

Seabird Island News

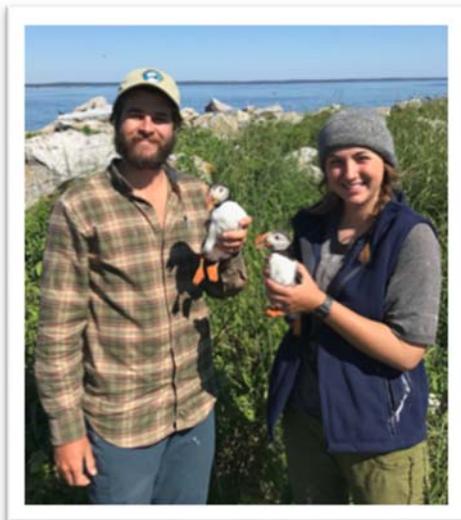
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Seabirds

Puffins

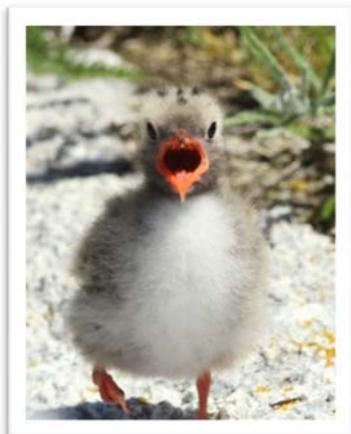
The 4th of July marked the 36th anniversary of puffins nesting at Eastern Egg Rock. This year the team has captured 47 unbanded adult puffins out of 68 total. The active puffin burrow count is now up to 108 this week as they search to discover puffins bringing food to chicks. Last year's count tallied 150 by mid-August. The Seal Island NWR and Matinicus Rock teams are continuing to report good feedings for puffins with the majority of healthy sand lance and white hake. Egg Rock puffins are receiving a similar diet with some herring and occasional Acadian redfish.



Puffineers Matt Dickey and Alyssa Eby hold puffins captured for banding at Eastern Egg Rock

Terns

Unlike last week, feeding studies on the islands are showing a drop off in the number of chick feedings and the quality of food. The nearshore islands of Pond NWR, Outer Green Island, Jenny Island, and Stratton



*Arctic Tern Chick begging.
Photo: Shannon Blake*

Island have all reported this in their tern colonies. Seal Island NWR is seeing the effect primarily in their Arctic Tern population. White hake continue to be in their diets, but they are small and more invertebrates and insects are being noted.

A merlin has continued to attack one of the Matinicus Rock Arctic Tern plots, reducing the chicks from 30 to five. Eastern Egg Rock also witnessed a Merlin taking a Spotted Sandpiper chick. In good news, however, they also personally witnessed a Common Tern take its first flight this week. Go little guy!

Other Bird News

World Seabird Day. On July 3, 1844, the last Great Auk was seen in the wild. To commemorate the day, the World Seabird Union organized July 3rd as a day to reflect on seabirds and their role as bellwethers of ocean health.

Decoys. Curated by Sue Schubel, the Project Puffin Visitor Center opened its new social attraction decoy exhibit 5 July in Rockland, ME. Steve Kress spoke about this conservation method that is now used worldwide.

Bird Sightings. The Seal Island NWR team estimated 162 Northern Gannets in one day and around 35 Wilson's Storm Petrels off shore this week. They are also keeping an eye out in hope of spying the Bridled Tern seen at Machias Seal Island.

Island Life

The islands celebrated Independence Day in a variety of ways. Some managed campfires and SMOREs, hotdogs, corn on the cob, and watermelon. Most reported viewing mainland fireworks from afar, but Jenny Island declared the fireflies best!