

Seabird Island News

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Seabirds

Our islands are becoming quieter as many young terns begin to fledge. Puffins, which are usually among the last to leave, are already heading to sea. However, our researchers still find their schedules filled with banding Black Guillemots and Leach's Storm-Petrels.



Penelope Murphy enjoyed the company of a Northern Gannet during research duties at Stratton Island this week and got this great photo.

Puffins

Puffin sightings are still high on the puffin watching trips to Eastern Egg Rock. Several flocks of more than a hundred are sitting on the water, making us wonder if they are about ready to begin their migration, even though this is about a week earlier than usual. Bucky the puffling, the star of the Seal Island cam on Explore.org is continuing to grow and consume more than a dozen fish per day. He is about 4 weeks old now, and is growing a waterproof set of feathers that he will need while floating at sea for the next several years.



A Common Tern chick receives a herring from its parent. Photo: Steve Kress

Terns

Our researchers are reporting that almost all of the tern chicks

have fledged. Many juveniles have been spotted clumsily flying by on the boat tours to Eastern Egg Rock, teetering and wobbling through the air with their short tails.

Other Bird News

- Stratton Island's shorebird count now includes a Stilt Sandpiper. The team also re-sighted a banded Semi-palmated Sandpiper. Other notables include an American Wigeon and a Sooty Shearwater.
- Seal Island reported its first southbound songbird this week: a Yellow Warbler and a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron.

Island Life

Island researchers Sam and Dallas left Jenny Island briefly for a local wedding, a fun celebration and an opportunity to share their island life with the nearby community.

Ocean Sunfish are frequently seen on the Egg Rock tour boats. They are of interest for their remarkable shape and slow swimming, but because they likely occur when warm water from the Gulf Stream enters the Gulf of Maine.



An ocean sunfish, or mola, was observed near Eastern Egg Rock. Measuring about four feet in diameter, it was small as the species goes. Some reach nearly 6 feet long. Photo: Steve Kress