

SUMMER WITH THE SEABIRDS

The life of a Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge Island Researcher

Archive 2014 – July, June and May

Welcome!

Welcome to the Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge Island Researcher blog! Here you'll find posts and multimedia projects created by island researchers spending the summer on the refuge's many islands. Please check back often for updates!

Archive for July, 2014

Business as usual on Petit Manan

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#) on July 25, 2014

Lots to do here on the island; as you might know our terns this year are running a little later than in past years, and later from the other Maine Coastal islands. We speculated from earlier observations that it could be due to a lack of good fish during courtship. Fish have continued to be unusual, in that we have a large variety of fish, some of which we have never seen terns carrying before.



Arctic tern with unknown fish

So after post-tropical storm Arthur rolled through with over 60mph winds and torrential rain, it is sad to say that about a 3rd or more of our chicks didn't make it through the storm and a few alcid burrows were flooded. Then after a week of nice weather, when everything was just getting back to normal, the next storm moved in and we were socked in with another storm and lost even more tern chicks. So as you might guess there was a lot to catch up in the colony after all the storms, but we didn't lose hope and the

strongest survived. Of the ones who made it, they did very well and we had our first of many arctic and common tern fledglings taking their first flight on July 20th!



Our first Arctic tern fledgling with adult

As for our Alcids, all our puffins and guillemots are growing rapidly in their burrows. We have an increase in puffin and razorbill burrows this year and they seem to be doing well.



22 day old Black Guillemot chick



Atlantic Puffin chick

Recently we found a usual guillemot that had two black wing bars like a Pigeon Guillemot. We replaced the old, worn band on its leg and discovered that it was banded here on the island in 1998!



16-year-old Black Guillemot looking similar to a Pigeon Guillemot

One last exciting thing that happened here on PMI was that MCINWR came out to the island and attached a nanotag to one of our razorbills! After banding it, Linda implanted the nanotag and the razorbill was put safely back into his burrow. Now we will be able to track "Percy" our razorbill (we needed to name it and it seemed fitting to name it after Julia's 21 year old cat who was actually named after a Maine lobsterman!) wherever he goes. More on that soon!

-PMI Crew



Linda attaching transmitter on Razorbill

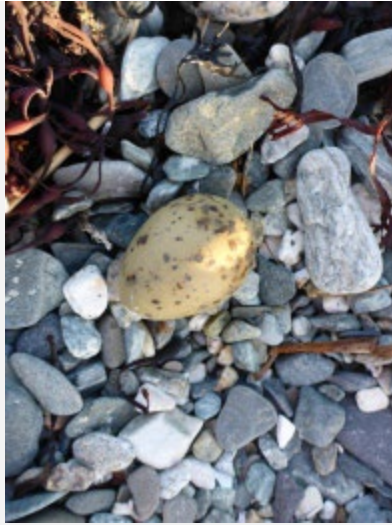


Wayne placing "Percy" the Razorbill with new transmitter back into its burrow

Last Days on Ship Island

Posted in [Ship Island 2014](#), tagged [Black Skimmer](#), [Common Tern eggs](#), [Common Tern fledgling](#), [Common Terns](#), [Ship Island](#), [Sunsets](#) on July 24, 2014

Rose and Mary here with a quick blog before the last sunset of our summer on Ship Island. It has been a wonderful time and we are both leaving here with many memories that we'll keep for a life-time. From finding the first common tern eggs



Literally our first egg found on May 28

to our 4th of July grilling party with burgers, 2 pies, chips, cherries, and corn on the cob...



Rose preparing our all-out Fourth of July "burgers."

to identifying a black skimmer after tropical storm Arthur (a somewhat rare species up this far north, typical after southern storms)....



Black Skimmer, Common Tern and Eider legs



Common tern fledgling exploring the beach.

to watching fledglings fly and touch the water for the first time.

We have learned so much about common terns and island living. As far as we can tell so far, without having computed our final numbers, our colony did very well this year. While the peregrine falcon and merlin visited nearly daily after chicks hatched, they did not disturb the terns enough to affect the whole colony. The larger of the storms down-poured over 3 inches of rain at times, yet miraculously we had very little loss due to the weather. The Ship Island Common Tern colony is a prime example of a restoration island success story and it has been wonderful to be a part of this effort. Thanks to the Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge Staff for giving us this opportunity and for the amazing seabird restoration and management work that you do!

Hasta luego! (Until next time!) Rose and Mary



Last walk on the tern colony beach.



One of our last sunsets. Enjoy the rest of summer!

The Brothers VS Hurricane Arthur

Posted in [Eastern Brother's Island 2014](#) on July 18, 2014

The past few weeks on The Brothers Islands have been interesting, mainly because hurricane Arthur came through with winds almost reaching 70 mph. During hurricane Arthur a volunteer biologist, Steve, was out here on the Brothers Islands while Baxter and I were on our break. When Baxter and I returned to the island after our break Steve said the outhouse had blown away 10 feet, and our large observation blind was blown 20 feet. To our surprise the blind had barely taken any damage. All Baxter, Linda, Jim, Steve, and I needed to do was put the stand back up and secure it back into place.



Baxter and I feared that the tern chicks might not have made it through the hurricane, but surprisingly enough both tern chicks are alive and well. Although the chicks can be sneaky and hard to find hiding in the knee high grass they are both developing at a promising rate. As you can see from the picture they have grown up so much since they first hatched. The other two tern eggs are completely intact as well, in fact they are both piping. We expect to see them hatched very soon. Every other day we check the tern chick's productivity which means we measure their wing cord and the weight of the chicks.

Baxter took a great photo of the two tern chicks together:



Just as our tern chicks are developing, so are our guillemot chicks. Many more have hatched, so Baxter and I have started a two day rotation for burrow checks. This allows us to gather more rate of growth information since the chicks grow up so fast. Here is a picture of Baxter measuring the wing cord of a guillemot chick:



More updates coming soon,

Jason

[Living that \(Ship\) Island Life](#)

Posted in [Ship Island 2014](#) on July 10, 2014

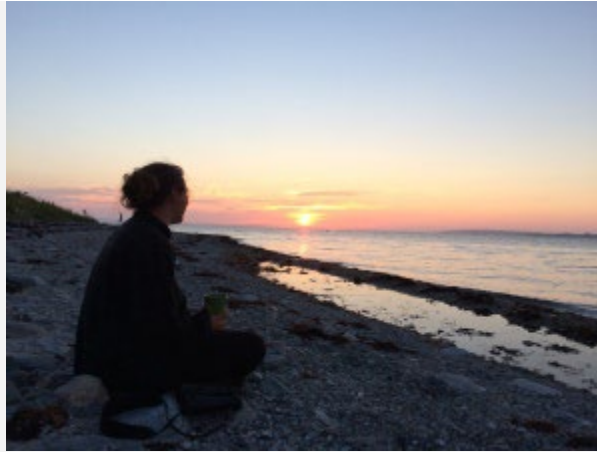
I just finished up a week on Ship Island and had such an amazing and unique experience! This summer I have been interning with US Fish and Wildlife up at Moosehorn N.W.R. in downeast Maine as a part of the Career Discovery Internship Program. My whole summer has been a whirlwind of new experiences and this week was no exception. To give the Island Supervisor Mary a break, I jumped right in fulfilling the normal day-to-day duties here on Ship. Having pretty much zero experience with birds, I admittedly arrived a bit nervous not knowing exactly what I would be doing. However, that feeling quickly faded as everyone jumped in to teach me the ropes.

