

Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge



July 5 – July 11, 2015 [Issue 8]

Photo Credit: USFWS/Claire Revekant

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Photo of the Week



Photo Credit: USFWS/Kaiti Titherington

A Message from Monomoy

Though many chicks continue to fledge and explore the beaches of Monomoy, the breeding season will continue for the next couple weeks. This includes the nesting of black skimmer pair, documented with two eggs on South Beach! Staging shorebirds, including whimbrel and dowitchers, have been seen filtering in from the Arctic in increasing numbers. It is during this crucial time that we remember to respect the bird's space as they gear up for staging, soon followed by migration.

We encourage all our visitors to enjoy the beginning of staging season from a safe distance. Don't forget to ask our visitor services staff to borrow a pair of binoculars and ask about their guided tours!

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

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Ring-billed gull | Red-breasted merganser |
| Iceland gull | Blue-winged teal |
| Bonaparte's gull | Green-winged teal |
| Great yellowlegs | Gadwall |
| Whimbrel | American black duck |
| Barn swallow | Mallard |
| Tree swallow | Northern Gannet |
| Least sandpiper | Horned lark |
| Ruddy turnstone | Saltmarsh sparrow |
| Killdeer | Magnolia warbler |
| Black-bellied plover | Common yellowthroat |
| Semipalmated plover | Yellow Warbler |
| Semipalmated sandpiper | American goldfinch |
| Spotted sandpiper | Gray catbird |
| Long-billed dowitcher | Song Sparrow |
| Short-billed dowitcher | Savannah sparrow |
| Red Knot | Eastern towhee |
| Sanderling | Eastern kingbird |
| Dunlin | Turkey vulture |
| Hudsonian Godwit | Peregrine falcon |
| Marbled Godwit | Bald eagle |
| Black skimmer | Northern Harrier |
| Black tern (7/7) | Osprey |
| White-winged scoter | Red-winged blackbird |
| Black Scoter | American bittern |
| Common eider | Virginia Rail |

Bird Activity

Piping Plovers (PIPL)

37 active PIPL pairs and two active nests remain on South Monomoy Island. 14 more chicks fledged this week between 7 broods, bringing the total number of fledged broods to 22, with 49 chicks between them. Nine broods have yet to fledge with 15 chicks between them.

Although no new nests were found or lost this week, one nest at east Lighthouse Beach was found partially predated by unknown cause. One egg and one chick remain from that nest. The PIPL seen previously in the season with a broken leg was spotted with one of its chicks on 7/10 on east Lighthouse Beach.

Minimoy was checked twice this week on 7/5 and 7/10. On 7/10, staff concluded the PIPL nest on Minimoy was abandoned.

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

American Oystercatchers (AMOY)

This was a big week for AMOYs! On 7/5, two chicks were banded from one brood that nested south of Hospital Pond. These chicks each received two yellow with black character PFRs (one for each upper leg) and a service band fitted on the lower right leg. Chicks are banded close to their fledge date. Unlike terns, an AMOY's legs continue to grow as they age to adult size. Later that day, two chicks were banded from one brood on Broad Creek Island. Welcome YE(4P), YE(5P), YE(6P), and YE(7P) to the population! All four chicks were accounted for past their fledge date, with a special surprise, as staff noted a third chick belonging to Hospital Pond brood banded on 7/5. Sneaky birds!

On 7/6, staff attempted to band two chicks hiding out in the marsh north of Plover Beach. Although unsuccessful, staff noted the chick's success on fledging on 7/11. To date, seven chicks have fledged on South Monomoy Island, with one nest and one chick left to fledge. Although no nests are left on North Monomoy Island, the Broad Creek Island pair fledged two chicks this week on 7/10.

Minimoy was visited twice this week on 7/5 and 7/10. On 7/5, staff attempted to capture and band nesting adults with a whoosh net. Due to the busy weekend and commotion

occurring on Minimoy that day, staff was met with disappointed. But no worries! On 7/10, one of the two remaining nests hatched with one chick, with one egg left to hatch.

If you see a banded AMOY, please report their band to the American Oystercatcher Working Group website at <http://amoywg.org/banding-re-sighting/>. See "Photo of the Week" for a picture of one of our banded chicks!

Common Terns (COTE)

Mass banding was initiated on 7/6 with a goal of banding 1000 chicks near fledgling age. By 7/11, camp staff filled that quota and banded 1100 chicks in the colony.

With fledging come plot closures. On 7/11, the first plot was closed in near east wash. Plots are closed once all chicks have fledged and no nests remain.

Staff has had difficulty finding young broods in the colony; therefore only one feeding stint was conducted this week. Staff has noticed sand lance and herring being fed to the chicks, although squid, blue fish, butterfish, and pollock have been seen scattered in the colony. The majority of chick diet consists of sand lance, a COTE favorite.

Roseate Terns (ROST)

9 of 11 ROST nests have hatched to date, with seven more chicks fledging this week between four broods. A total of 12 chicks between 8 broods have fledged, with one left to go! One chick has yet to be seen for several weeks and has passed its expected fledge date. R7 and R10 have yet to hatch.

As our ROST chicks take flight and explore the surrounding area, we ask you to keep your eyes peeled for the blue with white character PFRs. Please report their bands if you see them! Reporting bands is extremely important to researchers tracking the movements of these birds. Case in point, staff has read the bands of several ROSTs over the course of this summer. By doing this, we've found out one of our breeding adults was banded on Great Gull Island in 1991 and another was banded as a chick on Monomoy Refuge in 2010!

Black Skimmers (BLSK)

Good news for the BLSK! Two eggs were laid by one pair on 7/2, north of the Wasteland on South Beach. Mass Audubon staff will continue to monitor the nest and pair.

Least Terns (LETE)

Staff has noted chicks at Plover Beach, east Lighthouse Beach, the Big Stick, old Powder Hole inlet, and Powder Hole. Unfortunately, multiple overwhelming events have taken a toll on Minimoy's LETE colony. But on 7/10, the first LETE chick was documented on Minimoy Island!

Laughing Gulls (LAGU)

No new information to report.

Roseate habitat restoration Project

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

Nanotag Project

The nanotags fitted to the PIPLs were never meant to last forever, but they were expected to last until the end of fall! Five PIPLs have been documented without their transmitters, 3 of which have been recovered. The researchers for the project are discussing this implication. In the meantime, researchers are hoping the remaining PIPLs will not shed their devices.

Additionally, a tagged PIPL was found dead due to peregrine falcon predation on South Beach by one of the study researchers.

Exclosure Study

No new information to report.

Salt Marsh Integrity

No new information to report.

Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle (NBTB)

On 7/9, Refuge staff conducted a NBTB survey from Beetle Overwash to Cooler Dune. A total of 825 (underestimate) beetles were tallied. A more comprehensive survey is planned for 7/14 to obtain additional high counts for this year's beetles.

Current & Upcoming Events

- NBTB Surveys** **July 9 & 14**
- ROST Staging Training** **July 14**
- MA Coastal Waterbird Meeting** **August 4**
- GOMSWG** **August 10**

2015 JULY						
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	31	