

Seabird Island News

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Seabirds

Puffins

Despite the harsh weather, our puffin colonies seem to be thriving. New puffin burrows were discovered on Seal Island, and in a curious turn of events, a puffin was seen visiting Outer Green Island. Located in Casco Bay, Outer Green Island is one of the most southerly islands managed by Project Puffin. Puffins typically only come close to shore at breeding colonies, and with the nearest puffin breeding colony 40 miles Northeast at Eastern Egg Rock, the puffin visitor at Outer Green Island is a surprise, although not the first such visitor.

Terns

Heavy rains and intense heat dominated Maine weather this past week, battering the colonies with newly-hatched chicks. While puffins and other seabirds nest in sheltered burrows under rocks, terns nest in the open, and are especially vulnerable to periods of extreme weather. At Seal Island NWR, half of the chicks were lost in some study plots.



Shannon Blake holds a Leach's Storm Petrel. More next week on the storm-petrel census taking place right now in the Gulf of Maine! Photo: Matinicus Rock Team

Other Bird News

- Seal Island NWR has discovered another handful of Razorbill burrows, bringing this year's total to 54

nests! This beats last season's record of 36 active nests!

- A Black-billed Cuckoo was spotted at Matinicus Rock and though a Maine breeding bird, they are extremely rare visitors to our offshore islands!

Island Life

Beyond the extreme weather, the week was eventful with "Island Christmas" on 25 June and Guillemot Appreciation Day on the 27th! The islands crafted and exchanged a variety of goodies for fellow researchers on the other seabird islands such as candles decorated with upcycled lobster bait bags and upcycled fishing/jumping ropes for the island fitness buffs.



Happy Guillemot Appreciation Day! Pancake tribute to Black Guillemots everywhere, and the real deal (below). Photos: Egg Rock Team

Often overlooked, Black Guillemots are seabirds closely related to Atlantic Puffins. Like puffins, they nest in rock burrows and feed underwater on small fish, but don't compete as they eat mostly



bottom fish. The teams celebrated their special day with baked tributes to these lovely red-footed birds.