

Seabird Island News

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Seabirds

Puffins

Our Eastern Egg Rock team set some new records this week. They have now banded 18 chicks and passed the previous high count of puffin burrows with 152 pairs. On Saturday, they also hosted puffin-loving visitors from the annual Puffin Society trip.



Dr. Steve Kress explains to visitors on Eastern Egg Rock about how the 1st burrows were constructed in his early attempts to bring back puffins to the island. Photo: Tiffany Huenefeldt

Terns

Across all islands, the terns have mostly fledged with feeding and productivity studies coming to an end. The Jenny Island team wished their fledgers good luck as they closed the island this week. Outer Green Island resighted a Common Tern that was banded 11 years ago!

Other Bird News

Predator Update. The Pond Island NWR team finally solved the mystery of scores of tern chick deaths. It is a wily mink! Despite a valiant effort to catch it, the mink has continued to elude the Pond Island team. Likewise, an elusive muskrat is believed to be decapitating tern chicks on Stratton Island- an odd behavior for an animal that is usually a vegetarian.

Weeding. As the tern feeding and productivity studies slow down, the island teams are working hard to pull

invasive plants before they seed. Purple Loosestrife, wild radish and Asiatic bittersweet are the target of hand pulling campaigns.

Sightings. For fun, the seabird team from Seal Island NWR took a trip to the more remote waters off Matinicus Rock and spotted Great, Sooty and Cory's Shearwaters, Parasitic Jaeger, Red Phalaropes and a 15-18-foot Basking Shark! The puffin watching cruises from New Harbor and Booth Bay have also been delighted by minke whales and ocean sunfish.



A "Good Pirate" Keenan Yakola surprised the Matinicus Rock team with several jugs of fresh water. Photo: Matinicus Rock Team

Island Life

Soaked in by fog, the islands were glad to finally see their shoreline when the fog lifted this week. Stratton Island struggled with boat engine problems and hosted 50-60 happy Prout's Neck Audubon Society visitors. Captain Bill Chapman of the "Snowgoose" boat surprised the island crew with fresh lobsters in appreciation of their "Trade Buoys for Lobster" sign.