

Coastal Birding and Seawatching in the Quoddy Region

By Todd Watts



The Quoddy Region hosts some of the richest waters found within the Bay of Fundy. Running from Point Lepreau to the US border, and offshore as far as Grand Manan and Machias Seal Island, the region includes numerous islands, ledges, shoals, passages, upwellings, estuaries, smaller bays and coves. Powered by some of the highest tides in the world, the waters can be rich with nutrients and sea-life.

This document is intended to provide information on locations known to be productive places to view seabirds and waterfowl. Some notes on cetaceans are also provided. Sites listed include points and headlands, passages and upwellings, as well as, islands with breeding colonies. Information on viewing opportunities from ferries and whale watching boats is also provided.

Major movements of sea-ducks occur during spring and fall. In addition, avian visitors from the Southern Hemisphere pass through the area during the summer and fall months. Breeding colonies of gulls, terns, alcids and other birds occupy outer islands. Concentrations of wintering birds can number in thousands or even tens of thousands. All of the above add up to an abundance of opportunities to view a wide assortment of birds and whales.

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Resident and visiting naturalists can view sea-life from numerous vantage points on land, as well as from the water. The area's rocky headlands often provide excellent vantage points for observing sea-life. Ferries run between the islands. These ferry routes pass through some of the area's most productive waters providing free or low-cost opportunities for studying wildlife. Tour boats out of Saint Andrews and the islands provide additional possibilities for viewing.

Migration

During the spring and fall, migrating seaducks travel along the Fundy Coast providing a fascinating spectacle. Flocks of migrants contain anywhere from a few individuals to a few thousand. Some of them stage or briefly rest along the way, occasionally forming very large rafts.

During spring migration, birds moving toward their breeding areas tend to follow the Atlantic Coast, eventually turning into the Bay of Fundy. Fall movements tend to be more direct, taking the birds overland. Because of this, much larger numbers of many species pass through the area during their northward movements.

Southern hemisphere migrants including Greater and Sooty Shearwater arrive during the summer months adding to the diversity of life found on the bay. Manx Shearwater are occasionally found amongst the other shearwaters.

Several whale species migrate into the Bay of Fundy. The most common are Harbour Porpoise, Minke, Fin and Humpback Whales. Northern Wright Whale sightings are also possible, as are sightings of White-sided Dolphin.

Points and Headlands

Numerous headlands and other points of land within the region provide good vantage points. From these areas the observer can scan the surrounding water and the skies above. Headlands near the tip of long points tend to be the most productive as they allow the observer to see further afield. The advantage provided by height also allows for better viewing of field marks and easier counting of groups.



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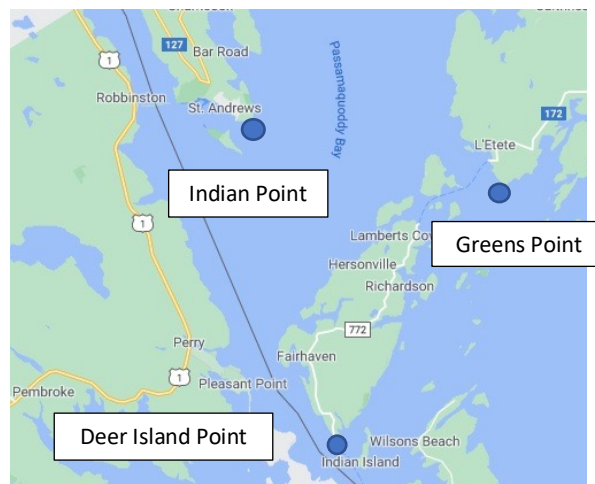
Point Lepreau is likely the most well-known of these points and headlands. From this location, the observer can see tens, hundreds or thousands of birds feeding near the point or the entrance to Maces Bay. Viewing of spring and fall migration can be spectacular. During migration, observers might see tens of thousands of migrants in a day. Harlequin Ducks and Purple Sandpipers, as well as a variety of alcids can be found here during winter. King Eiders are annual. A long list of rarities have been recorded.

