

TASL News March 2001



Take a Second Look

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SUMMARY TOTALS FOR BOSTON HARBOR TASL COUNT, 4 FEBRUARY 2001

Species	Nahant	Winthrop	Boston	Squantum	Hough's Neck	Weymouth	Hull	Totals
R-t Loon	2	1	7	1	3	2	4	20
Com Loon	3	4		2			4	13
Hor Grebe	12	59	14	56	22	1	67	231
R-n Grebe	1	10		1			15	27
Gr Corm	6			1			104	111
corm		18		37			4	59
G B Heron		1						1
M Swan	3	2		2	5	1	4	17
Brant	226	537	68	162	350	41	53	1437
Ca Goose	26	248	170	167	80	95	218	1004
G-w Teal	2							2
Am Bl Duck	124	195	208	302	337	99	365	1630
Mallard	16	61	38	6	100	84	78	383
R-n Duck			1					1
Gr Scaup	16	147	8	1119		14		1304
Com Eider	734	3482	161	1431	907	735	1453	8903
Harl Duck						1		1
Oldsquaw				15	4	14	10	43
Bl Scoter							1	1
Su Scoter	27	77				15	42	161
W-w Scoter	27	426	78	243	22		83	879
scoter				4				4
Co Goldeneye	71	125	123	382	113	80	201	1095
Ba Goldeneye		2						2
Bufflehead	224	249	148	379	85	189	345	1619
Ho Merganser			3					3
Co Merganser			2					2
R-b Merganser	57	111	97	256	27	59	175	782
Ru Duck					1		55	56
R-t Hawk			1			1	2	4
Am Kestrel		3						3
Merlin	1							1
Peregrine							1	1
R Turnstone					7			7
Sanderling	380							380
Dunlin	92							92
B-h Gull		1						1
Bon Gull		1						1
T-b Murre		1			1			2
Razorbill	1							1
B Guillemot	1						5	6
Sn Owl	1							1
Snow Bunt	4	2			88			94

FURRY CREATURES

Seal deal

One big story of the February census was the mammals. 77 Harbor Seals were seen, broken down by routes as follows:

Nahant	18	Winthrop	11
Boston	2	Squantum	15
Hull	31		

Maury, Lauren Miller and I, on Deer Island at the end of the day, saw over 20 east of Deer Island, most of them in the area of Great Brewster Spit. There are many ledges there, quite visible at low tide. Harbor Seals frequent the area at higher tides to fish among the rocks, and haul out when the tide drops.

Undoubtedly, the Hull and Squantum groups saw many of the same seals. Perhaps there were double counts. Still, there were a lot of seals visible.

Raccoon convention

Dave Lange wrote about the Squantum route:

Two mammal events of note. The first was a young Harbor Seal resting on the lower part of Squaw Rock in very close—and we were without cameras. The second was at the low part of Long Island out near the tip. There have been 4 or 5 large construction size dumpsters sitting there this winter. While walking back, we heard noise coming from one of them. We peered over the top to see four Raccoons in a nearly empty dumpster. Thinking that they got in there and had no way out due to vertical sides, we opened the end a bit but they did not rush out. We'll check the dumpster in March.

The big one

Q: What's brown, furry, 3 feet long and eats cats for lunch?

A: Fisher (*Martes pennanti*).

Some people call it a fisher cat, but it is *not* a cat. It is a big weasel! Lauren spotted it walking toward us at the tip of Deer Island; she said very softly, "What's *that*?"

It took Maury and I a little while before we realized she was looking behind us, not out to the ocean. We started watching it when it was 30 - 40 feet from us, and it kept walking toward us, finally veering off about 20 feet away.

Maury kept wondering how it got there. I just wondered what it was. Finally Maury said he thought it had to be a Fisher, because nothing else is that big. He said he had spent many days hiking inland hoping for a glimpse of one of these.

WEATHER DATA (2/4/2001)

Weather:	Partly cloudy
Wind:	Calm
Temperature:	-4° to +2°C (25° - 35°F)
High tide:	7:00 AM
Visibility:	Good
Seas:	Calm

PARTICIPANTS (2/4/2001)

Nahant:	Carolyn and John Marsh, Bob Stymeist
Winthrop:	Joanne Benard, Craig Jackson, Pat Randall, Fay & Peter Vale
Boston:	Paula Chasan, Lauren Miller, Soheil Zende
Squantum:	Dave Lange, Dave Larson
Hough's Neck:	Karen Freitas, Andrew Joslin, Ted Mara, Michele Parham
Weymouth:	Maury Hall
Hull:	Fred Bouchard, Shawn Carey, Job Dekker

Thanks to all the participants. Apologies to anyone whose name I misspelt or inadvertently left off.

WHAT IS TASL?

Take a Second Look (TASL) was started in the winter of 1980 by a local group of environmentally concerned birdwatchers; our primary focus has been to survey and census the bird population of Boston Harbor throughout the year, although the winter water bird censuses have been our major activity.

USEFUL URLS,

EMAIL ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS

Five years ago we began posting census result to volunteers and other interested parties via email. If you know someone who does not receive email but would like to receive the data, please provide them with a copy of this.

The data is also available at the **TASL OnLine** web site: <http://www.szgraphics.com/tasl.htm>. Additional data sheets and (some) route maps can also be downloaded from the site.

Please mail winter census results to:
Maury Hall
661 East 5th St.
South Boston, MA 02127.

TASL (Take a Second Look) is organized and staffed entirely by volunteers. TASL winter data is compiled by Maury Hall. TASL email and TASL OnLine are produced by Soheil Zende.

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