

Field Notes and Bird Sightings

Refuge Volunteer and bird identification expert, Don Morrow often leads birding tours at the Refuge. Call (850) 925-6121 for more information. Here is Don's most recent September 29 Refuge report:

In a long seven-hour trip to St. Marks NWR starting at 6:00 am I logged 72 species including a good number of migrants. Shorebird numbers are climbing. I counted 1,158 shorebirds of 14 species. Almost a quarter of them were Western Sandpipers. Night birds included Great Horned and Barred Owl, Common Nighthawk, King Rail, Sora and Least Bittern. There were a grand total of three duck species; Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal and Shoveler. Some highlights of the day were:

Stony Bayou I

- Reddish Egret
- Plovers (Black-bellied, Semipalmated and a single Wilson's)
- Sandpipers (Western, Least and a single Spotted)
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Willet
- Dunlin

Stony Bayou II

- Least Bittern
- Wood Duck
- Blue-winged Teal
- King Rail
- Sora

Tower Pond (mostly flooded, so only larger shorebirds)

- Roseate Spoonbill
- Black-bellied Plover
- Both Yellowlegs
- Willet

- Whimbrel
- Marbled Godwit

Picnic Pond

- Blue-winged Teal
- Shoveler
- Lighthouse
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Terns (Common, Forster's, Sandwich, Royal)

There were migrants all along the levees. Many Yellow Warblers and at least 50 Common Yellowthroat. In the Cabbage Palms along the levees I found Gray Catbird, Wood Thrush and Palm Warbler. Small flocks of swallows, mostly Barn, were passing through heading East. It was a good day to be at the refuge birding.

Good Birding, Don Morrow