The Saint John Naturalists' Club has a small observatory at the tip of the point. From their **Point Lepreau Bird Observatory**, the club collects data during spring and fall migration. Activities here began in the 1990's. During the peak of spring migration, a paid observer collects data five days a week. Volunteer observers often cover the weekends. Access to the point is restricted, so interested parties must first contact the naturalists club in order to plan a visit. Volunteers can participate by going to <http://saintjohnnaturalistsclub.org/plbo.htm>

Spring migration is the busiest at the point and on the bay. Big days can bring tens of thousands of seaducks and other birds past the point. The most abundant migrants include Black, Surf and White-winged Scoter, Common Eider, Double-crested Cormorant and Long-tailed Duck. Movements of Red-throated Loons can also be impressive.

Greens Point is located on the mainland near the town of Back Bay. From the tip of the point, near the lighthouse, the observer can view much of L'Etete Passage. The passage hosts significant numbers of birds throughout the year. However, late summer, fall and winter months can be the most productive.

This passage is most well-known for hosting large numbers of gulls, alcids and eiders. King Eider occur annually as do Thick-billed Murre. Look through groups of eiders and alcids for these uncommon visitors. Both loons are possible, if not likely depending on the season. Both grebes are likely during the fall. Black Guillemots can be abundant along with Razorbills during fall and winter. Black-legged Kittiwake also occur with regularity.



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Indian Point is located at the town of Saint Andrews (the town is known to the Peskotomukati as Qonaskamkuk). Water Street wraps around the point providing numerous opportunities to view the waters of Passamaquoddy Bay. Services in town include a campground, groceries, whale watching vessels, hotels, restaurants, and public restrooms.

The portion of Passamaquoddy Bay that is viewable from the point tends to be the most productive. Gulls and waterfowl constitute the bulk of bird life found here. Many of the birds rest or feed relatively near the shore. Look for gulls at a spit of land extending from Indian Point Park, which is adjacent to the Pagan Point Preserve. Distant offshore ledges also hold numerous gulls, eiders and cormorant.

Common Eider often gather near Navy Island, at Indian Point, as well as, the offshore ledges. Red-necked Grebes can be abundant during the fall and winter. Most of the grebes tend to spend their time near Ministers Island, however some of these birds can be seen at the point. Look early in the fall for individuals still holding their breeding plumage.

Other common species include Horned Grebe (fall and winter), Common Loon (year-round), Red-throated Loon (fall), Common Eider (year-round), Black Scoter (spring and fall), Surf Scoter (fall, winter and spring), White-winged Scoter (fall, winter and spring), Long-tailed Duck (fall, winter, early spring), Bufflehead (fall, winter and early spring), Red-breasted Merganser (fall, winter and spring), Black Guillemot (fall, winter and early spring), Double-crested Cormorant (spring, summer and fall), Herring Gull and Black-backed Gulls (year-round), Bonaparte's Gulls (late-summer, early fall), and Ring-billed Gull (year-round, although less commonly during winter). King Eider are possible during the colder months.

Additional information on birding Saint Andrews can be found at <https://www.townofsaintandrews.ca/documents/birding-in-saint-andrews/>

Deer Island Point is located at the southern tip of Deer Island. From this vantage point, the observer can look over the "Old Sow", which is considered to be the largest marine whirlpool in the Western Hemisphere. The point is quite open, providing multiple vantage points. The Deer Island Campground also occupies the point, providing opportunities for overnight stays.

Seasonal ferries to Eastport, ME and Campobello Island have run from a location quite close to the point. They provide additional access to the water.

The "Sow" as it is often called, is most powerful during flood tide. However, it can be productive during any portion of the tide cycle other than slack tides.

Gulls can gather here in great numbers. During late summer and fall, Bonaparte's Gulls are likely to be the most numerous. Look carefully for Little, Black-headed and Sabines Gulls as

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they appear at this location with some regularity. Red-necked Phalarope used to concentrate here in great numbers. Observed today might see tens, or if they are lucky hundreds.