I would have to say my favorite task of all would be productivity plots. It is amazing to physically see and measure the growth of a Common Tern chick. By monitoring the chicks daily I was able to see the different stages in growth from the starring of an egg to using a 300 g scale as the chicks continued to rapidly grow. I even avoided, for the most part, getting pooped on!



Banding a chick during productivity plots.

Ship Island is a beautiful place with an important goal to protect and to monitor the Common Tern. It's been great having a chance to take part in that even for this short amount of time. In all, this week was not only a great educational experience but also a time for me to unplug and soak up the "Island life". I saw the majestic sunset on my own private beach, and I even had the chance to take my first solar shower! It was surprisingly refreshing!



Enjoying the sunset with a cup of tea.



The infamous solar shower.

Thanks again for the opportunity!

Adrianna

How to Beat the Heat, Seabird Style

Posted in [Metinic 2014](#), tagged [Arctic Terns](#), [chicks](#), [Common Eiders](#), [guillemots](#), [Metinic](#) on July 7, 2014

As the heat of July settles in on Metinic, our birds, especially all those chicks we have, all need ways to keep cool.

Like humans, birds need to keep their bodies at a specific temperature. However, birds lack one of the key ways humans keep cool: the ability to sweat. So how does an animal covered in feathers and/or down make it through the summer without suffering from heatstroke? (No, the answer isn't air conditioning or lots of ice cream)



A guillemot chick, sporting a black down coat for the summer

This isn't that hard for swimming seabirds like Common Eiders. Even though these ducklings are dressed in down coats for the summer, they don't run the risk of overheating because they hop straight in to the cold coastal waters, sometimes on the day they hatch! Adults and ducklings alike will spend almost all their time in the water, occasionally hopping up onto rocks to preen.



Six eider ducklings tag along with mom

However, chicks that aren't ready to swim on day one can't just jump in the water for a nice cool dip. Black Guillemots have found one of the simplest solutions to keeping their chicks comfortable – keep

them out of the sun. Along with providing protection from hungry gulls, a guillemot's burrow is shaded and cool. The chicks won't leave the burrows until they are ready to swim, and then they can chill like the eiders.



A guillemot parent and two chicks (one freshly hatched) in a nice cool burrow

So what if you're stuck on the land, without a shady burrow like, say, a tern chick? You start out getting a little help from mom and dad. When tern chicks are small enough, they can be brooded by their parents. This behavior does double duty: it keeps chicks warm on cold nights and mornings, and provides cool (or at least cooler) shade during hot days.



An adult Arctic Tern brooding a chick

Some chicks still seem to want to be brooded even when they are far too big.



A patient Arctic Tern parent "broods" a chick

If the parents are off fishing, something they spend most of their time doing once the chicks are a bit bigger, the chicks have to keep themselves cool. The simplest strategy is familiar to anyone with a pet dog: panting. Adults and chicks alike can be seen panting on hot days.



A panting tern chick

Once mobile, usually just a few days after hatching, tern chicks can seek out shade on their own by escaping under a rock or into the cooler grass. It isn't unusual for us to find "chick tunnels" marking the path chicks take back and forth between their nests (where they get food from their parents) and a safe spot in the grass. We also put out three-sided structures known as "chick huts" in more exposed areas without much natural shelter.



A Arctic Tern chick (colored for a provisioning study) takes shelter in a shady chick hut

Hope all our readers are staying cool as well!

-Amy

Petit Manan Behind the Scenes

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#) on July 3, 2014

Another day on Petit Manan Island, yes there is major seabird action going on here on our island right now – our terns and alcids are hatching daily and eider chicks are running about, but this post is all about what goes on behind the scenes, the things that keep this island going, the things that maybe aren't so glorifying.

So to keep everybody in line here on PMI we have something called "Worm Duties." Everyday, someone new is the "worm-of-the-day" and they have to basically do all the house chores, daily weather, and alcid counts of the day. To make being the "worm" extra special, we have to wear the worm hat while working. As we say it has special powers and makes you work harder, maybe even faster so you can take it off quickly!



The worm hat holder



Compost dumping worm



Working worm

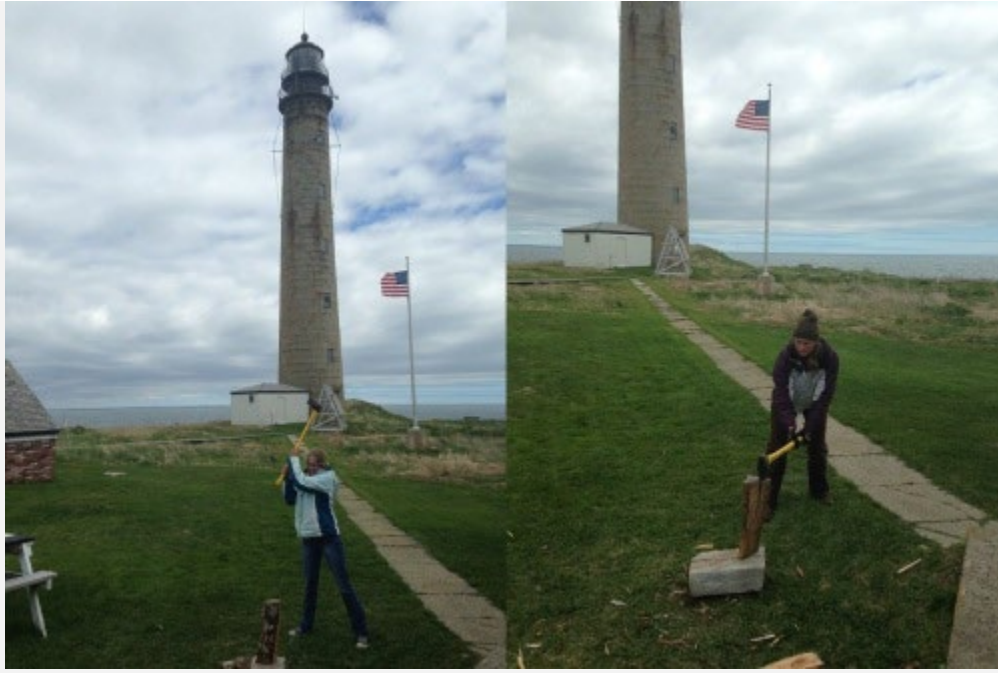


Recycling worm



Worm mowing the lawn

As well as other island duties:



Learning to chop wood



Ongoing bow net tweaking



Building chick houses



Cleaning boat ramp

Wow I'm exhausted just looking at all these working photos, oh no got to go! Time for Tern Productivity checks then Leach's storm petrel checks and data entry!

-Wayne

Archive for June, 2014

Chicks, Chicks, and More Chicks!

Posted in [Metinic 2014](#), tagged [Arctic Terns](#), [Black Guillemots](#), [guillemots](#), [Metinic](#), [Metinic Island](#), [savannah sparrows](#), [Spotted Sandpiper](#), [tern](#) on June 30, 2014

We're up to our elbows in chicks out on Metinic. In my last post, I mentioned that our tern chicks have started to hatch. A week later, our little fluffy friends are growing up fast.



Arctic Tern Chick

We can often see our older chicks testing out their wings, although they are still a long way from being airborne.



An Arctic Tern chicks, stretching its wings

Our resident Savannah Sparrows also have chicks of their own. These buzzy-sounding birds build a classic cup-shaped nest in grass on the ground. It can be easy to miss until you see the five squawking mouths.



