

Seabird Island News

Volume 1

June 10, 2019



The 2019 Seabird Island Team at training days on Hog Island

Seabirds

Seabirds and researchers have returned to the islands and the 2019 season is off to a great start! Our 30 island supervisors, research assistants, education assistants, International and Herz Fellows are now in place on the seabird islands and doing outreach on behalf of seabirds. Training, building blinds, clearing invasive plants and marine debris, delivering supplies, and much more goes into getting our islands ready for the summer. Now that all the prep work is done, everyone on our seven seabird islands is ready for an exciting and productive season!

Puffins

The puffins are back and the annual nest watch has begun! Many of the puffin pairs on Eastern Egg Rock, Matinicus Rock, and Seal Island NWR have laid their single egg per season, deep within their rocky burrows.



The first puffin with fish at Eastern Egg Rock as seen through a spotting scope. Photo: Jasmine Lee

This includes cam fan favorites “Milly” and “Willy”, stars of our Explore.org burrow cam. While we eagerly await the arrival of the burrow cam puffling, Eastern Egg Rock chicks have already begun to hatch! Our researchers observed puffins bringing fish back to the burrows on June 3rd, earlier than usual. Egg laying at Seal Island NWR is also early, a hopeful sign for a productive season.

Terns

All four tern species are busy incubating eggs and feeding each other small fish as part of their courtship rituals. In addition, Eastern Egg Rock has reported 26 Arctic Tern nests and 23 Roseate Tern nests. Jenny, Pond NWR, and Stratton Islands have reported Arctic and Roseate Tern nests as well. Stratton Island has also recorded 75 Least Tern nests. Wow!



Roseate Tern interacting with a decoy on Jenny Island. Photo by Dallas Jordan.

Other Bird News

- At least seven razorbills are frequenting Eastern Egg Rock, a hopeful sign that they will someday decide to nest.
- Leach’s Storm-Petrels are being banded on Seal Island NWR, as many as 50 in one night!
- Common Murres are back on Matinicus Rock. The last count was 38 individuals, a record high!

Island Life

Eastern Egg Rock is back again on Instagram and Jenny Island is new this year! Check out life on the seabird islands @easterneggrock and @jenny.island.maine!