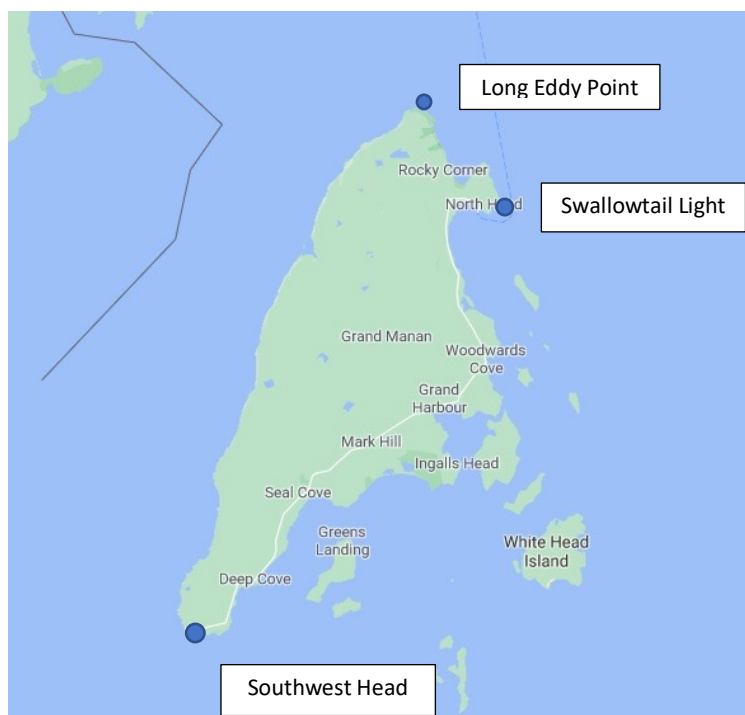
Minke Whale and Harbour Porpoise are possible, if not likely in season.

Head Harbour Lighthouse (also known as East Quoddy Light) on Campobello Island, is worth a visit, if you are on the island. Late summer and fall tend to be the best time of year for viewing at this location. Beware, if you choose to walk out to the lighthouse, be extremely mindful of the tide. Once the water starts moving over the intertidal zone, individuals walking back from the lighthouse could be swept away!!!

For those that do not wish to or cannot walk out to the lighthouse, good viewing can be had from the headland (the lighthouse ledges become an island during high water).

Great abundances of gulls appear in Head Harbour Passage. The most abundant, depending on the time of year, include Herring and Bonaparte's Gulls along with Black-legged Kittiwakes. Little Gulls, Black-headed Gulls and Sabine's Gulls appear with some regularity. As many as one million Red-necked Phalarope used to stop here every year. Viewers today are lucky to see tens or hundreds. Alcids can also be seen from the lighthouse area. Harlequin Duck are possible, if not likely during winter. Purple Sandpiper are another possibility along with many other seabirds.

Minke Whale are common from June to October. Harbour Porpoise can be abundant. Fin Whales are also sighted with regularity.



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Long Eddy Point on Grand Manan is another very productive location. The best viewing here is from the platform adjacent to the Long Eddy Point Lighthouse. From there, the observer can see nearly all of the eddy, as well as the adjacent waters of the bay. Easy road access adds to the site's attractiveness.

This location can be productive throughout the year. A moving tide tends to attract the greatest number of birds and whales. During the warmer months, it is possible to observe any of the bay's regularly occurring whale species. The list of birds species likely to be seen is nearly as long as the list of birds regularly observed on or over the bay.

Swallowtail Lighthouse on Grand Manan has potential for sightings of whales and seabirds. Access is not as easy as some other lighthouses. However, it certainly can be worth a visit. Northeast to southeast winds are likely to be the most productive.

Southwest Head, also on Grand Manan can be productive, generally not as productive as Long Point Eddy at the north end of the island, but still very much worth a visit. There are numerous vantage points at this headland and the viewscape is quite extensive. Vehicles can be parked near the lighthouse.

Look here for a very wide variety of seabirds. Any bird seen on or over the bay might be observed here. As is true for Long Eddy, this area can host thousands of Razorbills during the winter months. Harlequin Duck often winter at this location.

Whales are frequently spotted from the cliffs.

A trail to **Hay Point** begins at the lighthouse parking area. This point of land is worth checking for whales and seabirds, but only if you wish to spend a considerable amount of time hiking to the site. Those that do take the time might be rewarded with solitude and good sightings.

