

## 2021 Grant PUD / BPA Avian Monitoring Weekly Report 05/10 – 05/16/2021

### WEEKLY ACTIVITIES & UPCOMING EVENTS

ACTIVITIES	DATE
Survey of Potholes Reservoir: Goose Island and North Potholes	05/10
Survey of Lenore Lake: Shoal and North Rock islands	05/10
Survey of Banks Lake: Twinning and Goose islands	05/11
Survey of Sprague Lake: Harper Island	05/11
Survey of McNary NWR	05/12
Survey of McNary Pool: Badger and Crescent islands	05/13
Aerial survey counts - Astoria-Megler Bridge north crib	05/13
UPCOMING EVENTS	
Survey of Potholes Reservoir: Goose Island and North Potholes	05/17-05/23
Survey of Blalock Islands	05/17-05/23
Survey of McNary Pool: Badger, Crescent, Foundation, and Walla Walla River Delta islands	05/17-05/23
Survey of McNary NWR	05/17-05/23
Survey of Island 20	05/17-05/23
Drone Surveys: Miller Rocks and McNary Pool (Badger and Crescent islands)	05/17-05/23

### COLONY MONITORING & WATERBIRD SURVEYS

**Potholes Reservoir:** Potholes Reservoir was visited on May 10.

Goose Island:

Caspian terns were counted in 11 different locations on Goose Island and its surrounding islets (see *Table 1* below). 21 Caspian terns were counted in a bare sand area along the southwestern shoreline of the island (i.e. Southwest Main). Counts were likely an underestimate of colony attendance due to active dissuasion activities that were being carried out by another contractor during our boat survey. Thus, attended nest counts were not conducted this week and active nesting has not been confirmed to date.

*Table 1. Caspian tern counts by location at Goose Island from 4/8 – 5/10, 2021.*

Caspian terns						
LOCATION	04/08	04/16	04/21	04/27	05/04	05/10
Northwest Main	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast Main	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southeast Main	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Spit	0	0	0	0	0	0

South Beach	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southwest Main	4	48	34	7	40	21*
West Main	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Beach	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Rocks	3	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast Rocks	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northwest Rocks	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>21</b>

\* Nest dissuasion activities occurred during counts.

~2,840 nesting gulls were counted on Goose Island and the surrounding islets. Attended nest counts were unavailable this week. No gull chicks were observed.

Northeastern Potholes (Historic Caspian Tern Colony):

34 Caspian terns and 128 gulls were observed loafing on NE Potholes Island. There was no evidence of scrapes or active nesting. The Caspian tern and gull counts on NE Potholes were higher this week, perhaps due to dissuasion activities that were occurring on Goose Island just prior to our survey.

Solstice Island (Historic Caspian Tern Colony):

No birds and no physical signs of nesting were observed.

Unnamed Island in SW Potholes:

3 Caspian and 30 gulls were observed loafing on an unnamed Island in SW Potholes (46° 59.8386' N 119° 20.9172' W).

**Lenore Lake:** Lenore Lake was visited on May 10.

Shoal Island:

60 Caspian terns and 39 attended tern nests were observed on the island. We observed our first confirmation of Caspian tern eggs this year (see *Figure 1* below).



*Figure 1. Caspian terns and gulls nesting on Shoal Island on May 10, 2021 (left). First confirmed Caspian tern egg on Shoal Island (right).*

~200 gulls were observed on the island and were attending nests (see *Figure 1*).

North Rock Island:

No Caspian terns were observed on the island. The formerly occupied nesting colony for Caspian terns on North Rock has not been active in 2021.

226 double-crested cormorants were counted on the island from a boat-based survey. Aerial imagery from May 5 confirmed a minimum of 140 active cormorant nests (see *Figure 2* below). No cormorant chicks were observed.



*Figure 2. Double-crested cormorants and gulls nesting on North Rock Island – Aerial photo from May 5, 2021.*

~200 nesting gulls were counted on the island.

