

Seabird Island News

Volume 3

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Seabirds

Puffins

On Eastern Egg Rock thirty-eight puffin pairs have been sighted feeding their chicks. Seal Island NWR had its first chick this week and Matinicus Rock has banded and measured six puffin chicks. In just a few days, one of these chicks had doubled in weight! We will not know final puffin counts of nesting pairs until mid-August, but these first sightings are causing great excitement amongst the puffin keepers on our islands.

Terns

The first round of tern censuses is complete! On each island, researchers scoured the ground methodically using grids, counting every tern nest they could find and recording the number of eggs. This while keeping their eyes peeled for the nests of Arctic Terns and the federally endangered Roseate Terns in addition to the numerous Common Terns. Pond Island counted 954 tern nests, Stratton Island 1,219, Jenny Island 1,299, and Outer Green Island had a whopping 1,436. These are all time high records for Pond Island, Jenny Island and Outer Green Island. In contrast, Seal Island's tern colony declined by several hundred pairs.

Many of the islands have also reported tern chicks hatching, including at our least tern colony on Stratton Island that has a record high count to date of 93 pairs.



Stratton Island Least Tern. Chick shelter in background. Photo by Wray Gabel.

Other Bird News

Puffin Cruises. Puffin boat tours narrated by our education interns are now in full swing, leaving from both Boothbay and New Harbor. There have been good Puffin sightings so far, despite some rough seas. Rare birds have also been seen along the way including 10 Northern Gannets and a Manx Shearwater.

Razorbill Romps. There have been six new Razorbill chicks banded on Matinicus Rock and they too are quickly doubling in size.

Lots of Laughs. Eastern Egg Rock conducted a Laughing Gull census with 1,620 nests counted. Eastern Egg Rock is now by far the largest Laughing Gull colony in Maine!

A Magnificent Sighting. A very rare tropical Magnificent Frigatebird landed in a tree on Stratton Island.



Zeke Smith caught this image of the exotic Magnificent Frigatebird. For a size comparison, a tern soars in back.

Island Life

Eastern Egg Rock was also visited this week by 21 teen birders from Hog Island Audubon Camp. They helped build a bird blind, assisted with trail maintenance and delightedly collected puffin observations.

Despite some wet weather that kept interns inside, spirits were kept up through the joys of baking. Stratton Island successfully used their homemade outdoor pizza oven and we hear there's nothing like a Matinicus Rock chocolate cake!