

Seabird Island News

Volume 7

10-16 July 2017

Seabirds

Puffins

Seal Island NWR is reporting an increase in herring delivered to puffin chicks this summer, which combined with white hake and sand lance is resulting (so far) in plump pufflings! At Egg Rock, the active puffin burrow count is now up to 122 pairs. The Egg Rock team has re-sighted 11 returning Adopt-a-Puffins so far. The chick of adoption puffin EC26 (nick-named "Runt") was "grubbed" from its very deep burrow on the third try. It was banded, weighed, measured, and found to be in excellent condition.



Finally. Matt Dickey with "Runt Jr." after the 3rd time grubbing under the boulders. Photo: Steve Kress

Terns

Across all islands, terns are fledging. Matinicus Rock and Seal Island have banded many near fledging age Arctic Terns this week. The Seal Island team found that their Common Terns are growing normally, but the Arctic Terns remain underweight. By Saturday Outer Green Island reported that 25 of the remaining 59 fledglings in their productivity sample had taken flight. At Stratton Island, most Roseate Tern chicks have fledged.

Other Bird News

Razorbills. Matinicus Rock conducted its last productivity check this week for Razorbills as most chicks have fledged. They spotted 400 of them on the water this week as they prepare to leave for the season. Bon Voyage!

Great Cormorants. At Seal Island NWR, 22 pairs of Great

Cormorants are raising young this year, protected from eagle predation by Audubon seabird stewards. Only 11 other pairs nest in Maine.

Predators. Despite lighting systems and nightly guards, Black-crowned Night-Heron(s) continue to threaten the remaining terns at Stratton Island. A rare tern-eating muskrat is also suspected of decapitating tern chicks there. A possible mink attack has recently killed about 50 terns at Pond Island NWR. Eastern Egg Rock reports a Merlin and a visiting Bald Eagle. As hungry tern chicks wait to be fed, and move to the edges of the islands they become more vulnerable to gulls and raptors.



Zeke Smith making Stratton Island hot sauce. Photo: JB Smith

Island Life

A mix of wet, foggy, warm weather made for opportunistic days of fieldwork and ocean dips. A welcome respite from pulling invasive plants.

The Seal Island NWR team managed to score lobster from a nearby lobsterman. Stratton Island had a week of visitors, most bearing boxes of strawberries. Hot peppers and a Cuisinart powered by island solar cells, however, were all Zeke Smith needed for making one of his specialties- Stratton Island hot sauce!