Unnamed Island in North Lenore Lake:

~170 nesting gulls and 2 loafing double-crested cormorants were observed from shore on an unnamed island in the northern end of Lenore Lake (47° 29.8772' N 119° 30.9584' W).

**Banks Lake:** Banks Lake was visited on May 11.

Twinning Island:

~1,150 nesting gulls were observed. Attended gull nests were unavailable this week. One loafing American white pelican were also observed.

Goose Island (Banks Lake):

2 Caspian terns, 2 double-crested cormorants, and 5 American white pelicans were observed loafing on the island.

~510 nesting gulls were observed.

**Sprague Lake:** Sprague Lake was visited on May 11.

On the island's northern interior, ~ 30 Caspian terns were observed from the boat, although the view of this tern colony was partially obstructed by rocks and vegetation. Aerial survey imagery on May 6 confirmed ~60 Caspian terns in the same area (see *Figure 3* below). Due to obstructions, attended nest counts were not available and active nesting (i.e. tern egg laying) has not been confirmed at the site.



*Figure 3. Caspian tern colony on Harper Island in Sprague Lake from May 6, 2021 aerial photos.*

There are three active cormorant nesting colonies on Harper Island. On the northwestern cove/ridge, 569 double-crested cormorants and 132 active cormorant nests were observed in two distinct nesting areas (see *Figure 3* left panel above). On the southeastern bank, an incipient double-crested cormorant colony was observed in a large tree (75 cormorants and 14 active nests). An additional 50 double-crested cormorants and 230 American white pelicans were also observed loafing and foraging on or near the island. Double-crested cormorants that formerly nested in North Potholes may have relocated to Harper Island as counts continue to increase.

~1,225 nesting gulls were observed on the northern end of the island.

**McNary NWR:** McNary NWR was visited on May 12.

Burbank Slough:

32 Caspian terns were observed loafing on a land-bridged peninsula during a morning, shore-based survey. No active Caspian tern nests were observed.

**McNary Pool:** McNary Pool was visited on May 13.

Badger Island:

128 loafing Caspian terns were observed on the north end of the island during an evening survey (see *Figure 4* below). The incipient, interior tern nesting colony, confirmed by the aerial survey on May 5, was obstructed by vegetation. Thus, counts of individuals and active nests for this interior colony were unavailable this week. Counts of this colony will be conducted from aerial photography taken of the colony by drone later this week.





*Figure 4. Caspian terns and American white pelicans on the northeastern side of Badger Island on May 13, 2021.*

~180 American white pelicans were also observed nesting and loafing (see *Figure 4* above). All interior nesting colonies were obstructed by vegetation from the shore.

~677 nesting gulls were observed along the island's west shoreline. Gulls were also observed in the island's interior. An unknown disturbance flushed interior nesting gulls.

#### Crescent Island:

No Caspian terns were observed during an evening survey to Crescent Island. However, nesting was confirmed from aerial imagery on May 5. The first drone survey of Crescent Island will be conducted later this week.

~120 nesting gulls were observed on the island's shoreline. Most individual gull counts and attended nests were obstructed by vegetation.

**Astoria Megler Bridge:** North crib counts from the May 4, 2021 aerial survey of the Astoria-Megler Bridge were conducted on May 13, 2021.

#### Astoria Megler north crib:

1,418 double-crested cormorants and 659 cormorant nests were counted by two observers on the north crib from aerial imagery taken on May 4, 2021. Boat, aerial, and drone surveys of the Astoria-Megler Bridge are scheduled May 31 – June 13 in attempt to estimate peak colony size for cormorants on the bridge in 2021.

## PIT TAGGING OF STEELHEAD AT ROCK ISLAND DAM

Steelhead smolt tagging began at Rock Island Dam on 04/09. As of 05/16, 3,843 hatchery and 985 wild steelhead have been tagged. We will continue to provide total numbers of PIT-tagged hatchery and wild steelhead as they become available.