A nest full of Savannah Sparrow chicks

Spotted Sandpipers are Metinic's only nesting shorebird this year, and our first sandpiper chicks have made an appearance. Despite their small size and their resemblance to a cotton ball standing on a pair of toothpicks, these chicks are up and running around by day one. They do have a parent around to keep them out of trouble though!



Spotted Sandpiper adult (left) and chick (right)

Finally, we found our first Black Guillemot chicks. It's hard not to love these little black puffballs. Guillemots are also the only alcid to lay two eggs at once, so guillemot chicks usually come in pairs.



Our first pair of Black Guillemot chicks

Of course, Syd and I didn't want to miss out on the fun of Guillemot Appreciation Day, so we celebrated in the most delicious way we could!



Our tasty guillemot cake

More updates as our chicks continue to grow!

-Amy

Blue Hill Bay Census

Posted in [Ship Island 2014](#), tagged [Acadia National Park](#), [Blue Hill Bay islands](#), [common tern chicks](#), [MDI](#), [Ship Island](#) on June 30, 2014

When you live on an island for a summer it is quite a big deal when you get to step off your island for any period of time. We have found here on Ship Island that even going out in our rowboat a few hundred feet from shore to pick up a grocery delivery can give you a totally new perspective for the day. Having been on the island for over 6 weeks now, it was a treat for me to tag along with Jim (our boat operator/maintenance/all around go to guy) on the Blue Hill Bay Census. While all the islands we have staff living on are surveyed during the GOMSWG census, Jim has the duty of boating the various bays and inlets up and down the coast searching areas where seabirds have nested historically and recently. Here is a picture leaving Ship Island...



Jim and I did a four hour loop throughout the Blue Hill Bay region stopping to look at places such as Sand Island, The Nub, Goose Rock, Indian Point ledges, Folly Island, and The Hub. We were excited to report a thriving little colony of around 150-200 Common Terns on Conary Nub. Not only did we discover a 4-egg clutch (fairly rare), but also more developed chicks than here on Ship Island, suggesting they hatched around a week and a half earlier.



Finally, while this may sound a bit crazy to all our readers out there who live on the mainland, I would like to comment on how wonderful it was to see trees and to smell trees. While we have various types of vegetation out here, including fragrant sea roses, wild irises, and rustling tall grasses, none of them really add up to having a “tree” status. We do have a grove of chokecherry “trees” and our giant cow parsnip is now at least 6 feet tall, but it’s just not the same as a spruce/fir forest. Here is a view of a typical spruce studded island called The Hub off Bartlett Island with the mountains of western Mount Desert Island (Acadia National Park) in the background.



Cheers!

Mary

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) on June 29, 2014

This week has been an exciting week for the Brothers Islands. Not only have we switched island technicians (Baxter has switched with Rose from Ship Island for the week), but tern eggs have hatched and we have two little tern chicks! It has been years since tern chicks have been recorded on the Brothers Islands so it is a big success for us. The parents of the chicks have become very protective of their chicks and have been observed chasing gulls, ravens, and even a few bald eagles. When Rose and I go to check for the chicks the terns start dive-bombing us and screeching, apparently they don't enjoy our company too much.



Tern Chick just poking his beak through his shell

On another positive note we have regularly been seeing four or more terns when we do our observations, which means there is a least one additional tern pair that is interested in our colony. These new additions of terns are usually around to help protect the chicks. We haven't been able to determine if there are more than three terns nesting on this island yet but it seems very possible.



Two tern chicks fully hatched

Not only have we been seeing more terns on Eastern Brothers, we have been seeing more razorbills as well. It is not uncommon for us to see a few razorbills each day now, where earlier this summer it was rare. Rose saw seven razorbills swimming with the floating decoys at one point this week. I observed 2 razorbills scouting out Eastern Brothers together which gives me some hope of razorbill inhabitation.



The moon and the sun together on a beautiful day

For our guillemot burrow research we cover all of the burrows on Eastern and Western Brothers that we have found, in a week's time. The sections of the island are done in a three day rotation. Today for the first time we heard and saw a guillemot egg piping, the guillemot hadn't quite made it out of his shell yet, but will be next time we check that section of burrows.

Until next week,

Jason and Rose

Alcids!!!

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#), tagged [alcids](#), [Guillemot](#), [Petit Manan 2014](#), [Puffin Chick](#) on June 29, 2014

Black Guillemots have begun to nest on Petit Manan and for the last couple weeks we have been busy locating burrows and marking them for monitoring. Other alcids, including Razorbills and Atlantic Puffins have begun to nest, too! Rock crevices and under washed up wood is where Guillemots choose to nest. Searching for burrows includes kneeling down to rock or wood level and looking for 1-2 eggs or an adult Guillemot. Finding them could get tricky!!



Searching a tricky burrow under the boat ramp.



More burrow searching...



Guillemot eggs.

June 27th was Guillemot Appreciation Day and to celebrate we made paper Guillemots to send to the other islands. Here on Petit Manan, every day is Guillemot Appreciation Day with our own special Guillemot hanging over the kitchen table.



We searched the whole island perimeter and found 65 Black Guillemot burrows. The island crew will return to the marked Guillemot burrows every 3 days for monitoring. Also, we have 48 Atlantic Puffin burrows and 4 Razorbill burrows.

Today, we checked burrows and found 3 Guillemot chicks! Andddd while we were checking for Guillemots we found our first Puffin chicks and Razorbill chicks!!



Puffin Chick!!

Looking forward to all our alcid chicks hatching!

-Brittany

Tern Trapping Time

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#), tagged [Arctic Terns](#), [chicks](#), [Common Terns](#), [hatching](#), [Trapping](#) on June 26, 2014

For the past few weeks, a lot has been going on with Petit Manan's tern colony! We have been focusing much of our time on trapping and banding both Arctic and Common Tern adults, which is an essential part of our research.

In order to capture terns, we use two types of traps—the bownet and treadle trap—to catch adults on their nests. First, we temporarily remove the eggs from the nest so that the bird does not crush its eggs if it struggles in the trap. The real eggs are replaced with painted wooden ones, and a trap is set over the nest. Trappers then hide out in a blind and wait for terns to return.

The bow net is a spring trap that is set behind the nest cup and triggered when the adult sits on two monofilaments stretching over the "eggs." This trap has a metal frame and netting which springs harmlessly over the bird to contain it. The treadle is a small cage trap with a door, which the tern must walk through to trigger its closing mechanism.



Common Tern being removed from a treadle trap

When a tern is captured, a researcher runs out from the blind to retrieve it and replaces the fake eggs with the real ones. Each tern receives a metal band with a unique number on one leg. Every Arctic tern also receives a field readable band with an alphanumeric code on the other leg, so that it can be easily resighted from a distance. We take several measurements, including mass, wing chord (wing length), and head/bill length before releasing the tern.



Julia banding an Arctic Tern



Wayne releasing an Arctic Tern

By banding these birds, we can learn about their migration paths, longevity, nest site fidelity, and productivity. Banded birds may be re-trapped or resighted in the future. If a banded bird is found along its migration path or on wintering grounds, we can learn about where it has been travelling. If a bird that was banded as a chick is later found as a nesting adult, we know that it has lived to breeding age and laid eggs. Speaking of chicks...



First Common Tern chicks hatched on 6/20



First Arctic Tern chicks hatched on 6/22

We found our first tern chicks of the season on June 20! Every day we are finding more chicks, and banding them as well. As the season continues, we will be closely monitoring their growth, survivorship, and diet to learn about the colony's overall health. Stay tuned for more posts about these little cuties!

-Anna

Petit Manan Census Complete!

