

# MONOMOY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



June 28 – July 4, 2015 [Issue 7]

Photo Credit: USFWS/Peter Paton

## A Message from Monomoy

Everybody, duck! Monomoy's chicks can be seen buzzing over your head as they take to the sky and explore the surrounding area. PIPL chicks continue to fledge by the handful, as the first documented ROST and COTE chicks spread their wings by Independence Day.

Although severe thunderstorms in the beginning of the week demanded camp closure the night of 6/27, the visitor center was a bustling hub of excitement. Beach goers, fishermen, families, and boaters were seen combing the Southway in the wake of this busy weekend. After the storms cleared, Refuge and AmeriCorps volunteers helped staff tag over 200 horseshoe crabs on South Monomoy Island. Thank you for the help!

## 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	Red-breasted merganser
Ring-billed gull	Blue-winged teal
Iceland gull	Green-winged teal
Bonaparte's gull	Gadwall
Great yellowlegs	American black duck
Black-crowned night heron	Mallard
Whimbrel	Northern Gannet
Barn swallow	Horned lark
Tree swallow	Saltmarsh sparrow
Least sandpiper	Magnolia warbler
Ruddy turnstone	Common yellowthroat
Killdeer	Yellow Warbler
Black-bellied plover	American goldfinch
Semipalmated plover	Gray catbird
Semipalmated sandpiper	Song Sparrow
Spotted sandpiper (7/4)	Savannah sparrow
Long-billed dowitcher (7/5)	Eastern towhee
Short-billed dowitcher	Eastern kingbird
Red Knot	Turkey vulture
Sanderling	Peregrine falcon
Dunlin	Bald eagle
Hudsonian Godwit (7/4)	Northern Harrier
Marbled Godwit (7/2)	Osprey
Black skimmer	Red-winged blackbird
White-winged scoter	American bittern
Black Scoter	Virginia Rail
Common eider	

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**Photo of the Week**

Photo Credit: USFWS/Kaiti Tiiterington

## **Bird Activity**

### Piping Plovers (PIPL)

34 active PIPL pairs and five active nests remain on South Monomoy Island. Although no new nests were found this week, a mystery brood with four young chicks was discovered at Old Inlet on 6/30, bringing the total number of broods to 29 with 60 chicks between them! Of these broods, 13 have fledged with 31 chicks.

Minimoy was checked once this week on 7/4. The PIPL nest remains at four eggs and was floated by staff in order to estimate stage of development. Staff estimated the age of the eggs to be ~22 days and is anticipating Minimoy's first chicks of the 2015 season next week.

Three nests were lost this week. On 6/29, one nest was lost due to unknown predation and two nests were found sanded over, presumably by the storm on 6/28.

44 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 chicks of Monomoy are gearing up for their first flight. A total of five chicks between three broods were confirmed this week on South Monomoy Island, with a suspected fourth brood at Powder Hole based on parental behavior. Staff hopes to band four out of the five chicks on 7/5. The first two chicks are expected to fledge on 7/6. On 7/3, a re-nest was located south of Hospital Pond with three eggs.

Minimoy was checked once this week on 7/4 and revealed two nests lost to overwash. Two nests remain on Minimoy Island. Staff hopes to trap and band unbanded adults on 7/5.

North Monomoy Island was surveyed on 7/4. A predated nest was found at the north tip of North Monomoy Island. One brood remains on Broad Creek Island with two chicks, due to fledge next week.

### Common Terns (COTE)

Due to severe thunderstorms and torrential downpour on 6/28 and 7/1, camp was closed Saturday night (6/27) and re-opened the morning of 6/29. Even with the foul weather, camp staff plugged along with productivity when allowed and trapped 13 more banded COTE adults on 6/29 & 7/3, bringing the season total to 31 individual

recaps. After several weeks of demanding work, staff welcomed the first productivity fledgling on 7/4. COTE chicks officially fledged on day 23 and staff has taken note of the rapid growth in the colony. Mass banding is expected to start in the next couple weeks as a result.

Feeding stints were initiated on 6/30, allowing staff to identify and measure the relative proportions of fish species provided to chicks. 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. Feeding stints will occur daily as time allows.

### Roseate Terns (ROST)

9 of 11 ROST nests have hatched to date, with R11 hatching on 6/30 for a total of 14 chicks between nine broods. R7 and R10 have yet to hatch.

On 6/30, the R11 chick and parent were fitted with PFRs F35 and F36, respectively. At the older end of the spectrum, the first ROST chick fledged on 6/29. By 7/3, five chicks fledged between four broods.

As our ROST chicks begin to take flight and explore the surrounding area, we ask you to keep your eyes peeled for the blue with white character PFRs.

### Black Skimmers (BLSK)

BLSK have continued to be seen by Mass Audubon staff, as scraping was noted at the north end of South Beach. Mass Audubon and Refuge staff have been closely monitoring to see if the BLSK remain and nest.

### Least Terns (LETE)

LETE fledglings were noted on South Monomoy Island on 7/4. With recent storm events, staff documented heavy overwash on east and west beach south of the lighthouse. Chicks seem to be doing well at Plover Beach and the Connection where the birds are less impacted by high tide and winds.

### Laughing Gulls (LAGU)

No new information to report.

## **Roseate habitat restoration Project**

Staff took photos of the designated plots on 6/14. The plants continue to be doing exceptionally well, especially in the north end of the colony!

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

**Nanotag Project**

The story of KTX continues as this female PIPL was spotted at Plymouth Long Beach on 6/30. Just to recap, KTX was outfitted with a nanotag on 6/18 on South Monomoy Island and was then seen on Fisher Beach in Truro on 6/22 after her nest failed. We are so lucky to have this information of PIPL flight movements!

**Exclosure Study**

No new information to report.

**Salt Marsh Integrity**

No new information to report.

**HSC Tagging**

On 7/2, Refuge staff, volunteers, and four Americorps volunteers tagged over 200 HSCs at the north tip of South Monomoy Island.

**Current & Upcoming Events**

- HSC Tagging** **July 2**
- 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	