The Passages, the Old Sow and Wolf Banks

The passages between the mainland and the islands, as well as between Deer and Campobello Islands host some of the region's largest concentrations of seabirds. Powerful currents produce strong upwellings, resulting in nutrient rich waters, which produce and attract an abundance of life. The water of one passage, as it wraps around Deer Island creates a powerful and well-known whirlpool, the "Old Sow". Offshore, near The Wolves and Grand Manan is an area of banks, which can be well worth a visit.

L'Etete Passage runs between the mainland and Deer Island. Currents can be quite strong as water flushes in and out of Passamaquoddy Bay. Viewing is best near the lighthouse. Additional viewing opportunities can be found on the Deer Island Ferry and its landing at L'Etete.

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This passage is most well-known for hosting large numbers of gulls, alcids and eiders. King Eider occur annually as do Thick-billed Murre. Look through groups of eiders and alcids for these uncommon visitors. Both loons are possible, if not likely depending on the season. Both grebes are likely during late fall. Black Guillemots can be abundant along with Razorbills during fall and winter. Black-legged Kittiwake also occur with regularity. The rocks near the lighthouse often hold Purple Sandpiper and Harlequin Duck during the winter.

Minke Whale are occasionally observed east of the point. Harbour Porpoise also occur.

Western Passage runs between the state of Maine and Deer Island. The passage attracts an abundance of gulls along with some waterfowl. Unfortunately, viewing options are very limited. The best viewing is from the US side of the passage or from the water.

The Old Sow (see Deer Island Point)

Head Harbour Passage runs between Deer and Campobello Islands. Very large volumes of water pass through the passage creating powerful upwellings. The upwellings bring nutrients and zooplankton to or near the surface, which attract a wide variety of birds.

Portions of the passage can be viewed from Head Harbour Lighthouse, the wharf at Wilson's Beach and the wharf on North Road (all on Campobello Island). Several whale watching/tour boats visit the passage during its most productive seasons.

Look for an abundance of gulls including large numbers of Bonaparte's. Little, Black-headed and Sabine's are possible along with the occasional Laughing Gull. Alcids, shearwaters, gannets, waterfowl, and phalarope are regular, in season. During the summer and fall months, Black-legged Kittiwake are often be found perched on rocks near the lighthouse. The larger gull species typically occupy the higher portions of the rocks with the kittiwakes perched lower, on more vertical formations.

Harbour Porpoise and Minke Whale tend to be common from late June through October. The porpoise can be abundant. Fin Whale occasionally enter the passage.

Wolf Banks is located far offshore, between The Wolves and Grand Manan. At this location, the sea floor rises up creating strong upwellings, bringing nutrients and plankton to or near the surface. Access to this area is limited to private vessels including whale watching boats. However, the Grand Manan ferries pass close enough for many of the birds and whales to be seen from the vessel.

All of the regularly occurring seabirds of the Bay of Fundy are possible here. Rafts of shearwater are a common sight during July, August and September. Alcids, phalarope and gannet are often found in significant numbers. Wilson's Storm-Petrels are possible and can be numerous. Leach's Storm-Petrel are possible. Like many locations, the productivity of the area can vary from year to year.

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Recently, Wolf Banks has been the region's most productive area for Humpback and Fin Whales. Harbour Porpoise also frequent the area along with the occasional Minke Whale.

Islands

Many of the region's islands hosts bird colonies. Some of the species nesting here are at or near the southern limit of their range. These offshore refuges can be a wonder to the eye and a great place to study birds such as alcids, kittiwakes, terns, and storm petrels.

Machias Seal Island is located 25 km southwest of Grand Manan. The island has been designated an Important Bird Area and a Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Access to the island and the surrounding water is extremely limited. Operators from Grand Manan and Jonesport, Maine take visitors to the island. Book a year or more in advance of your trip. Chartering a boat out of Grand Manan or Saint Andrews is another option. Individuals lucky enough to find a way to the island will almost certainly find a good variety of birds (spring, summer, fall).

Species that breed on or near the island include Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, Common Murre, Black -Guillemot, Common and Arctic Tern. These birds are easily viewed during the breeding season. Visits outside of the breeding season can produce a very wide variety of seabirds including alcids, shearwater, gulls, gannet and more.