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#), tagged [census](#), [eider](#), [FWS](#), [GOMSWG](#), [gull](#), [lighthouse](#), [Maine](#), [MCINWR](#), [Petit Manan](#), [PMI](#), [puffin](#), [razorbill](#), [seabird](#), [tern](#) on June 24, 2014

On June 19 and 20 the island crew, along with the invaluable help of Refuge staff and volunteers, completed the annual Gulf of Maine Seabird Working Group (GOMSWG) Census where over the course of

two days we attempted to count every nest on the island belonging to a tern, gull, or eider. In order to do this, we all spread out in a line and called out nests to the person recording.



Census crew working around the PMI light tower

During the census we came across a few oddities, such as Laughing Gull eggs in Eider nests and gull nests with double clutches.



Laughing Gull egg nestled in the warm down of an Eider nest

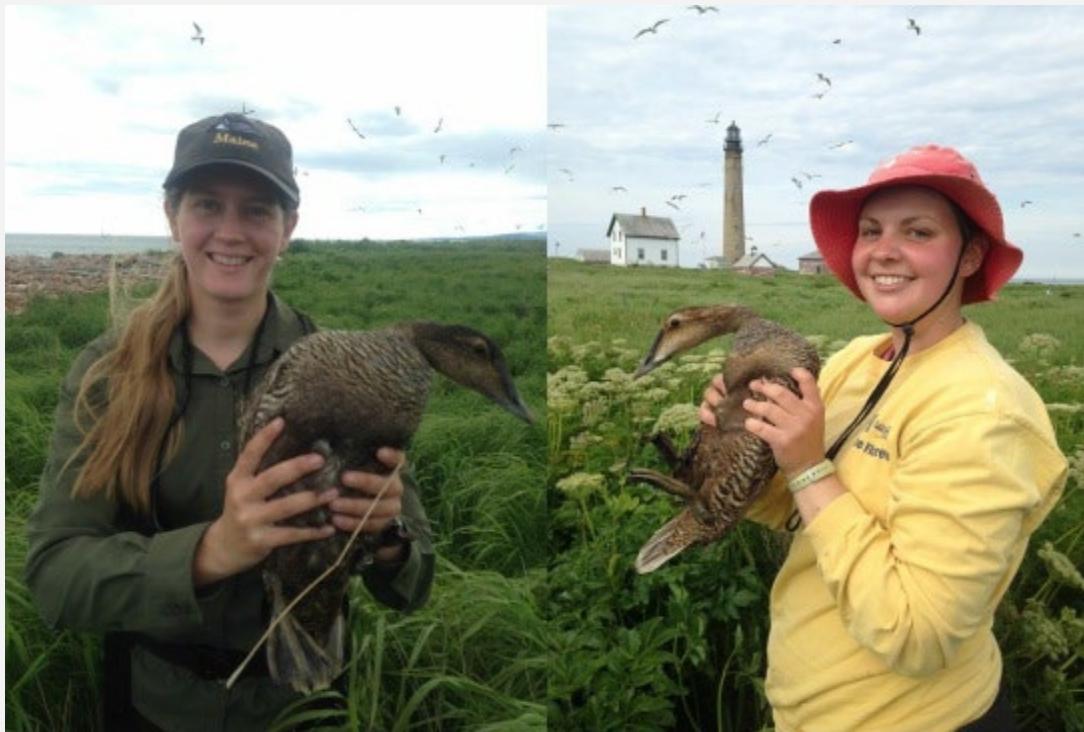


A double clutch of gull eggs – normally they have only 3. This could be a case of two females nesting together.

In addition to all these nests, we also found female Eider hens sitting quietly on their eggs in the vegetation hoping to go unnoticed. Usually, we leave these ladies to their incubating, but during census we catch them to read their bands or apply new bands if needed, helping us keep track of them in the future.



Mother Eider sitting quietly on her nest



Julia and Brittany as successful Eider-catchers!

After tallying up all the numbers and accounting for all the Common and Arctic Tern nests we marked with colored flags, we have 1203 tern nests, 670 of which are Commons while 533 are Arctics, 521 Laughing Gull nests, and 54 Common Eider nests! We do the puffin/guillemot/razorbill census a little

differently, using the number of burrows we find throughout the season combined with how many we see on the island from day to day, so we will have those numbers later. Keep posted for more exciting updates about all those eggs.

– PMI Island Crew

GOMSWG Census and Hatching

Posted in [Ship Island 2014](#), tagged [common tern chicks](#), [Common Terns](#), [GOMSWG](#), [hatch date](#), [Ship Island](#) on June 23, 2014

We've had an exciting last week here on Ship Island. Everything is really rolling now! On June 16th we completed the annual GOMSWG (Gulf of Maine Seabird Working Group) census. After factoring in a correction factor, we had a total of 403 nests, which is on par with last year's count of 436. On the weekend of the 13th a storm coincided with the highest tide of the month, which flooded at least 30 known nests and more than likely 50 more. Because of the flood tide and the slow start to the season, we were all surprised by such a high number, however, we continue to see new eggs throughout the colony.



On top of the census, we have been busy getting ready for our productivity studies. Depending on the size of the colony we try to monitor 5-10% of the colony. Throughout the season we check the egg status and then hopefully the chick status after that. We use these selected nests as a way to gauge the success/failure of the whole colony. As has been posted in the past, terns can be quite aggressive towards intruders, which includes us. When working in the colony this includes their constant kipping at you, but they also enjoy hitting you and defecating on you. Here is Rose searching for a chick and getting hit by a common tern...this one actually tore her jacket!



And now because it's the only appropriate thing left to do: I am happy to announce the hatching of our first chicks! We noticed starring (appears as slight cracks in the eggs) and then piping several days ago, and on Saturday the 21st the first chicks of the colony hatched. Here is a picture of the newest residents of Ship Island.



Cheers!

Rose and Mary

Preparing for the Guillemot Hatch at The Brothers Islands

Posted in [Eastern Brother's Island 2014](#) on June 22, 2014

This week at The Brothers Islands we have been preparing for the hatching of guillemot eggs by locating and numbering each barrow with numbered rocks so we can keep track of the nests we need to visit throughout the week. So far in our island egg hunt we have found 52 nests, and each guillemot can have anywhere between 1 to 3 eggs. This is an example of what a numbered guillemot nest would look like:



About two weeks ago Sara and Jim from the Milbridge office came to visit our island and needed Baxter and I to help them set out floating razorbill decoys. At the time we were all unsure of how affective these decoys would be because of the strong currents tangling them and the rough waves damaging them. To our surprise the decoys held up nicely and real razorbills started noticing and landing with the floating decoys. Before long the razorbills even started visiting our island. The razorbills landed on the rocks and inspected the decoys that were placed on the island. Here is a picture of a razorbill I was able to snap some pictures of it in the water, and later inspecting our island:





Here is a picture of the floating decoys we put out:



Unfortunately we have not yet had any razorbills nest on our island.

In my free time I have been trying to catch fish. For the first couple of weeks I did not have any luck catching fish so I didn't think that I was going to be able to catch any fish off the islands. To my surprise, after searching the coast of the island for different places to fish I started catching pollock. They were fairly small but after catching a few Baxter and I made a delicious meal out of them.



Until Next time,

Jason

Arctic Tern Uptick on Metinic

Posted in [Metic 2014](#), tagged [Arctic Terns](#), [census](#), [GOMSWG](#), [Metic Island](#) on June 22, 2014



Summer Solstice Sunset

Just a quick post today, but plenty of exciting news!

