

# **AUTUMN GRAND MANAN**

**AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 6, 2009**

**LEADERS:**

**BARRY ZIMMER AND BRENNAN MULROONEY**

**COMPILED BY: BARRY ZIMMER**

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*Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc.*

## **Autumn Grand Manan**

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**Leaders: Barry Zimmer & Brennan Mulrooney**

*Once again, the boat trip on our Autumn Grand Manan tour produced staggering numbers of seabirds. Few trips anywhere in the world can match the diversity of species and the sheer volume of birds as are regularly found in the Bay of Fundy in September.*

*Shearwaters were abundant with an estimated 1,000 Greater and 300 Sooty in one day, many of which were nearly at arm's-length coming in to chum off the bow. Though much less numerous, we had good looks at Manx Shearwater as well, tallying a total of 9 birds for the tour. Periodically a Northern Gannet came by to survey the scene, or a Pomarine or Parasitic Jaeger would swoop in to harass the other birds. Alcids were plentiful with 67 Razorbills, 71 Atlantic Puffins, and 48 Black Guillemots tallied. Migrant flocks of Red-necked Phalaropes dotted the surface of the ocean, and small numbers of Common and Arctic terns were regularly encountered. Black-legged Kittiwakes joined the masses of Great Black-backed and Herring gulls behind our boat, as did 4 rare, but increasing, Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Most impressive, however, were the Wilson's Storm-Petrels, which were present in ridiculous numbers. At one point, a quick count around the boat revealed over 1,500 visible. Estimates for the entire day ran from a low count of 20,000 individuals to upwards of 50,000! Literally everywhere you looked, for most of the day, you could see swarms of storm-petrels skittering about the surface of the water. It was an incredible sight.*

*In addition to all the birds, we also enjoyed a great whale show with northern right (5), humpback (6), finback (19), and Minke (2) all seen well. Toss in gray and harbor seals, many harbor porpoises, and an amazing creche of 400+ Common Eiders looking like a huge brown carpet on the ocean, and you can see what a superb pelagic trip we had. Perhaps the most amazing thing was that this was not an unusual day, but rather a typical fall boat trip off Grand Manan!*

*Of course, seabirds and whales are not the only attractions in Grand Manan. Our tour is timed to coincide with the peak of passerine migration as well. We often see 20 or more species of warblers. This year we tallied 16, including the likes of Black-throated Green, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided, Palm, Ovenbird, Black-and-white, and American Redstart. We also had exceptional views of Philadelphia, Blue-headed, and Red-eyed vireos, Alder and Least flycatchers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak among others. At Castalia Marsh we enjoyed superb studies of a Nelson's Sparrow creeping along the edge of the water line, a tour highlight for many.*

*September is also a good time for migrant shorebirds and we totaled 16 species including Black-bellied Plover (49 in one flock), Semipalmated Plover, Solitary Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, and Red Knot. Other notable birds included White-winged Scoter, Bald Eagle, many Broad-winged Hawks, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Winter Wren.*

*All this, against a backdrop of the scenic New Brunswick coastline and regular doses of lobster and blueberries in various forms, was a hard-to-beat combination!*

**Itinerary:**

August 31 - arrival in Bangor

September 1 - Orono Bog Boardwalk, drive to Grand Manan via Hwy 9 and Hwy 1 with ferry ride from Black's Harbor to Grand Manan; the Whistle Road (62 species)

September 2 - all day boat trip off Grand Manan (Old Proprietor's Shoal, Bulkhead Rip, Gannet Rock); Castalia Marsh (38 species; 77 total)

September 3 - boat trip to The Wolves & circumnavigation of Grand Manan; The Anchorage, Long Pond, Dock Road (44 species; 89 total)

September 4 - The Whistle, Castalia Marsh, The Anchorage & Long Pond Beach, The whistle, Dark Harbor Road (77 species; 111 total)

September 5 - Whale Cove Road, Hole-in-the-Wall Park, Dock Road, Castalia Marsh, ferry ride to Black's Harbor, return to Bangor via Hwy 9 with brief stops at Moosehorn NWR (63 species; 120 total)

