

Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge



June 14 – 27, 2015 [Issue 6]

Photo Credit: USFWS/Peter Paton

A Message from Monomoy

More firsts occurred for the Refuge this week as LAGU, LETE, and ROST chicks have graced us with their presence on South Monomoy Island! We have LETEs and COTEs nesting on Minimoy and BLSK seen loafing outside of the colony. You name it, we have it! Our biological programs continue to progress at full steam ahead, with plover chicks fledging and oystercatcher chicks at the brink of fledging. Not quite as far along are the hordes of ruffled COTE chicks scuttling about.

With July 4th right around the corner, we welcome our last addition to the Monomoy family, Mark Sudak! Mark will be serving as an interpretive intern this summer. One last remark, see below for final tern census numbers!

2015 Field Season Update

This is a weekly synopsis of biological activities on South Monomoy, North Monomoy, and Minimoy Islands. Information within this report is subject to change. For up to date information, please contact Refuge Staff.

Bird Sightings

Double-crested cormorant	Blue-winged teal
Ring-billed gull	Green-winged teal
Iceland gull	Gadwall
Bonaparte's gull	American black duck
Killdeer	Mallard
Great yellowlegs	Northern Gannet
Black-crowned night heron	Horned lark
Whimbrel	Saltmarsh sparrow
Barn swallow	Magnolia warbler
Tree swallow	Common yellowthroat
Least sandpiper	Yellow Warbler
Ruddy turnstone	American goldfinch
Killdeer	Gray catbird
Black-bellied plover	Song Sparrow
Semipalmated plover	Savannah sparrow
Semipalmated sandpiper	Eastern towhee
Short-billed dowitcher	Eastern kingbird
Red Knot	Turkey vulture
Sanderling	Peregrine falcon
Dunlin	Bald eagle
Black skimmer (6/14)	Northern Harrier
White-winged scoter	Osprey
Black Scoter	Red-winged blackbird
Common eider	American bittern
Red-breasted merganser	Virginia Rail

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Photo of the Week



Photo Credit: USFWS/Claire Revekant

Bird Activity

Piping Plovers (PIPL)

32 active PIPL pairs and 4 new re-nests were documented on South Monomoy Island over the past couple weeks, bringing the total number of active nests to 11 as of 6/27. Four nests hatched since 6/14, bringing the total number of active broods to 13, and a combined 53 chicks between them. On 6/18, South Monomoy Island fledged the Refuge's first three chicks, which have since increased to 17 fledged chicks between seven broods!

On 6/15, a partially predated nest was found on Broad Creek Island (BCI) at the south end of North Monomoy Island. The nest was predated by suspected coyote and was subsequently abandoned. The pair was later observed scraping at BCI on 6/27. On 6/27, staff located the first PIPL nest on Minimoy Island for the 2015 season!

The week ending in 6/20 concluded 2 nests lost and 2 nests partially predated. One nest was lost to gull predation on the west side on 6/20 and one nest was lost to abandonment at the south tip on 6/16. Staff noted one nest partially predated by a coyote on 6/16 at Plover Beach and one nest partially predated by AMCR on east Lighthouse Beach on 6/20. Although the latter nest lost two eggs to AMCR predation, the other two eggs successfully hatched.

Additionally, a PIPL adult was found dead at the south tip of South Monomoy on 6/15. The cause of death is suspected avian predated based on puncture wounds found on the bird. On 6/19, a dead PIPL chick was found at the Connection during LETE census. The cause of death was unknown.

43 PIPL pairs have nested on the Refuge since the beginning of the season. Staff will continue to monitor nests/broods and nest search for new nests.

American Oystercatchers (AMOY)

The last nest on South Monomoy Island hatched on 6/17 with one chick, bringing the total number of confirmed chicks to seven between four broods! Three of the four broods are expected to fledge early July with the first on 7/6.

Minimoy was checked twice these past couple weeks on 6/19 and 6/27. One re-nest was found on 6/19, while three additional re-nests were located on 6/27.

North Monomoy Island was surveyed three times. On 6/15, two re-nests were found, one on each end of the island. On 6/22, the nest located at the northern end of the island was lost to suspected coyote predation. The same fate was met on 6/27 for the nest on BCI. With a glimmer of hope, the brood on BCI is still going strong with two chicks expected to fledge in the next couple weeks.