First and fluffiest, we have our first tern chicks!



Almost there – hatching is hard work!

Second, we completed our GOMSWG Census, and we have some great numbers. In our colony, we counted 428 nests. After applying a correction factor (essentially an estimation of how many nests we missed) we estimate there to be about 477 tern nests on Metinic this year. That's an increase of more than 100 nests from last year!



Our 2014 Census Crew at work

Special thanks to volunteers Frank and Sandy, Interns Megan and Kim, and Refuge Staff Beth, Michael, Brian, and Jay for helping us with our census.

Finally, we picked up all of our species ratio flags (see my previous entry, Egg Enigmas for more information), and came up with an estimate of 89 Common Terns to every 100 Arctic Terns. When we apply this ratio to our total counts, we get 256 Arctic Tern nests and 220 Common Tern nests. Our estimation of Arctic Terns on Metinic has increased more than 100 pairs, or 200 individual birds, from last year. This is especially exciting because Arctic Terns have been struggling in recent years.



Chicks are cuter when they have a chance to dry out

Now we just have to wait and see how well all our chicks do!

– Amy

40 mph Winds on The Brothers

Posted in [Eastern Brother's Island 2014](#) on June 16, 2014

Greetings from The Brothers Islands! It has been an interesting week here on the islands with drastically different weather conditions each day. Some days were hot sunny and calm and others were rainy with peak winds of over 40 mph. Spirits have been high however and we have done our best to stay warm and dry as we scramble across rocks looking for visitors to our little slice of Scotland.



Jason and Baxter enjoying a sunny day

The nesting season continues to truck along with dozens of black guillemot nests popping up daily. Our new common tern pair (or Stewie and Rita as we like to call them) are finally peacefully at home on Eastern Brothers. Our resident common tern Reggie has even been joining in on protecting their new nest.



Common Tern Pair (Stewie and Rita)

Stewie and Rita have successfully produced two new eggs in their new nesting spot just a stone's throw away from our main tern decoy setup. We have been keeping tabs on the nest regularly and we are hopeful that they will hatch by the end of the month of June!



Two Tern Eggs

In other news, for several weeks we had a pair of Canadian geese nesting on Western Brothers and we are excited to say that their 5 eggs have hatched. Soon after we discovered that the eggs had hatched the pair departed from the island and have not been seen since. Hopefully the goslings made it through their several mile swim to a safer location on the main land or a neighboring island.



Hatched Goose Eggs

Until next time!

-Baxter

There Are No Corners on a Round Island

June 15, 2014 by MCINWR

Greetings from Ship Island!

I am coming to the end of a short detail with the Maine Coastal Islands N.W.R., spending 5 days observing and monitoring Ship Island's Common Tern breeding colony. As a fisheries employee with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I have thoroughly enjoyed having this opportunity to expand my biological horizons, taking a few, precious days to slow down my pace of life and just observe. I arrived at the Seal Cove boat launch on Thursday morning, and was left on the island that afternoon, allowing the other permanent resident (of two) to take her break on the mainland. It was an odd feeling to see the boat drive away, but it was also quite exciting. Who doesn't dream of being marooned on an island?



Ship Island Coast

Having worked with birds for only one summer, I was rather rusty on my bird ID. However, Mary, the wonderful Island Supervisor, graciously taught me what I needed to know (still in progress) and we continued the tasks at hand. Creating productivity plots, doing scope surveys of bird species on adjacent islands, directional foraging studies, observations in the blind of the colony, morning bird counts- all of these activities require serious observation skills and an attention to detail. I felt the need to slow down, to take in the behavioral details of the birds, and to note the many changing faces of this small island. Every weather shift, cloud pattern, bird call, budding flower, unusual smell, wind direction and sea level were accounted for and had a great influence on our surroundings. Daily priorities shift from mainland to island life as dramatically as the tides.



Spotted Sandpiper Eggs



Common Tern

One of my deepest impressions from these past few days has been the desperate line between life and death here. A thriving brood of Mallards flushes from the vegetation while simultaneously, just across the water, a Black Backed Gull feeds on eider chicks. Stormy seas wash Common Tern eggs out of the nest while Spotted Sandpiper eggs remain safe in a crevice on the bluff. A Peregrine Falcon successfully dives into the Tern colony and a Song Sparrow feeds its chicks with a freshly caught insect. The island is a microcosm of the constant interplay between life and death, survival of one species over survival of another. It can be quite heartbreaking to come across a drowned chick in the wrack line, but this is

nature with a sentimental cloak undone. One is left only with a deep respect for the birds that invest incredible amounts of time and energy returning to this spot to breed every year.

Tomorrow I'll return to my life on the mainland, away from the sound of breaking waves, the smell of the sea, and the sound of seals in the distance. I've learned and observed an amazing amount in my short time here, but feel confident that the birds of Ship Island remain in the best possible hands.



Sunset on the Island

~Serena

Posted in [Ship Island 2014](#) | Tagged [birds](#) [island](#) [terns](#) [Maine](#)

Return Trip: Retrieving a Geolocator on Metinic

June 14, 2014 by [MCINWR](#)

Arctic Terns have arguably the most impressive migration of any bird – they travel from the Arctic to the Antarctic and back again just about every year of their lives. While we've known for a while *where* the terns travel, *how* they get there has been something of a mystery. Do they travel along the coastline? Do they take a direct route from Maine to the Antarctic coast? Do they do a marathon flight from pole to pole, or make pit stops along the way? These questions were nearly impossible to answer until very recently, for the simple reason that following a single tern (or even a flock of them) is nearly impossible. Terns are small birds – a little over 100 grams, or 3.5 ounces – so they can't be equipped with heavy satellite tags. They also do most of their traveling over water, so the odds of spotting a tern on its migration are slim.

Enter the light-level geolocator, here to solve these problems and answer many of our migration questions



A geolocator, wrapped in a waterproof cover, attached to the leg of an Arctic Tern

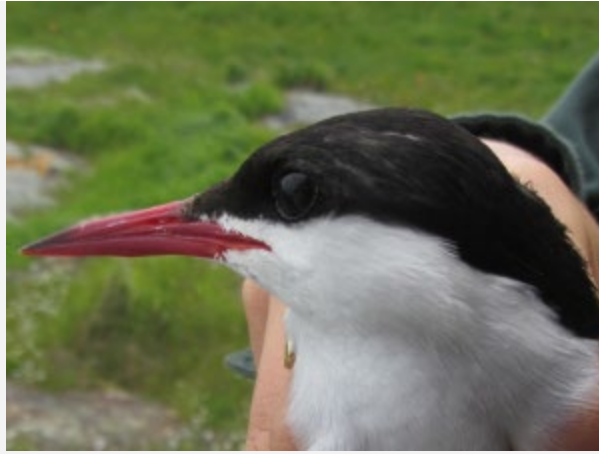
Four years ago, in the summer of 2010, the Refuge deployed 30 geolocator tags on 30 separate Arctic Terns. These tiny tags are lightweight enough that they don't hinder the terns as they travel (in fact, they've been used on even smaller birds, like Purple Martins). They work by using detecting light levels and recording the time of sunrise and sunset every day. Since the length of day and the time of sunrise and sunset are slightly different at every point on the globe, this information can be converted into a rough map of everywhere the tag, and by extension the tern, has been.

A pretty miraculous little gadget, isn't it? But there's a catch: to reduce weight, the geolocators don't transmit the data they gather, they simply record it. To get at all that information, the tag must be retrieved and physically attached to a computer. This means the tagged birds must be recaptured and the tags removed before they do us any good.