September 6 - departures for home (120 total species)

**Key:**

M = all areas in Maine

G = all areas on Grand Manan including boat trip, plus other parts of New Brunswick

**bold-faced species** indicate birds of rare, casual, or accidental occurrence

underlined species indicate birds of very uncommon occurrence or species that occur regularly but in such low numbers as to be easily missed

**Birds:**

Canada Goose G,M

Wood Duck M

American Wigeon G

American Black Duck G

Blue-winged Teal G

Green-winged Teal G

Ring-necked Duck G,M

Common Eider G---including one incredibly cool creche of about 400 birds from our boat trip; tied for second favorite bird of the tour

White-winged Scoter G---one male from our return ferry ride by some

Red-breasted Merganser G

Ring-necked Pheasant G

Common Loon G

Red-necked Grebe G---very distant views from Long Pond beach

Greater Shearwater G---seen daily with an estimated 1000 on our first boat trip and 600 on the second, some within ten feet of the boat; voted the favorite bird of the trip!

Sooty Shearwater G---300+ in one day

Manx Shearwater G---nine total spread over four days

Wilson's Storm-Petrel G---an estimated **20,000+** on our all day boat trip!!!!

Northern Gannet G---a total of 29 seen of varying ages and plumages

Double-crested Cormorant G

Great Cormorant G---total of ten seen

Great Blue Heron G  
**Snowy Egret** G---a rarity on the island  
 Turkey Vulture M,G  
 Osprey G  
 Bald Eagle M,G  
 Northern Harrier G---female near Black's Harbor  
 Sharp-shinned Hawk G---only one seen by some  
 Cooper's Hawk M---a couple near the Bangor Airport our first morning; uncommon  
 Broad-winged Hawk M,G---several excellent views of perched birds  
 Merlin G---six total; particularly nice was a female at Long Pond  
Black-bellied Plover G---one group of 49 and another of 43, some still in breeding plumage;  
 uncommon  
 Semipalmated Plover G---149 total  
 Spotted Sandpiper G  
 Solitary Sandpiper G  
 Greater Yellowlegs G  
 Lesser Yellowlegs G  
 Ruddy Turnstone G---very distant  
Red Knot G---eight at Castalia the last morning; uncommon  
 Sanderling G  
 Semipalmated Sandpiper G---the most numerous peep  
 Least Sandpiper G---nice views of fresh juveniles  
White-rumped Sandpiper G---only one distant bird at Castalia, not seen by all  
Baird's Sandpiper G---a juvenile at the Anchorage was a surprise  
Pectoral Sandpiper G---two at Castalia Marsh; uncommon  
 Short-billed Dowitcher G  
 Red-necked Phalarope G---about 350 on our all day boat trip!  
 Black-legged Kittiwake G---up to 150 in a day  
 Bonaparte's Gull G  
 Ring-billed Gull M,G  
 Herring Gull M,G  
Lesser Black-backed Gull G---four seen our boat trip; increasing here but still considered rare to  
 very uncommon here  
 Great Black-backed Gull M,G---by the hundreds  
 Common Tern G---about 20 from the boat  
 Arctic Tern G---ten from the boat  
 Pomarine Jaeger G---eight total with one adult that followed the boat for some time and provided  
 superb views; tied for second favorite bird of the tour  
 Parasitic Jaeger G---five total  
Common Murre G---a few from the ferry on each trip; uncommon  
 Razorbill G---up to 67 in one day; great views  
 Black Guillemot G---daily with a high count of 48 in one day  
 Atlantic Puffin G---tied for the second favorite bird of the tour; 71 total seen  
 Rock Pigeon M,G  
 Mourning Dove M,G  
Common Nighthawk G---flock of 20 migrating and feeding over Castalia Marsh; late  
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird G  
 Belted Kingfisher G  
 Downy Woodpecker M,G

