

Seabird Island News

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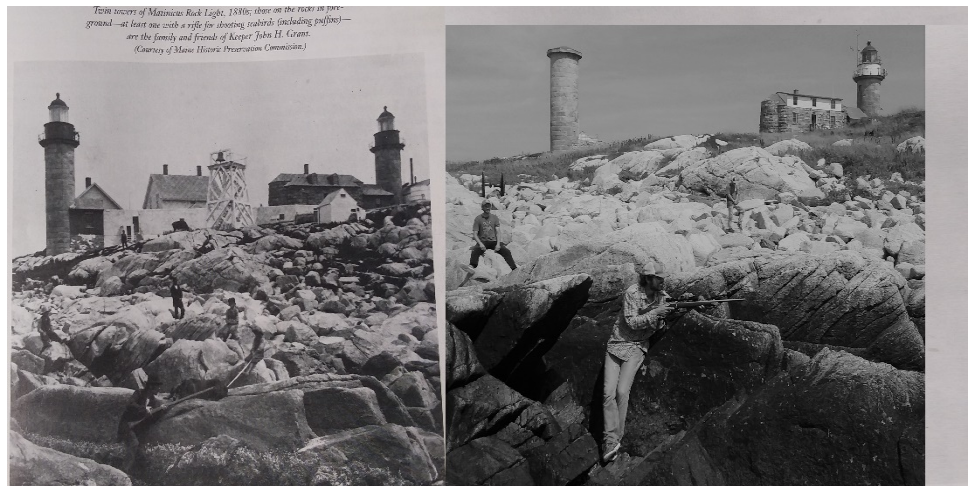
Island Life

The Seabird Restoration Program has nearly completed its research on the islands and almost all blinds, camps and kitchens are now shuttered for the year. Teams on the alcid islands will remain a bit longer, with the Seal Island NWR crew staying into September to discourage eagles from attacking Great Cormorants.

Seabird teams from throughout the Gulf of Maine converged at Hog Island Audubon Camp for the 34th annual GOMSWG (Gulf of Maine Seabird Working Group) meeting on 10 August. Researchers presented island reports on success of each island's bird colonies, availability of forage fish, and predator issues. Additional presentations focused on Maine's Breeding Bird Atlas program, use of satellite tags to track Common Terns, overwintering movements of alcids at Machias Seal Island, and how terns are



The Eastern Egg Rock research team presents their island summary at GOMSWG meeting: Photo: Huenefeldt



Ten towers of Matinicus Rock Lighthouse, three on the rocks in foreground—at least one with a rifle for shooting rabbits (including puffins)—are the family and friends of keeper John H. Coates. (Courtesy of Maine Historic Preservation Commission.)

Audubon researchers (right) at Matinicus Rock (now part of Maine Coastal NWR) reenact poses of the light keepers who occupied the island (and hunted seabirds) in the 1880's (left). Photo: Matinicus Rock Team

responding to changing climate conditions in the Gulf of Maine.

Seabirds

Eastern Egg Rock's final active puffin nest count is 178, up 6 pairs from 2017! Despite an abundance of chicks, there has not been an abundance of food for puffins. Chicks are fledging late and are small and underweight. Razorbills and Black Guillemots, on the other hand, who rely on different fish, have had a successful breeding season. Likewise, Common and Arctic Terns across most of the Gulf of Maine were challenged by inclement weather and apparent food shortage. While Roseate and Least Terns had a successful year. Here's hoping for successful migration!



In contrast to 2017, the 2018 puffin fledglings were lighter in weight and most were slow to mature. Photo: Eastern Egg Rock Team