White Horse Island, a two-hectare, Class 1 Protected Natural Area is located approximately five kilometres south of Greens Point. The island hosts one of the Western Hemisphere's southernmost colonies of Black-legged Kittiwakes. Visitors to the island are not allowed onshore and should stay well away from the nests.

The easiest way for most people to see the kittiwakes is getting on one of the Saint Andrews based whale watching boats. These boats often visit the island during the months of June and July. Check with their office to see if they plan to head to the island.

Southern Wolf, which is part of The Wolves Archipelago, formerly hosted a colony of Black-legged Kittiwake. A variety of seabirds can often be found nearby. Access is only by boat.

Kent Island, which is part of the Grand Manan Archipelago hosts the region's largest colony of Leach's Storm Petrels. The island is owned by Bowdoin College. Access to the island requires permission.

White Head Island is also part of the Grand Manan Archipelago. Access to the island is provided by a car ferry. Viewing from the ferry can be good. From the island, there are several locations capable of producing good sightings. Long Point is likely to produce the best viewing of seabirds. Harlequin Duck winter at some of the rockier shoreline locations. Purple Sandpiper can often be found in the intertidal zone.

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Ferries

Several vehicle ferries operate within the region, providing access to the islands. These ferries also provide opportunities for birders and whale watchers to observe species known to inhabit offshore areas. They also provide opportunities to visit a couple larger passages, which can be rich with bird life.

The **Grand Manan ferries** run from Blacks Harbour on the mainland to North Head on the island of Grand Manan. Two relatively large ferries capable of holding dozens of vehicles run this route. Food and washrooms are available onboard. From the upper decks one can scan the waters, looking for a wide variety of sea-life. Ferry service is available year-round. <http://grandmanan.coastaltransport.ca/schedule.html>

From the upper decks of the ship, while tied up at Blacks Harbour, one can usually see Black Guillemots, Common Eiders, Double-crested Cormorant, American Black Duck, Common Loon, Herring Gull, and Great Black-backed Gull. Iceland Gull, Ring-billed Gull and Glaucous Gull are also possible, if not likely depending on the season. Horned and Red Necked Grebe also occur.

Soon after leaving its moorings, the ship passes several small islands and ledges. Groups of eiders, cormorant and gulls often rest near the intertidal zone. Bald Eagle can usually be found sitting on one or more of the exposed ledges or small islands. As the ship begins to leave the harbour, Bonaparte's Gulls, as well as Common and Arctic Tern become more likely (summer and fall).

Depending on the season, the waters between the mainland and The Wolves can hold a variety of species including Northern Gannet, Great and Sooty Shearwater, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, Razorbill, Common Murre, Storm-Petrels, as well as some of the species found in the more sheltered coastal water. Minke and Fin Whale, as well as the occasional Humpback are also possible in season (July – October).

At or near Southern Wolf, one can encounter all of the species found closer to the coast, plus Red-necked and Red Phalarope, and Atlantic Puffin. Storm Petrels become more likely. Fin and Humpback Whale are possible, if not likely depending on the season and the particular year. When looking from the ferry, turn your attention toward the island as you approach. Birds and whales can appear anywhere, but the east side of the boat will tend to produce more sightings.

Soon after passing Southern Wolf, the ferry will pass a little west of Wolf Banks. This can be one of the most productive areas in the bay. Larger rafts of seabirds are possible, along with less common or rare species. All of the regularly occurring whale species are possible here too. It is best to focus on the east side of the track while moving through this area.

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As the ferry approaches Grand Manan, Long Point Eddy will be visible off the island's tip, west of the ferry track. This eddy extends for quite a distance off the island. A wide variety of birds and whales are possible. While in this area, and until turning toward North Head, check both sides of the boat. When passing Whale Cove, seabirds are likely to be more abundant to the east, but other birds and whales often appear in the cove.

At the North Head Harbour, look for eiders, cormorant, Black Guillemot and numerous gulls. The fisherman's wharf adjacent to the ferry landing can hold hundreds of gulls. Looking through them might produce something of interest.