A geolocator (right) and a field-readable band (left)

Recapturing a bird can be difficult. The best way to do so is to find the bird's nest, and use a trap that springs while the bird is incubating. That, however, requires the bird to be able to find a mate. Last year on Metinic, Zak and I spotted a geolocator-equipped tern who had eluded capture for 3 years, but we couldn't get our hands on him because he didn't have a mate or a nest. He spent all summer trying to court various female terns with fish, but there were no takers.



Hard to believe such a good-looking guy couldn't find himself a date

This year, our lonely tern returned and found himself a mate. Syd and I set up a trap called a bow net trap, which is triggered by the tern attempting to incubate a set of fake wooden eggs (the real ones are safely stored in a blind so they aren't crushed by a struggling tern). It took a couple of tries, but today we succeeded in capturing the handsome gentleman we have nicknamed Giovanni (Geo, for short).



Syd and Geo

Geo was released back to his mate and eggs, probably glad to be rid of his extra baggage. The geolocator will be returned to Refuge staff, who will hopefully be able to use it create a roadmap of Geo's travels from the past four years. That could be up to eight trips between Maine and Antarctica – more than 70,000 miles!



Geo, free of the geolocator and sporting a shiny new band

Posted in [Metinic 2014](#) | Tagged [Arctic Tern](#), [Geolocator](#), [Metinic](#), [Metinic Island](#), [Migration](#), [Terns](#), [Trapping](#)

Petit Manan is Eggcellent!

June 13, 2014 by [MCINWR](#)



A Puffin relaxing on the rose granite

Greetings from Petit Manan! Things are well under way here on this island oasis – after all the mating happened, eggs of all shapes, sizes, and colors began to show up all around the island. We have eggs from 2-3 different Tern species, as well as Laughing Gulls and Common Eiders. Some tern eggs are brown while others are green, and some have beautifully woven nests of grasses and shells while others are laid on bare rock.



A typical brownish-gray Common Tern egg



Some heavily-mottled eggs in a very intricate nest



A full clutch of beautiful turquoise/green Arctic Tern eggs laid almost on bare rock. These birds would rather decorate with shells and sticks and feathers than weave the intricate nest bowls of Common Terns



A Common Eider nest concealed among the Angelica and lined with soft, warm down

We also have three different species of alcids nesting among our rocky shoreline: the Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, and Black Guillemot. Each species, just like with terns, chooses nesting sites among the rocks with different criteria in mind, and they decorate their homes quite differently as well. But these eggs are not as easy to find...



Wayne checking the contents of a Guillemot burrow...



... and taking out the eggs for a closer look.



Puffins lay a single mostly-white egg in a warm nest of dried grasses brought into the burrow by the beak-full



Razorbills, on the other hand, lay one large, speckled egg on the bare rocks. You can tell these eggs from Guillemot eggs by the lack of a “ring” formed by the speckles at the large end.

Until next time!

– Julia

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [eider](#), [Guillemot](#), [gull](#), [Maine](#), [Petit Manan](#), [puffin](#), [seabird](#), [tern](#), [razorbill](#)

Eagle Rescue on The Brothers

June 8, 2014 by [MCINWR](#)

It was another exciting week on The Brothers Islands! We rescued an injured juvenile bald eagle with the help of Jim and Linda from our Milbridge headquarters and the Coast Guard.



On Thursday the 5th of June Jason and I noticed a juvenile bald eagle perched on Western Brothers. After crossing to Western Jason and I quickly walked to the area where we had spotted the eagle and to our surprise he stood still even when we were only 5 to 10 feet away. It became very clear that he was having difficulty either walking or getting into the air. After consulting Sara, one of the Milbridge biologists we decided to leave the bird alone until the morning when a potential rescue could be arranged.



Injured Juvenile Bald Eagle

The next morning Jason and I spent several hours searching Western Brothers with no luck until suddenly the juvenile casually flew over the tallest hill on the island. After circling the island gulls began to chase and harass him and it became apparent that he was having difficulty flying. After the gulls got the eagle over the water he began to get closer and closer to the water until a gull dove at him and kicked his back sending him splashing into the water. After about an awkward 150 yard swim the eagle managed to reach the shore and started to dry off.



Juvenile Bald Eagle Dries of After a Long Swim

The eagle glided around the intertidal zone between the Eastern and Western Islands and landed on the rocks where it placed its head against its chest. Once Jim and Linda arrived Jim immediately grabbed a net and began climbing into the intertidal in order to get behind the eagle. The rest of us slowly worked our way to the front side of the bird and just as Linda raised her head and alerted/distracted the eagle Jim was able to get the net around it.



Jason Holding Bald Eagle



Baxter Holding Bald Eagle

The bird was extremely skinny, put up very little fight and was likely on the verge of hypothermia. Hopefully our efforts were not in vain and this young eagle will be able to successfully hunt on the Maine coastal islands soon.

-Baxter

Posted in [Eastern Brother's Island 2014](#)

PMI's Animal Antics

June 6, 2014 by MCINWR

Snowy owl!? Yes PMI had a snowy owl preying on Atlantic puffins and Black guillemots. It was first spotted flying from Puffin Point and hunting all around the alcid colony. After several days and numerous attempts to discourage it from the island with pyrotechnics, we finally had to take action by setting out soft-coated leg-hold traps to try and capture the owl without injuring it and then relocating it. Now, placing the four traps that we had would be tricky as this particular owl didn't perch or roost in any one spot twice. So I figure if it likes puffins so much the best way would be to dig out this old Puffin decoy I found stashed in our tool shed and put him to good use. We set up the traps and decoy just on the edge of the alcid colony at sunset just far enough so no alcids would fall into our traps.



Puffy the decoy working hard on the job

The next morning "Puffy" the puffin decoy did his job! Two traps were set off and Puffy had his first battle talon scar on his chest! After that morning the Snowy owl was never seen on the island as of this posting which has been over 3 weeks! So now with this peculiar predator off the island our resident birds can get back to doing their thing, which is....



Guillemots mating



Puffins mating in the water!



Razorbills Mating on Puffin Point



Arctic Terns Mating



Common Terns Mating



Even species that we don't like to encourage have started mating now that the snowy owl is gone!

– Wayne

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#) | Tagged [arctic](#), [decoy](#), [gull](#), [Island](#), [lighthouse](#), [Petit Manan Island](#), [PMI](#), [puffin](#), [razorbill](#), [seabird](#), [snowy owl](#), [tern](#), [trap](#)

Eggs and Things on Ship!

June 5, 2014 by [MCINWR](#)

Hey Everyone!

The first couple weeks here on Ship Island have been fantastic! We have had great luck with the weather and are actually just hitting our first patch of all-day fog. We found our first Common Tern nest on 5/29 and the rest of the colony is following suit. We have identified 63 nests so far and terns are still showing up! Common Terns are the only species of terns that we have here. We do however also have Spotted Sandpipers, sparrow, warblers, and Mallards nesting here. Some of these later birds have hatched already!



They grow up so fast!



For some reason a snail joined these Song Sparrow eggs.

While doing blind work Mary and I get to watch what the terns bring in to feed their mates. It's actually very exciting as you try to follow the birds with your binoculars and either identify the food or snap a picture before they gobble it down. As of late, the gulls and terns in the area have taken to eating Clam Worms. These worms might seem a little strange out of water but they have a beautiful iridescent green to purple coloring as they swirl around in the water to clean themselves of sand. Most of the worms are around ten inches long and quite hilarious to see our small terns carrying.



What we believe to be a herring.

