

TASL News September 1996



Take a Second Look
42 Baker Avenue
Lexington, MA 02173

Remaining TASL Shorebird Census Dates:
Sunday, September 22
Sunday, October 20
for more information, call (617) 863-2392

TASL SHOREBIRD CENSUS: 25 AUGUST 1996

Species	Nahant Bay/ Lynn Harbor	Pines River Marsh	Pines River	Point of Pines	Belle Isle/ Oasis	Winthrop Beach	Snake Is. high tide	Snake Is. low tide	Logan Airport	Squantum/ Long Is..
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT	18								120	60
GREAT BLUE HERON		1			1		4		1	7
GREAT EGRET		5			14					
SNOWY EGRET		2	19		111		8			31
LITTLE BLUE HERON										1
GREEN HERON					6					
CANADA GOOSE					45					
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK				5						10
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER	15									
OSPREY		1								1
NORTHERN HARRIER		2								
AMERICAN KESTREL	6									
MERLIN										1
BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER	7	280	27	16	11		93		95	11
SEMIPALMATED PLOVER	583	58	42	355	161		20		60	293
KILLDEER	1	1							1	11
AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER	0	0			0		2		5	0
GREATER YELLOWLEGS		207	9		127		20			86
LESSER YELLOWLEGS		14			19		4			6
SOLITARY SANDPIPER					1					
SPOTTED SANDPIPER		1								
HUDSONIAN GODWIT					3		6	7		
MARBLED GODWIT		1					2	2		
RUDDY TURNSTONE	8							18		
RED KNOT				2						
SANDERLING	734	22	9	390		3		12		
SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER	1502	35	78	19	310		15		150	233
LEAST SANDPIPER		23	1		8			6		13
WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER				2	1					
PEEP (SP.)	250	200								
SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER		115		35	33		14			10
LAUGHING GULL	5			7	2	6	3			1
BONAPARTE'S GULL	463			26		200				
COMMON TERN	3			4			2			17
FORSTER'S TERN	1									
HARBOR SEAL	2									
TIME	8:15- 10:45 AM	9-10 AM	12:45- 1:15 PM	12:30 PM	6:30- 11:15 AM	11:45 AM	11 AM	2 PM	9-10 AM	AM
TIDE	HI-MID	HI	LO	LO	HI-MID	MID	HI	LO	HI	HI

Weather: clear

Wind: calm early

High tide: 8:20 AM.

Temperature: around 75°F (23°C) early on

[Later a WSW breeze developed, with temperatures exceeding 80°F (26°C).]

Participants:

Joanne Benard, Dennis F. Oliver, John Quigley, Christine Small, Lynn Harbor/Nahant Bay
Fay & Peter Vale, Pines River Marsh/Pines River/Point of Pines
Jim & Vaughn Barton, Michelle Parham, Karen Fretters, Belle Isle/Oasis/Winthrop Beach

Bruce Berman, Scott Bickerton, Craig Jackson, Soheil Zende, Logan Airport/Snake Island
Fred Bouchard, Jamie & Tom Cameron, Brian Overly, Squantum/Long Island

Please check the spelling of these names. I apologize to any of the new people whose names I might have misspelled or left off inadvertently.

Shorebird Notes

The August Hotspot

The Pines River Marsh (Revere/Saugus) is a shorebird roost in the process of being discovered. You may remember that I took Fay and Peter Vale out into the marsh where Fay sank into the muck and had to be rescued by Peter and I. (See "Quickmuck," *TASL News* Summer 1995.) Fay has declined to go out there ever since, but Peter faithfully covers that spot for the shorebird censuses. It is reached by parking on tiny Weeden Street (Revere) and walking north into the marsh, heading for the hunting blind and the salt pans about 300 yards away. It is very wet and marshy, but quite passable if the tide is not real high; watch out for old overgrown marsh ditches.