Harbour Porpoise are often common, if not abundant for most of this crossing. Long Point Eddy tends to hold the greatest abundance of this species.

Other cetaceans are possible from June through November. As the season ends, the whales are more likely to be seen far from the mainland, eventually moving to areas beyond the big island (Grand Manan).

The **Deer Island ferries** run from L'Etete on the mainland, landing at Stuart Town on the island. The track runs through L'Etete and Little L'Etete Passages passing several islands and ledges. Currents here can be quite strong as the waters of Passamaquoddy flush in and out.

<http://deerisland.coastaltransport.ca/schedule.html>

From the ferry landing at L'Etete one can often observe Common Eider, Black Guillemot, Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Herring and Black-backed Gull. Moving out on the track, Razorbills are often common during late summer, fall and winter. During late summer and fall, Bonaparte's Gulls can be abundant in the main passage (a thousand or more might be present). Black Legged Kittiwake might also be seen from the ferry. Looking through flocks of Common Eider could produce a King Eider during the colder months. Thick-billed Murre are also possible. Northern Gannet can enter the passage, but usually stay closer to Green's Point (the same is true of Thick-billed Murre and Black Legged Kittiwake).

As the ferry passes into Little L'Etete Passage, nearing Deer Island, the number of species observed are likely to greatly diminish. However, it is still worth looking through the flocks of eider for possible Kings. The eider tend to spend much of their time in sheltered areas close to the numerous small islands.

Tour boats

Whale watching and general sight-seeing boats are seasonally available from several locations. Some offer little more than a fast, rough, cold ride in a survival suit. However, if you choose the correct boat with a good crew, the bird and whale watching opportunities can be excellent.

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Area operators use a variety of vessels types. All have their advantages and/or appeal. Some are far more suitable for use by birders than others. Upper decks tend to provide better viewing, especially if you are looking at birds in flight. Closed cabins protect gear and provide protection from the elements. Heads/washrooms are very nice to have, especially on longer trips. The ability to move around will allow passengers to see more. When booking a trip, it is best to consider all of the above.

The following description of vessels should help individuals choose a good boat.

Zodiacs

Pros- very fast, maneuverable, proximity to wildlife

Cons- little to no room to move or store gear, everything could get wet (from rain, fog and/or salt spray), cold, passengers must wear survival suits, no washroom, can be more disruptive to wildlife

Converted fishing vessels

Pros – maneuverable, often have closed cabins with room for gear, can be heated, some have small upper decks, washrooms

Cons- Rather slow, not as spacious as larger vessels

Catamarans

Pros- fast, spacious with room to move and store gear, often heated, tend to have upper decks, stable, washrooms, adequate maneuverability

Cons- none

Sailing vessels

Pros- aesthetic, some ability to move, some gear storage

Cons- slow, poor maneuverability, no cabin, unheated, no upper deck

Groups of birders might wish to look into chartering a boat. Doing so, as opposed to boarding as a passenger, can allow you to tailor the trip to your needs. Some of the captains and their crews know the best locations to see birds. If you are lucky, a skilled birder will be part of the crew.

Equipment

The experienced seawatcher will likely be outfitted with quality binoculars, a good spotting scope mounted on a sturdy tripod, a camera for documenting rarities and assisting with difficult IDs. A spotting scope is of no use on a moving vessel, however, it is extremely useful for the land-based observer. A waterproof notepad and mechanical pencil held in a pouch is also recommended and standard equipment for the seasoned seawatcher. Of course, proper clothing including a wind-shell and a good hat can be of critical importance. Sunglasses, sunblock, and lip balm can also be useful. For those venturing out on the water, some ginger chews can help settle an upset stomach.

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Note taking, science, conservation and eBird

Note taking is a basic skill for any naturalist. The taking of detailed notes can help advance knowledge of seabirds and the marine environment. When taking notes, it is very important to note anything that might influence your ability to see, hear and/or identify wildlife. This information is often overlooked by even some of the most skilled observers.

Reporting birds on eBird is a great way to contribute to science and conservation. Remember to note equipment used, weather and water conditions, effort and anything that affects your ability to view wildlife.

