

# Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge



July 12 – July 18, 2015 [Issue 9]

Photo Credit: USFWS/Kaiti Titherington

## A Message from Monomoy

The influx of birds coming in from the Arctic is astounding, as staging season officially began on 7/16. Staff has documented hundreds of staging terns and 30 red knots down at Powder Hole of South Monomoy Island. And birds aren't the only animals making their presence known on the Refuge! Staff located a juvenile 7 ½ foot great white shark stranded north of the break in the Southway on 7/13, see picture above for a great shot of him and read below for more details.

It is during this time we encourage our visitors to respect the space and needs of both our terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. Please keep a safe distance and enjoy them from a distance!

## 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	Osprey
White-winged scoter	Red-winged blackbird
Black Scoter	American bittern
Common eider	Virginia Rail

## Inside This Issue

- 1 Message from Monomoy
- 1 2015 Field Season Update
- 1 Bird Sightings
- 2 Bird Activity
- 3 Roseate Habitat Restoration
- 3 Nanotag Project
- 3 Exclosure Study
- 3 Salt Marsh Integrity
- 3 iPlover
- 3 Northeastern beach tiger beetle
- 3 Great White Shark Sighting
- 3 Current & Upcoming Events

## Photo of the Week



Photo Credit: USFWS/Cheryl Horton

## **Bird Activity**

### Piping Plovers (PIPL)

Four chicks between one brood fledged on 7/18 and two chicks from one nest hatched on 7/12, bringing the total count to ten unfledged chicks between seven broods and 56 fledged chicks between 24 broods on South Monomoy Island.

No nests were lost this week and one nest remains with three eggs on South Monomoy. On 7/12, staff documented a juvenile gull near a PIPL brood on east Lighthouse Beach, forcing the chicks to hide. After dealing with gull predation previously in the season, staff will keep a close eye on these chicks.

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)

Minimoy was checked once this week on 7/18. With one nest left to hatch and one nest left to hatch one egg since last week, staff noted an abandoned egg in each nest. No chicks were seen but staff suspects two broods based on parental behavior and evidence of hatching. One of the brood's chick was last seen 7/10.

South Monomoy Island welcomed three newly hatched chicks from one brood on 7/18! The same pair fledged all three chicks last year, are they up for the same this year? Only time will tell, as the chicks were aged at about three days old on first sight. The unfledged chick from the boat landing brood is expected to fledge on 7/22 and was seen galavanting on the north tip flats throughout the week. As it stands, South Monomoy Island has 4 unfledged chicks between two broods.

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 last week's "Photo of the Week" for a picture of one of our banded chicks!

### Common Terns (COTE)

Camp staff has been working hard all summer trying to reach their 50 banded recap goal. Between last week's six recaps and this week's three recaps on 7/12 and 7/17, staff has trapped 40 banded COTEs. Two of these birds were discovered to have been banded on Monomoy in 1999 and 2002! That may not beat the bird previously trapped and banded in 1991 on Great Gull

Island, but the age still impresses staff here at Monomoy. We are happy the birds are returning to the Refuge to nest.

Plots continue to be closed in preparation to the end of the breeding season. Five more plots closed this week for a total of six out of thirty-five so far. Plots are closed once all chicks have fledged and no nests remain. In addition, staff has switched back to checking all plots everyday.

Staff continues to conduct kleptoparasitism stints and notes multiple HERG flying around the colony.

Staff has had difficulty finding young broods in the colony; therefore only one feeding stint was conducted this week on 7/17. During this stint, staff documented a chick eating a fish not recorded yet this year; a flounder. The majority of documented fish remains 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 the last chick fledging on 7/15, bringing the total to a solid 13 fledglings! R7 and R10 have yet to hatch, although staff does not expect them as one of the eggs is broken and two of the eggs were found cold.

On 7/14 staff attended a ROST resighting training at Cape Cod National Seashore in Truro, MA. Here, staff learned how to properly read and record banded terns, ID different tern species, and estimate flock size. The training also included presentations from two graduate students researching ROST on the Cape. Their research includes studying disturbance and parental behavior. They hope to answer questions on survival of hatch year chicks and the recruitment of those survived to the breeding population.

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.

### Black Skimmers (BLSK)

The BLSK nest increases its egg count to three and has been seen incubating throughout

the week. Mass Audubon staff will continue to monitor the nest and pair.

#### Least Terns (LETE)

No new information to report.

#### 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**

Another bird was found this week having dropped its transmitter, making that six birds without their tags.

### **Exclosure Study**

No new information to report.

### **Salt Marsh Integrity**

No new information to report.

### **iPlover**

On 7/15, six people from the iPlover program at USGS visited South Monomoy Island to take elevation measurements of nests at the south end of the island. The visit also included a tour of the least tern colony on east and west Lighthouse Beach.

As a reminder, the Refuge has been cooperating with NPS and USGS for the past two seasons as a beta test site for an exciting app: iPlover. With this app, important nest site data is collected, and used to determine how plover nest site selection relates to rising sea levels and climate change.

### **Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle (NBTB)**

On 7/14, two teams set out to survey NBTB, spanning from the Wasteland on South Beach to the overwash on South Monomoy Island. A total of 3900 beetles were counted! Staff hopes to conduct additional surveys, weather and time permits.

### **Great White Shark Sighting (GWS)**

Quite the exciting week for sharks, if I do say so myself. On 7/13, staff was returning from the tern colony at the north tip of South Monomoy when they spotted an animal thrashing in the water on the north side of the break. A 7 ½ foot shark had stranded itself on a shallow sandbar in the Southway! With a

dropping tide, staff acted quickly and called the Chatham Harbormaster to come out and help the juvenile shark. In a combined effort between Chatham Harbormaster and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, the beached male shark was successfully tagged and returned to the sea after an hour of towing. See banner photo on page one for a look at the shark.

## **Current & Upcoming Events**

<b>NBTB Surveys</b>	<b>July 9 &amp; 14</b>
<b>ROST Staging Training</b>	<b>July 14</b>
<b>MA Coastal Waterbird Meeting</b>	<b>August 4</b>
<b>GOMSWG</b>	<b>August 10</b>

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	