The research that we do for birds here is very rewarding, however we do have other responsibilities to help take care of Ship Island. One of the most important things we do is remove invasive species. The primary one here is garlic mustard (*Allaria petiolata*). The island had recently been covered in garlic mustard but Maine Coastal has been working towards removing the invasive for the past eight years. We have been testing different control methods, cautious in what methods we use in order to not affect the other species on the island. Currently we spend most warm days hand pulling the adults (the plant is biennial) before they go to seed.



The nightmare when you weed around Cow Parsnip.

Till Next Time!

Posted in [Ship Island 2014](#) | Tagged [Clam Worms](#), [Common Terns](#), [garlic mustard](#), [invasive species](#), [Maine Coastal Islands](#), [Mallards](#), [Rag Worms](#), [Ship Island](#), [Sparrows](#), [tern](#)

Egg Enigmas on Metinic

June 4, 2014 by [MCINWR](#)

Getting a handle on how many terns are nesting on Metinic (or any tern colony) is fairly simple: count up the nests and multiply by 2. However, Metinic has two species of tern, Arctic and Common, and figuring out which nests belong to which species can be tricky.



Whose egg are you?

Like most terns, Common and Arctic Terns both lay their eggs in simple nests called scrapes. The eggs of both species are essentially identical – oblong, with brown spots on a blue, brown, or olive background. Common Terns typically nest in grassier areas and have 3 eggs per nest.



A typical Common Tern scrape

Arctic Terns prefer more open rock or cobble and usually lay only 1 or 2 eggs.



An Arctic Tern scrape

However, it is possible to find an Arctic Tern with 3 eggs in its nest, or a Common Tern with eggs up on a rock, so these differences are not enough to determine whose eggs are whose. The best way to tell who laid a particular batch of eggs is to watch who does the incubating.

To do this, we begin by locating a group of nests visible from a blind window. We place a pink flag next to each nest whose species is unknown. This helps us find the nests from the blind, since the eggs are very well camouflaged and the blinds are usually some distance away.



There is a nest on the rocks, I promise! Now just imagine trying to spot it from 20 feet away – the flags make life a lot easier!

Next, we hop into a blind, pull up a scope, and watch. Usually within a minute or two, adult terns will settle onto the nests and resume incubation. With a scope or binoculars, we can tell the adults' species.



A short, red bill like that means this nest belongs to an Arctic Tern

After that, we replace the pink flags with either a red flag (for Arctic Terns) or a blue flag (for Common Terns).



A red flag, indicating an Arctic Tern nest

So why is all this important? Once we're done flagging nests, we'll gather all the flags back up and tally up the number of Common versus Arctic Tern, then use our census number to estimate how many of each species we have on the island this year. For example, last year we marked 64 Common Tern nests and 37 Arctic Tern nests, or 63% Common and 37% Arctic. Our mid-June census found 330 total nests on the island, so we estimate there were 209 Common and 121 Arctic Tern pairs nesting on Metinic last year.

We're excited to see how our numbers compare to last year!

– Amy

Posted in [Metic 2014](#), [Uncategorized](#)

Petrel Patrol

June 4, 2014 by [MCINWR](#)

What is that sound walking to the outhouse in the dark of night?! It's a Leach's Storm-Petrel! Its call is a spooky one to hear for a person like me unacquainted with the "giggling" sound. I heard my first petrel call here on Petit Manan. Pretty cool!

While the other inhabitants of the island are roosting at night, Leach's Storm-Petrels are active searching for a mate and a burrow dug from the soil. They are a secretive, nocturnal, and pelagic species only returning to land to breed and active at night to avoid predation. Petrels lay one egg that is incubated for 37-50 days and chicks fledge in September or October.



Julia with a Leach's Storm-Petrel adult

Early in the season, we venture out in search of petrel burrows. Our goal is to mark 20 active burrows with colored flags. How do you know it's active? You reach into the burrow (1-3 feet in length) to find a nest cup, nesting material, or a petrel! Often burrows curve, so a burrow camera can be used to reach where your whole arm cannot. One indication of Leach's Storm-Petrels is their musty smell at the entrance of a burrow.



Wayne smells a petrel



Burrow entrance



Julia holding the camera and Anna wearing the viewing screen



Burrow camera in use

Later in the season we will return to the flagged burrows and determine the presence of an egg. Then return again to check for a hatched chick. In the meantime, we will continue with our tern and alcid activities. Look for Petit Manan's next post for some exciting news!

-Brittany

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#) | Tagged [burrow checks](#), [Leach's Storm-petrel](#), [Petit Manan 2014](#), [Petrel](#)

A week of firsts on The Brothers Islands

June 2, 2014 by MCINWR

Hello again from The Brothers Islands!

The weather has been drastically changing over the course of the week. Most of our mornings have been wet and foggy which creates a very cool eerie feeling as we conduct our morning count of the Islands.



Foggy day on Eastern Brothers Island

The afternoons however have been beautiful, with clear skies and amazing sunsets.



Sunset from Western Brothers

Despite the extremely foggy mornings, quite a bit has happened this week on Eastern Brothers Island. The new common tern pair that has been visiting our island on a regular basis has started copulating.

They have also been showing behavior attributed to nest selection and creation. We will be monitoring their progress over the next few days and keeping our fingers crossed for eggs.



The new common tern pair

Jason and I also began our first series of black guillemot burrow checks of the season and found 11 eggs. It is truly amazing how small some of the crevices containing eggs are. Hopefully their spelunking efforts will result in healthy protected chicks.



Black guillemot burrow

Stay tuned for more updates about our flourishing little island.

-Baxter

Posted in [Eastern Brother's Island 2014](#)

Archive for May, 2014

Posted in [Uncategorized](#), tagged [buoys](#), [Common Terns](#), [Metinic](#), [Metinic Island](#), [Sheep](#), [Terns](#), [trash](#) on May 29, 2014

Hello from Metinic! I'm Amy, and If you're a regular reader of this blog (there must be a few of you out there!) you might remember me from last summer. This is my third summer working on a seabird island for MCINWR, and I can't tell you how glad I am to be back on Metinic. Joining me this year is Syd, a recent University Maine graduate, and Maine native. This is her first summer living on a seabird island. Our first task on the island has been a bit of spring cleaning. Over the winter, trash and debris have a tendency to wash up into the colony, so Syd and I have been picking up bags of trash including the ordinary (plastic bottles, aluminum cans, a lost sandal or two) and the unusual (snow shovels, cans of cheez whiz, and a section from a car dashboard). We've also rounded up some buoys.



Lots of buoys.



Our other job for the first few days on the island was to send Metinic's year-round woolly residents south for the summer. The sheep of Metinic normally have the run of the entire 300+ acres of Metinic, but during the summer, they

are restricted to the southern end of the island so that they don't disrupt the colony or accidentally step on a nest. Thanks to help from Refuge staff and volunteers, we managed to herd the whole group out of the colony and down to their summer home.



Syd helps a lamb that was separated from the flock

Our terns seem to be appreciating their cleaner surroundings. About 300 of them have been house-hunting and checking out potential nest sites



Common Terns going house hunting

Best of all, a handful of birds have really settled in: we found our first eggs yesterday!



Our first egg!