Species

Black Scoter (BLSC)

Common spring and fall migrants. Small numbers often linger through the winter. During migration, birders might encounter thousands of birds rafting in coastal areas or flying low over the water. Spring movements are much larger than fall. Point Lepreau is the best location within the region for viewing these birds. Peak movements occur during the month of April.

Season: Common late March – early May. Possible year-round

Surf Scoter (SUSC)

Common spring and fall migrants. Significant numbers also winter on the bay. Point Lepreau is the best place to observe this species during migration. Peak spring movements occur immediately after the Black Scoter. Passamaquoddy Bay hosts a wintering population.

Season: Year-round

White-winged Scoter (WWSC)

A common migrant. However, they occur in much smaller numbers than other scoters. Peak movements occur during early May. Wintering birds can be found on Passamaquoddy Bay.

Season: Year-round

Common Eider (COEI)

Common migrant and present in significant numbers throughout the year. Peak spring movements occur in early April before Black Scoter. Large numbers can be observed passing Point Lepreau in late March and early to mid-April. L'Etete Passage and Passamaquoddy Bay are good places to find significant numbers of birds during fall, winter and spring. The number of birds being seen has dropped significantly in recent years.

Season: Year-round

King Eider (KIEI)

An uncommon spring and fall migrant, rare summer resident. Some individuals winter within the region. During migration, the best place to see one could be Point Lepreau.

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Wintering birds occur in L'Etete Passage and Passamaquoddy Bay. There is potential to locate one anywhere that eider occur.

Season: Generally late fall through early spring

Common Loons (COLO)

Common year-round residents and common migrants. Peak spring migration occurs in early May. Individuals can be found almost anywhere along the coast.

Season: Year-round

Red-throated Loon (RTLO)

Common spring and fall migrants. The occasional bird can be found during the winter. Peak migration occurs in early May. Point Lepreau is the best place to view them during migration.

Season: Spring and fall

Bufflehead (BUFF)

Can be locally abundant from fall through early spring. They are found in sheltered coastal waters such as Oak Bay, Passamaquoddy Bay as well as amongst the islands.

Long-tailed Duck (LTDU)

Common migrants and wintering birds. In migration, Point Lepreau is the best place to see significant numbers. Large rafts of wintering birds occur amongst the Western Isles and on Passamaquoddy Bay. The aquaculture sites amongst the islands seem to attract the greatest number of these birds with as many one thousand individuals being observed adjacent to active fish pens.

Season: fall, winter, spring

Common Goldeneye (COGO)

Uncommon migrants and common wintering birds. Local abundances do occur. One of the best places to find this bird is near Spoon Island on Oak Bay (late fall and winter). The Castalia Marsh seacoast also tends to host these birds.

Season: Fall, winter and spring

Barrow's Goldeneye (BAGO)

Uncommon migrants and wintering birds. The most reliable locations within the region appear to be Oak Bay (in addition to the St. Stephen Sewage Lagoons). Winter sightings appear to be regular at the Castalia Marsh seacoast.

Season: Fall, winter and spring

Black Guillemot (BLGU)

Breeds on offshore islands. Common on coastlines and amongst the islands. One of the best places on the coast to find significant numbers of this species is L'Etete Passage near Greens Point.

Season: Year-round

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Razorbill (RAZO)

Huge concentrations can be encountered during the late fall and winter months at Northern and Southwestern Heads, as well as rather inaccessible locations such as Old Proprietor Shoals. Point Lepreau and L'Etete Passage can host significant numbers of birds from late fall through early spring. Breeds on offshore islands. Can show up at a wide variety of locations.

Season: Year-round

Common Murre (COMU)

Found along parts the coast and in offshore areas. Can be locally abundant, particularly in the vicinity of Yellow Murre Ledge and Machias Seal Island. Check Greens Point, Point Lepreau, The Whistle and Southwest Head.

Season: Year-round

Thick-billed Murre (TBMU)

Uncommon winter residents. Greens Point appears to be the region's most reliable place to find them. Point Lepreau is certainly worth checking when access is possible. Southern Head and the Whistle are also worth checking.

