

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 May 2 Refuge report:

In five hours of birding this morning at St. Marks while doing a shorebird survey, I logged 70 species including 3 waterfowl species and 14 species of shorebirds. Notable were a Merlin and a Bobolink both on Stony Bayou II.

The ducks are gone. Besides the resident Wood Ducks I only had BW Teal and Lesser Scaup. Shorebird numbers have dropped by half since last month. Dunlin and Short-billed Dowitcher accounted for almost 800 of the 980 shorebirds that I counted. There were several White-rumped Sandpipers, 23 Whimbrel and a breeding plumage American Avocet on Picnic Pond. Some other highlights of the morning were

Salt Flats along the East side of Lighthouse Road near the Lighthouse

- Black-bellied Plover
- Semipalmated Plover
- Willet (still some Westerns, but mostly Eastern)
- Whimbrel
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Dunlin
- Sandpiper (White-rumped, Western and Semipalmated)
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Terns (Least, Forsters and Common)

Tower Pond

- Black-bellied Plover
- Semipalmated Plover

- Greater Yellowlegs
- Willet
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Dunlin
- Sandpipers (Least, Semipalmated and Western)
- Terns (Gull-billed & Forsters)

Seaside Sparrows are sitting up in the marshes, Clappers are pretty noisy and there are Purple Gallinules everywhere. I had Veery and Swallow-tailed Kite at the Double Bridges. It was a nice morning to bird at the refuge.

Good Birding, Don Morrow