Common Terns (COTE)

Tern census numbers are in, drum roll please! Staff calculated **9203 pairs** in the colony with three nests found on North Monomoy Island and one nest found on Minimoy Island. This is a jump from the 8526 pairs counted last year. Census numbers were adjusted using Lincoln Index (LI), a calculation that takes into consideration nests missed on census date, or human survey error.

In other news, the first COTE chick to reach 15 days old was recorded on 6/26. On 6/14, staff trapped 4 banded COTE adults and trapped/banded 2 unbanded mates, bringing the total to 18 and 15, respectively. To date, 23 COTEs with PFRs have been resighted in the colony.

Productivity demanded staff attention for the week ending in 6/27 due to peak hatching events occurring in the colony. Staff hopes to start feeding stints and continue trapping banded COTE adults next week. In the meantime, Peregrine predation is suspected in the colony after staff found 2 headless, plucked COTE carcasses and three heads on 6/27. Staff also notes coyote tracks outside the colony and 2 BCNH flying over the colony on 6/26. BCNH predation continues to be a problem as two eggs were found predated on 6/26.

Roseate Terns (ROST)

The first ROST nests hatched on 6/14 and have continued to hatch since, bringing the total to eight broods with 13 chicks between them! The remaining three nests have yet to hatch, although R11 is making headway as staff notes one egg started as of 6/27.

On 6/17, three chicks were fitted with PFR bands, F20-F22. On 6/25, staff banded the remaining 10 chicks with PFRs F23- F32 and trapped and banded 2 adults, one from R11 & one from R10, with PFRs F33 and F34, respectively. These blue bands with white characters are designated for Monomoy and will provide insight on ROST survival and

movement. Day stints will continue in hopes of locating additional nesting ROST pairs.

Black Skimmers (BLSK)

Four BLSK were seen loafing outside the tern colony on 6/14. BLSK have continued to be seen by Refuge and Mass Audubon staff throughout the past two weeks. Staff has been closely monitoring to see if the BLSK remain and nest.

Least Terns (LETE)

Staff conducted LETE census on 6/16, 6/19, and 6/20 on Plover Beach, east beach, west beach, the south tip of South Monomoy Island and Minimoy Island. Final numbers concluded 521 nests and over 28 chicks on South Monomoy Island and 11 nests on Minimoy Island (532 total nests)! This is an increase from the 376 nests censused in 2014 and the 261 nests counted in 2013. The first LETE chick was seen on west Lighthouse Beach (South Monomoy Island) on 6/16. See "Photo of the Week" for a look at our LETE chicks!

Laughing Gulls (LAGU)

Census revealed **1424 LAGU pairs** nesting in the colony. This number was adjusted using LI and is an increase from the 983 pairs counted last year.

Roseate habitat restoration Project

Staff took photos of the designated plots on 6/14. The plants continue to be doing exceptionally well!

Staff will continue to document the growth of the plants. More information on this project will follow as necessary.

Nanotag Project

On 6/19, Refuge staff finished deploying the remaining 6 nanotags on South Monomoy Island! Overall, 17 PIPLs were tagged on South Monomoy Island and 8 PIPLs were tagged on South Beach. These birds now join the network of migratory birds fitted with these light-weight radio transmitters. Their movements will be tracked until the end of fall when their transmitters are subject to fall off.

On 6/22, one of Monomoy's tagged PIPLs (KTX) was seen with its mate on Fisher Beach in Truro, MA. That's a 30 mile commute from

his nest lost two days prior to suspected gull predation on South Monomoy Island! KTX and its mate were seen being territorial with a male PIPL raising four chicks without a female present. Mass Audubon monitors PIPLs on Fisher Beach and has been keeping an eye out for tagged PIPLs.

See banner picture on page 1 for a look at a nanotagged PIPL!

Exclosure Study

No new information to report.

Salt Marsh Integrity

No new information to report.

Current & Upcoming Events

Least Tern Census

June 16, 19, & 20

Last Day of Tern Census

June 20

HSC Tagging

June 17 & July 2

Staff Retreat

June 23

June 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				