

Seabird Island News

Volume 2

June 16, 2019

Seabirds

The seabird islands are bustling with life this week as we start to welcome the first of the new puffin, razorbill, tern, and other seabird chicks to the world! Despite some extreme weather, our researchers are hard at work weighing and measuring chicks to check their health and performing tern surveys. They weren't alone, however, with help this week from Hog Island campers and mainland staff. Teamwork!

Puffins

Pufflings are hatching! What a treat to witness the first feedings, knowing that a new generation of puffins is with us.



An Atlantic Puffin Chick or "Puffling." Photo: Steve Kress

This year the puffin hatch started at Eastern Egg Rock on June 3rd when a puffin parent delivered the first beak load of food. A week later on June 10th, Matinicus Rock found their first puffin chick of the season. Then, consistent with the usual west to east hatching sequence, our team at Seal Island NWR discovered 'their' first chick on June 16th. Let's hope there are many more to come!

Terns

The first Common Tern census of the season is complete, and we have some impressive numbers! Common Terns set new records at several islands with many nests. Stratton Island recorded 1,244 Common Tern nests, Outer Green Island reported 1,717 nests, Jenny Island reported 1,618 and Eastern Egg Rock reported 989. The counts at Outer Green Island and Jenny Island are all time high counts.

A team from USFWS and SRP Science Director, Don Lyons attached GPS tracking devices to Common and

Arctic Terns. These tags will help us learn where the terns go for catching food, presently a secret

Our researchers also captured 64 Arctic Terns on Matinicus Rock for a banding study. This is the most captured on the island since 2012. Great job, team!

Other Bird News

- We recovered geolocators from two Manx Shearwaters on Matinicus Rock. These may tell us where the birds travelled over the past year.
- Seal Island NWR reports the hatching of its first six razorbill chicks.



Hog Island Teen Camper, Janelle Booker, observes a Leach's Storm Petrel. Photo: Raymond Van Buskirk

Island Life

Teen campers from Hog Island Audubon Camp tasted research life, doing blind stints, weeding invasive plants, and cleaning up marine debris.

Heavy rain, dense fog, and strong winds kept many of our researchers indoors throughout the week, but that doesn't mean they haven't been busy! Bad weather days are great for entering data and cooking.