Season: Late fall, winter, early spring

Dovekie (DOVE)

Sightings tend to be rare. However, it is possible to see very large groups from mid-fall through early winter. Mid-winter to late-winter or very early spring sightings of individuals or small groups do occur. The size of this bird makes it very easy to miss. They are most likely to be seen after a late season (Nov, Dec) coastal storm. Areas beyond Grand Manan are most likely to produce sightings. The best opportunities to see them from land would likely be from Northern Head/The Whistle, Southwest Head, Swallowtail Light, Long Point Lighthouse (White Head Island) or Point Lepreau.

Season: Late fall, winter, early spring

Double-crested Cormorant (DCCO)

Common to locally abundant during spring, summer and fall. Large flocks can be observed during spring and fall migration. Fall movements through the region tend to be much larger than spring. These birds are often observed on bell buoys, channel markers, exposed ledges and fish pens.

Season: Year-round (uncommon during winter)

Great Cormorant (GRCO)

Fairly common spring and fall migrants, as well as uncommon winter residents. Point Lepreau is likely one of the best places to observe these birds during migration. Wintering birds are often observed in L'Etete Passage.

Season: Fall, winter, spring

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Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers (POJA, PAJA)

Uncommon to fairly common depending on the year. They tend to be observed in offshore areas, usually during the summer and fall months. Watch for individuals chasing gulls and shearwaters. Check the Grand Manan Ferry Track and areas beyond Grand Manan. Can appear closer to the mainland.

Season: Spring, summer, fall

Long-tailed Jaeger (LTJA)

Rare. Most likely to be encountered well offshore.

Season: Summer, fall

Great Skua (GRSK)

Sightings are very rare. Areas most likely to produce are far from shore.

Season: Possible at any time of year, although most likely to be encountered during migration.

South Pola Skua (SPSK)

Sightings are rare, although not as rare as GRSK. They are most likely to be observed well offshore from Wolf Banks to areas beyond Grand Manan.

Season: Summer, fall

Northern Gannet (NOGA)

Can be common from spring through fall. As the area's largest seabird, they tend to stand out amongst gulls and other seabirds. Watch for individuals and groups plunge diving.

Sometimes seen from shore at Greens Point, Head Harbour Light, Northern Head, Southwest Head and Point Lepreau (can be common here during fall migration).

Season: Mostly spring, summer and fall

Red-necked and Red Phalarope (RNPH, REPH)

Can be uncommon to locally abundant during the summer and early fall. Formerly occurred in great abundance within Head Harbour and Western Passages. These birds continue to be reported in those areas. However, offshore areas from Wolf Banks to areas beyond Grand Manan are now producing the greatest number of reports. Often observed perched on floating mats of rockweed.

Season: Summer, fall

Great Shearwater (GRSH)

Can be common in offshore waters during the summer and early fall months. Large rafts sometimes form from Wolf Banks to areas beyond Grand Manan, occasionally closer to the mainland.

Season: Summer, early fall

Sooty Shearwater (SOSH)

Can be somewhat uncommon. Sightings occur during summer and early fall. Look for them amongst GRSH or occasionally in smaller single species flocks.

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By Todd Watts

Season: Summer, early fall

Manx Shearwater (MASH)

Tend to be uncommon to rare. However, can appear in abundance. They are most likely to be observed well offshore, if not beyond Grand Manan. Look for them amongst other shearwaters. The Grand Manan Ferry Track is a good place to check.

Season: Summer, early fall

Cory's Shearwater (COSH)

Rarely observed. When encountered, they are most likely to be beyond Grand Manan. Checking the Grand Manan Ferry Track after a storm might occasional produce an individual.

Season: summer, early fall

Northern Fulmar (NOFU)

Sightings can be fairly common well beyond Grand Manan. In other areas, they are uncommon to rare. Look for them during the spring, summer and fall months. Winter sightings are also possible. However, few people, other than fisherman, venture offshore during the coldest months.

Season: Year-round

Wilson's Storm-Petrel (WISP)

Offshore water from Wolf Banks and beyond are most likely to produce. The number of birds "inside" of Grand Manan varies greatly from year to year, even day to day. South to southwest winds tend to bring the greatest numbers.

Season: Summer, early fall

Leach's Storm Petrel (LESP)

Uncommon to rare "inside" of Grand Manan

Season: Summer, early fall