

2021 Grant PUD / BPA Avian Monitoring Weekly Report 07/19 – 07/25

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES & UPCOMING EVENTS

ACTIVITIES	DATE
Survey of Potholes Reservoir: Goose Island and North Potholes	07/20
Survey of Sprague Lake	07/21
Island 20 – PIT Tag Recovery	07/22-07/24

This is the last weekly report for colony monitoring during the 2021 season. Our efforts are transitioning to PIT-tag recovery and identifying peak counts from drone and aerial imagery. Summaries of PIT-tag recoveries and peak nest and individual counts will be provided in the 2021 Annual Report.

COLONY MONITORING & WATERBIRD SURVEYS

Potholes Reservoir: Potholes Reservoir was visited on July 20.

Goose Island:

Caspian terns were counted in 11 different locations on Goose Island and its surrounding islets (see [Table 1](#) below). The main colony area was obstructed from our vantage. 9 Caspian terns were observed loafing on Southeast Main. No nesting activity or tern chicks were observed. Peak nest and individual counts of are currently being conducted from drone imagery.

Table 1. Caspian tern counts by location at Goose Island from 06/09 – 07/20. [NA: Not Available]

Caspian terns							
LOCATION	06/09	06/17	06/22	07/01	07/09	07/13	07/20
Northwest Main	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast Main	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southeast Main	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
South Spit	0	0	8	9	0	0	0
South Beach	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colony Area ¹	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Southwest Main	18	9	0	0	0	0	0
West Main ²	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Beach	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
East Rocks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast Rocks	0	23	13	0	0	0	0
Northwest Rocks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

¹ Complete obstruction from boat vantage.

² Partial obstruction from boat vantage.

~490 adult gulls and ~390 fledglings were observed. ~60% were California gulls and ~40% were ring-billed gulls. The oldest chicks (~6 weeks old) were close to fledging and observed near the shoreline (see [Figure 1](#) below). No adults were observed in nesting posture. Peak individual counts are currently being conducted from drone imagery.



Figure 1. Gull chick and adult on Goose Island.

Northeastern Potholes (Historic Caspian Tern Colony):
Northeastern Potholes was not visited this week.

2016 Colony Site:
The 2016 Colony Site was not visited this week.

Sprague Lake: Sprague Lake was visited on July 21.

Harper Island:
No Caspian terns were observed on Harper Island. The interior Caspian tern nesting colony was partially obstructed from our view on the water. Peak nest counts are currently being conducted from drone imagery.

160 combined adult and fledgling double-crested cormorants were observed loafing on or near the island. Double-crested cormorant nesting on both colonies has concluded (see [Figure 2](#) below).



Figure 2. Former double-crested cormorant nesting colonies (left) and double-crested cormorants loafing on shoreline (right).

25 American white pelicans and 25 gulls were also observed loafing.

Island 20: Island 20 was visited July 22-24.

Island 20:

PIT tag recovery efforts were completed at Island 20 on the southern and northern breeding colonies of California and ring-billed gulls. Summaries from this recovery effort and predation estimates will be provided in the 2021 Annual Report.

PIT TAGGING OF STEELHEAD AT ROCK ISLAND DAM

Steelhead smolt tagging commenced at Rock Island Dam on 04/09 and ended on 06/13. In total, 5,583 hatchery and 1,655 wild steelhead smolts were tagged, totaling 7,238 steelhead smolts, reaching our target goal of ~ 7,000. Steelhead were selected for tagging at random, regardless of fish size, condition, or rear-type (hatchery, wild) and smolts were tagged in proportion to and in concert with the run at-large (tagged and untagged) passing Rock Island Dam in 2021. We will start to scan bird colonies for smolt PIT tags soon after the dispersal of birds from their breeding colonies.