

Seabird Island News

Volume 7

July 8, 2018

Seabirds

Puffins

It was a great week for Maine puffins. Our observers on Matinicus Rock reported plenty of hake and haddock in the chick diets; on July 2, Seal Island NWR reported 18 feedings to one chick in a single dawn to dark tally of puffin feedings. So far this year, frequent feedings of small haddock are fueling rapid chick growth, especially at Seal Island and Matinicus Rock. Egg Rock puffins are feeding mostly hake and haddock.

As of July 4, Egg Rock had 102 active burrows. This date is meaningful because puffins recolonized Egg Rock on July 4, 1981- nearly a century after the colony was extirpated by hunting in 1887.

On Egg Rock, photographer extraordinaire, Jean Hall, spent 5-days photographing 10 of our Adopt-a-Puffins. This bodes well for exciting updates for puffin adopters.

Terns

On July 7th, Stratton Islanders celebrated their first Least Tern fledging and Pond Island discovered their first Roseate Tern chick on July 4th! Some surprising tern sightings included a Least Tern on Seal Island on July 6th and a Black Tern on Egg Rock on July 7th.



Earl Johnson holds a Common Tern chick during last week's tern productivity study at Seal Island NWR.

Other Bird News

- The Seabird Restoration Program in cooperation with the MDIFW, USFWS and Iain Stenhouse of the Biodiversity Research Institute continue to census Leach's Storm-petrels in the Gulf of Maine. In recent years, their population has declined in the North Atlantic. The project is possible because of funding from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund.
- Peregrine Falcons and at least one Merlin continue to spook the terns at Pond Island, but despite the danger, many are bringing home multiple fish in their beaks and most chicks are thriving.
- Prey items for terns and puffins continue to be of great interest and sharp eyes are spotting surprises, like the tern that brought home a red hake, a first for our study.



A Common Tern holds a red hake, a species that typically lives on the bottom. This first record for Egg Rock may be from a fish pirated from a Black Guillemot. Red Hake typically live on the ocean floor.

Island Life

The 4th of July brought celebrations, bonfires with s'mores, cookouts and even a lobster bake! The extreme weather of the past week also made things particularly interesting for island crews, who had to adjust their schedules to accommodate heat waves, torrential downpours, and sustained wind up to 30 mph.