

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 June 6 Refuge report:

In five hours of birding starting at 6:00 am I logged 63 species. Birding was light , but steady, and I added two new species to my refuge list – House Finch and Magnificent Frigatebird. Some highlights of the day were:

Tower Pond

- Black-bellied Plover (one in breeding plumage)
- Semipalmated Plover
- Wilson's Plover (two were banded)
- Willet
- Marbled Godwit
- Ruddy Turnstone
- White-rumped Sandpiper (two late birds)
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Short-billed Dowitcher

Lighthouse Area

- Black-necked Stilt (nesting on Lighthouse Pond)
- American Oystercatcher (on mudflat across from boat ramp turn)
- Wilson's Plover (salt flats across from Lighthouse Pond, seem to be nesting)

- Least Tern (salt flats across from Lighthouse Pond, seem to be nesting)
- Magnificent Frigatebird (juvenile plumage flying over water NW of the eagle's nest)
- House Finch (female feeding on wildflowers along Lighthouse Road)

In late June bird diversity at St Marks is at its low point for the year. All of our wintering species and the vast majority of our migrants have passed through. Instead of 200 regularly occurring species during the winter months, in late June there are only about 130. However, the species mix is always shifting and in July we'll start to see some returning shorebirds and the first of the Fall warblers; Yellow, Prairie and Black-and-White.

Good Birding, Don Morrow