The number and variety of birds using this salt pan at high tide has been impressive. We seem to have stumbled on one of the high tide roosts for the shorebirds that feed at Point of Pines at low tide. (There is an auxiliary high tide roost about a quarter mile north along Route 107, just south of Atlantic Lobster, along the banks of the Pines River. Both spots attract large numbers of Black-bellied Plovers, and American Golden Plover should be looked for in September and October.) When Peter covered the salt pan for the census this August, a harrier flushed everything before he got to the puddles. I went there on September 8 and tallied the following:

Green-winged Teal	15
Merlin 1 (flushed all the birds after I had seen everything!)	
Black-bellied Plover	200+
American Golden Plover	1
Semipalmated Plover	50
Greater Yellowlegs	60
Lesser Yellowlegs	6
Willet	2
Marbled Godwit	1
Red Knot	6
Semipalmated Sandpiper	600+
Least Sandpiper	80+
White-rumped Sandpiper	5
Pectoral Sandpiper	1
Dunlin	2
Short-billed Dowitcher	75

The Garbled Mudwit is certainly the same bird that has been seen at Point of Pines for the past three weeks. Peter and Fay saw it at the Atlantic Lobster roost two weeks ago. The Willets were not entirely a surprise—I had seen one at Point of Pines a week before. The Red Knots and dowitchers and White-rumps were all in roughly the same numbers that are seen at Point of Pines—I saw most of them later the same day at low tide.

I call this place an August hotspot because we have seen very large numbers of birds there in late August but few later. But the total number of birder visits to the salt pan have been quite low. If more people begin going out to check it who knows what could be turned up. For example, I found a Wilson's Phalarope there last year.

The Pines River roost (Atlantic Lobster) actually gets

better as the fall progresses; and it is easy to get to. Stop at the bridge just south of Atlantic Lobster on Route 107; walk northeast along the river. Be careful or you'll flush everything! Then proceed north to the Atlantic Lobster parking lot and look over the edge. Shorebirds (mostly yellowlegs) roost just below on the rocks.

Not-so-Hot Spots

You will notice that certain areas, covered on previous censuses, were skipped on our August census. This was deliberate on my part. One year we had a number of people schlepp out to the Harbor Islands and spend all day in order to count 5 Whimbrels and a pair of Spotted Sandpipers; Shawn Carey and company counted handfuls of yellowlegs and peep in Weymouth and Hingham last year. It seems that we have definitely established, through censusing three years in a row, that those areas do not attract a lot of shorebirds. Why should we spread ourselves thin? Any comments? By the way, participants from those areas should not hesitate to cover them if they like; prove me wrong! Also, you are certainly welcome to join other groups in the northern part of the Harbor.

There is one spot, a potential high tide roost at Thompson Island, that needs further observations. It is in the middle of the island. You must have permission from the island administrators (currently an environmental school) to get there. They provide ferry service from South Boston. If you are interested in checking this out further, please get in touch with me or Bob Stymeist.

More on Lynn Beach

The news from Lynn and Nahant continues to be low numbers of peep, as well as low shorebird species count, in late August due to lack of *Pilayella* algae. The Nahant crew reported 1500 Semipalmated Sandpipers, but almost 600 were at Short Beach, Nahant, not Lynn Beach.

Joanne Benard reported that there had been "thousands" of peep at Lynn Beach feeding on the algae just one week before the count. We await Big John's summer summary for Lynn Beach.

Where Are the Grown-ups Going?

The beginning of fall shorebird migration, in July, was most impressive. Very large numbers of dowitchers were tallied, especially at Newburyport Harbor around July 14; large numbers were at Rosie's Pond around the same time. Could this mean adult dowitchers left their breeding grounds early because of bad weather or other factors affecting reproduction? A long-time shorebird watcher has observed that in late August she was seeing the lowest number of dowitchers in her experience. All comments are welcome.

Soheil Zende

Take a Second Look (TASL) is organized and staffed entirely by volunteers. Summer data is compiled by Soheil Zende. Special thanks to Bruce Berman and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay for the use of their boat.