Hairy Woodpecker G---briefly flying over by some  
 Northern Flicker G---yellow-shafted variety  
 Alder Flycatcher G---a family group along The Whistle and another single; uncommon  
 Least Flycatcher G---total of ten seen  
 Eastern Kingbird G---fourteen scattered about various locales  
 Blue-headed Vireo G---great views of two  
Philadelphia Vireo G---great studies; four total; uncommon; tied for second favorite bird of the tour  
 Red-eyed Vireo G---very common with an estimated 24 seen  
 Blue Jay M,G  
 American Crow M,G  
 Common Raven M,G  
 Black-capped Chickadee M,G---our most common landbird  
 Red-breasted Nuthatch M,G---about 25 seen  
 Brown Creeper M---one along the Orono boardwalk  
Winter Wren M---one at Orono; very uncommonly seen on this trip  
 Golden-crowned Kinglet M,G---great studies; tied for second favorite bird of the tour  
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet M  
 Eastern Bluebird M---three along Hwy 9 the first day  
 Hermit Thrush M  
 American Robin G  
 Gray Catbird M,G---seven total  
Northern Mockingbird M---three at Howard Johnson's our first morning; uncommon  
 European Starling M,G  
 Cedar Waxwing M,G---common  
 Tennessee Warbler G---one seen  
 Nashville Warbler G--- three seen  
 Northern Parula G---total of sixteen for the trip  
 Yellow Warbler G--- ten total  
 Chestnut-sided Warbler M,G---a total of four seen  
 Magnolia Warbler G---ten total  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler M---Myrtle; oddly only one seen  
 Black-throated Green Warbler M,G--- the most common warbler this year with an estimated total of  
     **36**; repeated superb views from very close  
 Palm Warbler M---four at Orono Bog; uncommon; the yellow eastern race  
 Blackpoll Warbler M---only one  
 Black-and-white Warbler M,G--- 14 total  
 American Redstart M,G---final count of eight  
Ovenbird G---great views out in the open; also part of the tie for second favorite bird of the tour  
 Northern Waterthrush G---heard only  
 Common Yellowthroat M,G---our second most common warbler with 29 seen  
 Wilson's Warbler G---two along The Whistle  
 Chipping Sparrow G  
 Savannah Sparrow G  
 Nelson's Sparrow G--- superb views of a fairly bright adult; the duller race *subvirgatus*; tied for  
     second favorite bird of the tour  
 Song Sparrow G  
 Swamp Sparrow G  
 White-throated Sparrow G  
 Dark-eyed Junco G---Slate-colored

Rose-breasted Grosbeak M---at Orono  
Common Grackle G  
Brown-headed Cowbird G---uncommon; only one immature bird seen  
Baltimore Oriole G---three total  
Purple Finch G---one by some behind the museum  
American Goldfinch M,G---scarcer than usual  
House Sparrow M---always tough on this trip, but some were spotted near Howard Johnson's our  
first morning

Total species - **120**

**Leader only birds:**

Swainson's Thrush

**Mammals:** total species - 10

Harbor Seal

Gray Seal---lengthy studies of these strange creatures

Harbor Porpoise---very common

Northern Right Whale---total of five seen---one from the ferry, two or more on our second boat trip  
(brief but very close & nice views), and another two from Long Eddy Light which swam within  
a hundred yards of shore or so, and made four passes right in front of us!!!

Finback Whale---nice views; 19 total seen

Humpback Whale---six on our boat trip

Minke Whale---one or two

Red Squirrel

Eastern Gray Squirrel

Eastern Chipmunk---leader only

**Butterflies:** total species - 6

Cabbage White

Great Spangled Fritillary

Clouded Sulphur

Mourning Cloak

Common Ringlet

Monarch

**Significant others:**

lobster in various forms

blueberries in various forms

miniature golf at Durlan's---(Durlan = 42/ 48, Peter=47/53 Barry = 50/ 46, Brennan 46/ 50)---the great  
Grand Manan shave-off ended in a dramatic come from behind tie!

dulse tasting---yuk!

Stephen King's house

pitcher plants

Blue fin Tuna in feeding frenzies on the surface

large horsefly