The countdown to chicks has begun! In the meantime, we'll be sure to update you on the other happenings on Metinic, so stay tuned! – Amy

Migrant Flurries on Petit Manan

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#), tagged [Migration](#), [Passerines](#), [Petit Manan](#), [Warblers](#) on May 28, 2014

During the past few weeks, we have enjoyed watching the migrating passerines that pause to rest and refuel on Petit Manan. On the mainland, many migrants are spread far and wide throughout expansive forest habitat, often bouncing around high in the trees. However, here on PMI we have the rare opportunity to see songbirds up-close in the intertidal. Flies buzzing among the rockweed provide a perfect meal for these hungry birds. Since Petit Manan covers 16 acres and has only one tree (a twisted spruce that is a few feet tall), migrants are easily visible and concentrated within a small area. It seems almost surreal to find Blackburnian Warblers like this one hopping along the rocks, since this species normally feeds high in the treetops.



Wilson's Warbler



Ovenbird



Black-and-White Warbler



Northern Parula



Magnolia Warbler



White-throated Sparrow (top) and Black-throated Blue Warbler (bottom)

Many of these migrants have traveled all the way from wintering grounds in Mexico, Central America, and northern South America. It is amazing to think that such tiny birds can travel this far, and continue even further northward to breed. Passerines often travel by night to avoid predation, and we sometimes hear them calling after dark as they resume their journeys.

We look forward to having more migrant visitors, and adding to our quickly growing bird list!

-Anna

Enjoying the sun on The Brothers!

Posted in [Eastern Brother's Island 2014](#) on May 26, 2014

Greetings from the Brothers! This is Jason's and my first season working on the islands off the coast of Maine and it has already been a very exciting experience. The first four days here on the Brothers were so sunny I think we actually got tan believe it or not. Waking up early every morning and using a small inflatable dingy to cross the small channel to Eastern Brothers has been quite an entertaining experience and surprisingly a dry one too. After scaling rocks and exploring every nook and cranny reachable on the island I think we are finally becoming true caretakers of this small slice of Scotland.



Looking East to Eastern Brothers Island

Although Bald Eagles greet us every morning it appears that our presence is deterring most of the predators from staying long on the Island. This is great, especially since hundreds of Black Guillemots have returned to the island. Their tiny squeaks create an incredible symphony in the mornings which coupled with their awkward water landings makes them quite an interesting bird to monitor. Although Reggie our resident Common Tern appears to be doing all that is in his power to scare away new Terns that fly to Eastern Brothers we have seen as many as 7 new Common Terns circling in groups around our decoy setup. A few pairs have even been bold enough to land for the day.



Reggie protecting his decoy friends

I am hopeful that the terns will continue to come back and begin nesting on Eastern Brothers.

-Baxter

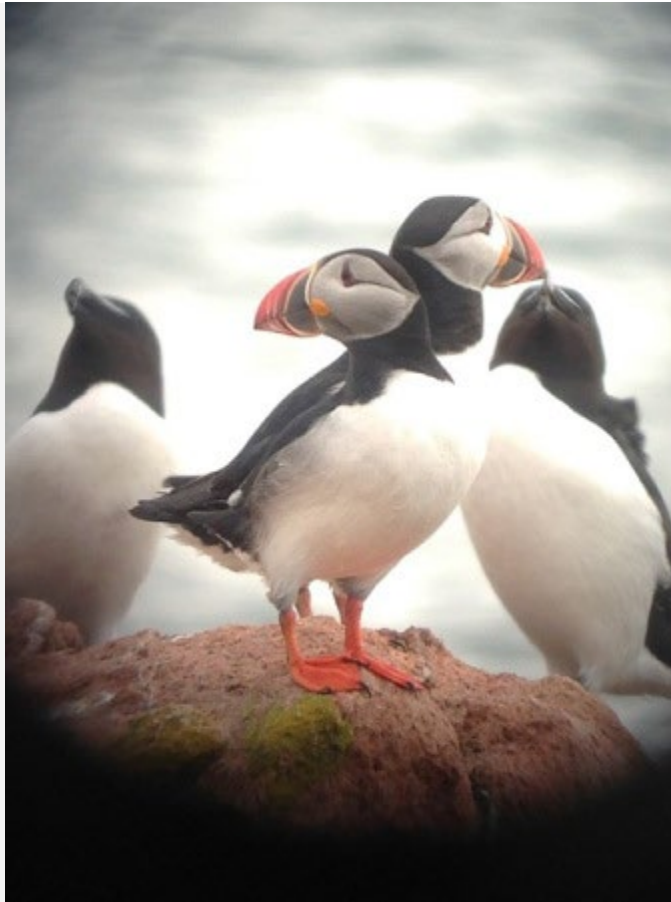
2014 Petit Manan Season Begins!

Posted in [Petit Manan 2014](#), tagged [lighthouse](#), [Maine](#), [Petit Manan](#), [puffin](#), [seabird](#), [tern](#) on May 23, 2014



Petit Manan

Back to Island life! It's been three years since I've lived on a Maine island and I'm glad to be back. Dug out all our gear, threw it together and off we went. "We" as in Julia and I – we have been dating for nearly three years and are working together this summer with two other technicians: Anna and Brittany. We are all biologists with varying amounts of experience and we all hope to have a great season with the terns and alcids here on Petit Manan.



A puffin and razorbill pair through the scope.

We arrived on May 7th and 20th with an ominous greeting by a Bald eagle perched on top of the boathouse. Unpacked all our gear and settled into our new home for the summer – a beautiful 4-bedroom historic building. That first night I was outside and heard the first Arctic and Common terns of the season as well as the unique calls of Leach's storm-petrels! It was great to finally hear them again. Woke up the next morning, looked out my window to see Atlantic Puffins and Razorbills loafing on the rocks. How could it get any better? Time to climb the 137-step spiral staircase up Petit Manan's 119ft lighthouse (second highest in Maine) to do morning alcid counts. Wow what a sight to finally be looking down on flocks of terns and guillemots from above. A seabird biologist's dream! Oh no, what's that? A Snowy owl!?

-Wayne



Snowy Owl for the first time in over a decade on Petit Manan!

And So It Begins...

Posted in [Ship Island 2014](#), tagged [Blue Hill Bay](#), [Common Tern](#), [Island](#), [island living](#), [Maine Coast](#), [Ship Island 2014](#) on May 20, 2014



"Research birds on a coastal Maine island for 12 weeks? Sure!" was my first thought. I had never researched anything but black bears and birds are a different concept altogether. Experience has taught me that it doesn't matter if you have no experience; you just have to be open to it and dive right in. The Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge allowed me to do just that. What I wasn't prepared for was the moment the boat left. Imagine packing up two totes with all you will have for a summer, enduring two days of training, and being dropped off on a small island with someone you just met the day before yesterday. Imagine the boat driving away and knowing that your entire life relies on them coming back and your next three months will be spent getting to know the stranger next to you. I can't explain that moment when the boat leaves, when you know all you have to contact the outside world is a phone, your only means of leaving is a dingy. What I can tell you however is that I am a week in and I don't regret it for a second.

Ship Island is in Blue Hill Bay, just southwest of Mount Desert Island (Acadia National Park). From the island, my supervisor, Mary and I have a gorgeous view of Cadillac Mountain and the small coastal islands that surround us. East and West Barge are covered in seals, cormorants, and gulls. Trumpet Island is slightly larger and covered with common eiders. The past week Mary and I have set up an outhouse, cut trails, documented species, and put together our new home for the summer. Terns are our main focus here and we are excited to let you know that we have seen them every morning! Lately they have even returned at night. We have high hopes that it will be a good season for them. If you want to know more about living on a Maine island and about the tern colonies, then keep up with our blogs. Thanks so much for reading! Till next time!

Rose & Mary

(Yes, together we make Rosemary).



View of Trumpet Island!