		20		1	20	97
MUTE SWAN										7	7
GREEN-WINGED TEAL				7	34						41
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK	6		2	72						11	90
MALLARD										15	15
NORTHERN SHOVELER							1				1
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER						1					1
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER	146			25							171
SCOTER (sp.)	3									3	
OSPREY	1		1							1	3
RED-TAILED HAWK										1	1
MERLIN	1										1
BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER	1	30		10		277	90	15	24		447
AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER						1	4	2			7
SEMIPALMATED PLOVER	18	2	7	56	11		8			13	115
KILLDEER		1					12		4		17
GREATER YELLOWLEGS		7	3		82		12		64	42	193
LESSER YELLOWLEGS					4					2	6
HUDSONIAN GODWIT				1	1						2
MARbled GODWIT							1				1
RUDDY TURNSTONE						65		1		66	
SANDERLING	777		1	850	5	58					1691
SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER	55	12	41	45	10	2	15		4	9	193
WESTERN SANDPIPER					1		2				3
LEAST SANDPIPER			1						1	2	4
WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER			1	5							6
PECTORAL SANDPIPER		1									1
PEEP (sp.)			2								2
DUNLIN				5			14				19
STILT SANDPIPER				2					2		4
SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER					4	1	1				6
LAUGHING GULL						34	20		55		109
BONAPARTE'S GULL	30			250		4			312	3	599
COMMON TERN									2		2
BLACKSKIMMER				2							2
BELTED KINGFISHER		1					1			3	5
TIME	8:40 AM	8:10 AM	7:30 AM	6:40 AM	10 AM	8:40 AM	11 AM	10 AM	7 AM-1 PM	7-9 AM & 45-11:30 AM	
TIDE											HI-11:30 AM

WEATHER: Clear WIND: North at 10 MPH

What is TASL?

Take a Second Look (TASL) was started in the winter of 1980 by a local group of environmentally concerned birdwatchers. In our winter censuses we tally the water birds and raptors of Boston Harbor from Nahant to Hull. Our summer censuses concentrate on the herons and shorebirds from Lynn Beach to World's End.

The 1996 summer TASL Harbor Census dates are listed on page 1; please mark them in your calendars. Can you drag along a friend or two and break them in?

This is an excellent opportunity to learn—and teach—about the common water birds of the Harbor. You do not have to be an expert to participate. Each area will be led by at least one competent birder. That person will need help with navigation, driving and record-keeping. So make yourselves useful and learn something in the process.

Due to our new, enlarged census schedule, we have need of additional administrative assistance. There are a number of small jobs, e.g., compiling and editing tally sheets or improving our mailing list, that should be shared among volunteers. Also, if you would like to write for or illustrate this publication, we need you. For more information call Maury Hall (268-7571) or Soheil Zende (863-2392H, 923-0941W).

Please mail summer census results to *Soheil Zende, 42 Baker Avenue, Lexington, MA 02173.*

Participants in the 1995 shorebird censuses: *Jim Barton, Scott Bickerton, Tom Cameron, Shawn Carey, Paula Chasan, Mike Fager, Paul Fitzgerald, Kathy Foley, Bob Kelley, Joan Labby, Alan Lapey, Glenn Long, Ted Mara, Tink Martin, Bob Meyer, Jane Nahwalk, Dennis Oliver, Patty O'Neil, Joe & Renée Pike, Marj Rines, Martha Steele, Polly Stevens, Bob Stymeist, Ed Sullivan, Fay & Peter Vale, Soheil Zende, Bill Zuzevich.* Thanks to all, and apologies to anyone whose name was left off inadvertently.

TASL (Take a Second Look) is organized and staffed entirely by volunteers. Winter TASL data is compiled by Maury Hall. This newsletter is produced by Soheil Zende. Thanks to Mary Sprague, who helped compile this data.

Boston Harbor TASL Census: 22 October 1995

Species	Nahant Bay Lynn Harbor	Pines River Marsh	Pines River	Point of Pines	Belle Isle Oasis	Wintthrop Beach	Snake Island	Governors Island	Weymouth World's End	Totals
RED-THROATED LOON	2									2
HORNED GREBE	4									4
NORTHERN GANNET	3									3
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT	1046	65	184	278		3000	1400		67	6040
GREAT BLUE HERON		4	5		1		16		11	37
BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON					1					1
MUTE SWAN									3	3
BRANT				40			5			45
GREEN-WINGED TEAL					36					36
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK	18		15	12					87	132
GREATER SCAUP	5									5
COMMON EIDER	300									300
BLACK SCOTER	22									22
SURF SCOTER	100									100
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER	1030									1030
SCOTER (sp.)	75									75
HOODED MERGANSER									10	10
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER		2				5				7
MERLIN									1	1
BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER		51	71			500	1			623
AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER						1		8		9
SEMIPALMATED PLOVER							1	1		2
KILLDEER							1			1
GREATER YELLOWLEGS		22	21		76		20		8	147
LESSER YELLOWLEGS			1		6					7
RUDDY TURNSTONE						30				30
SANDERLING	556			360		375				1291
SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER		4		3						7
DUNLIN		90	27	73	1	200	3	3		397
STILT SANDPIPER							2			2
LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER					5					5
LAUGHING GULL						30				30
BONAPARTE'S GULL	160			550		250				960
BELTED KINGFISHER		1							1	2
TIME	7:50 AM	1 PM	3:10 PM	2:30 PM	7:20 PM	8-9 PM	10 AM	9:10 AM		7:50 AM-3:10 PM
TIDE	MID	MID	LO	LO	MID-HI	HI	HI	HI		HI-10:17 AM

WEATHER: Sunny

WIND: Calm

Correspondence (continued)

My method for birding Lynn Beach is to arrive at high tide for close observation, and in the afternoon for the light to be behind me.

John Quigley

27 January 1996

SZ replied:

I share your enthusiasm for birding at Lynn Beach. But there is a question in my mind regarding the numbers there: In previous years we have counted *thousands* of Semipalmated Sandpipers in August. In 1995 we barely broke 100! Your algae explanation is very good. But your first paragraph seems to imply that the algae and the birds were there at times this past summer. Were the numbers there? I think not. We need to clarify that.

Sobeil

February 1996

Big John replied:

Forster counted 1200 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Lynn Beach last August. There were days when the algae was present as were thousands of shorebirds. Are you referring to the low numbers of birds on TASL count days or throughout the summer?

John Quigley

3 March 1996

SZ replied:

At your insistence I went and looked up Dick Forster's record of 1200 Semipalmated Sandpiper (SESA) at Lynn Beach last August. The date of the 14th only confirms what I've been saying—and you said it first. On the 16-18 there was that dry nor'easter, and by the 20th all we could find were 126 SESA and not much else. The rest of the season no one including TASL reported any numbers over there. Actually, there were over 700 Sanderlings here on the September 24 count. But my experience has been that a major wave of SESA hits the beach around the first of September every year and a lot of other stuff comes in with them. Not this year.

If you don't agree with me *do you have the numbers and dates?*

Sobeil

[Big John has offered to provide a daily shorebird abundance estimate for Lynn Beach this summer. We need to tie that data series to the daily occurrence of *Pilayella algae*.]

