

# Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge



July 26 – August 1, 2015 [Issue 11]

Photo Credit: USFWS/Kaiti Titherington

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## Photo of the Week



Long-billed curlew  
Photo Credit: USFWS/Rob Finer

## A Message from Monomoy

\*Sigh\* an end to breeding season, brings an end to the field season. The colony, characterized by few nests and small chicks, led staff to close camp on 7/30. But hey, chin up! Staff still has plenty of field work ahead of them, as staging count surveys continued this week with terns, dowitchers, plovers, and red knots being resighted on South Monomoy and Minimoy Islands. Tern, oystercatcher, and plover productivity monitoring also continue to be on the list of jobs to do.

Perhaps the biggest news of the week comes with the addition of our new Refuge Manager, Matthew Hillman! Matt, a native to Massachusetts, is coming to us from Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex in California. Welcome to the Monomoy family, Matt!

## 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	Common eider
Iceland gull	Red-breasted merganser
Bonaparte's gull	Blue-winged teal
Greater yellowlegs	Green-winged teal
Whimbrel	Gadwall
Long-billed curlew (7/28)	American black duck
Barn swallow	Mallard
Tree swallow	Northern Gannet
Ruddy turnstone	Horned lark
Killdeer	Saltmarsh sparrow
Black-bellied plover	Magnolia warbler
Semipalmated plover	Common yellowthroat
Semipalmated sandpiper	Yellow Warbler
Spotted sandpiper	American goldfinch
Solitary sandpiper	Gray catbird
Least sandpiper	Song Sparrow
Semipalmated sandpiper	Savannah sparrow
Long-billed dowitcher	Eastern towhee
Short-billed dowitcher	Eastern kingbird
Red Knot	Turkey vulture
Sanderling	Peregrine falcon
Dunlin	Bald eagle
Hudsonian Godwit	Northern Harrier
Marbled Godwit	Osprey
Black tern	Red-winged blackbird
White-winged scoter	American bittern
Black scoter	Virginia Rail

## **Bird Activity**

### Piping Plovers (PIPL)

Two chicks fledged this week on 7/27 and 7/30, bringing the total number to 60 fledged between 28 broods on South Monomoy Island. Three chicks between three broods have yet to fledge, but are expected to take flight by 8/11 at latest.

43 PIPL pairs have nested on South Monomoy Island since the beginning of the season. Of these pairs, seven failed to hatch chicks and five failed to fledge chicks, so far. Staff will continue to monitor the remaining broods.

### American Oystercatchers (AMOY)

Minimoy was checked twice this week on 7/28 and 7/31. Although the chicks continue to hide from staff, two broods are suspected based on parental behavior and evidence of hatching. Minimoy chicks are expected to fledge in a couple weeks.

Staff diligently checked the surprise brood at Powder Hole with two chicks all week for signs of fledging. These chicks, along with the three chicks at Hospital Pond that continue to be spotted, are expected to fledge in the coming weeks.

As it stands, North Monomoy Island has two fledged chicks between one brood and South Monomoy Island has five unfledged chicks between two broods and eight fledged chicks between four broods, three of which were banded.

If you see a banded AMOY, please report their band to the American Oystercatcher Working Group website at <http://amoywg.org/banding-re-sighting/>.

### Common Terns (COTE) & Roseate Terns (ROST)

The big day has finally come. On 7/30, camp closed for the 2015 field season and the three blinds in the colony were broken down on 7/31. Additionally, staff GPSed the parameter of the colony this week for future reference on nesting area and report.

With camp closure comes a lull in colony work. Productivity continues to wind down within the tern colony, with five more plots closing this week for a total of 11 plots closed so far. Plots will be monitored until the last remaining nests have hatched and B-census chicks have fledged/reached 23 days. No new nests were noted in plots this week. Additionally, kleptoparasitism stints are expected to discontinue in the next week as

staff notes the colony emptier and less aggressive with many hatch years and adults loafing on the flats.

In other news, the Refuge plans to burn in the tern colony after the birds have vacated the island. This is a management practice the Refuge undertakes in order to retain optimal nesting habitat for our terns. On 7/28, camp staff finished pulling grass for the fire break in preparation of the pending burn in October.

As for our ROSTs, staff has noticed the return of many staging terns at the north and south tip of South Monomoy Island. Two staging count surveys were conducted on 7/28 and 7/29 with Three adult ROSTs, one of which had a 6-band color combination, and a hatch year were noted within the flocks at the north tip of SMNY. On 7/27, staff spotted a ROST with a blue PFR with white characters X22 at the south tip of SMNY. X22 is a hatch year banded on Great Gull Island as part of Kayla Davis's MSc work at Virginia Tech. As a reminder, Kayla is studying parent-offspring relationships during the pre-migratory staging period and disturbances affecting these interactions. X22 was seen being fed a sand lance by one unbanded adult, an exciting observation! Additionally, one COTE with a black PFR was resighted. This COTE was banded at Monomoy as part of Pam Loring's project. Please refer to Issue 1 for more information on the project and report banded terns to Kate Iaquinto at [Kate\\_Iaquinto@fws.gov](mailto:Kate_Iaquinto@fws.gov). Reporting bands is extremely important to researchers tracking the movements of these birds.

### Black Skimmers (BSLK)

BSLK were not seen on the Refuge or South Beach this week.

### Least Terns (LETE)

No new information to report.

### Laughing Gulls (LAGU)

No new information to report.

## **Roseate habitat restoration Project**

On 7/29, staff took photos at the plots designated last year in order to document the growth of the plants throughout the season, and with good news to report! Staff notes the goldenrod in main marsh and near the north sound system doing very well and going to seed. The plants at the southern end of the island may not be doing as well, but staff is hopeful they will flourish in the coming years.

See the banner photo on page 1 for a look at our plants growth progress.

### **Nanotag Project**

Researchers and staff note birds leaving their nesting area to begin their migration. Along with the plovers seen in various locations mentioned in previous Weekly Updates, staff has also documented tagged birds feeding on Minimoy. On 7/31, a PIPL with white flag C2 was spotted on South Monomoy Island. This white flag indicates the bird was banded as part of a research project aimed at assessing the survival and movements of birds nesting in Eastern Canada and began in 2013. More information will be provided in next weeks update once it becomes available.

### **Exclosure Study**

No new informaiton to report.

### **Salt Marsh Integrity**

No new information to report. Staff is still awaiting the arrival of necessary parts to come in to install the last water levellogger.

### **"The Fury of the Tempest"**

Please join Refuge Interpretive Specialist Carson Fehner on a journey through over 300 years of human activity on the Monomoy Islands! Carson will be giving a talk on *The Fury of the Tempest: Navigating the History of the Monomoy Islands* on **12 August at 7PM at the Eldredge Public Library in Chatham.**

## Current & Upcoming Events

<b>Tern Staging Counts</b>	<b>July 28-29</b>
<b>MA Coastal Waterbird Meeting</b>	<b>August 4</b>
<b>Beach Clean-Up</b>	<b>August 6</b>
<b>GOMSWG</b>	<b>August 10</b>
<b>AMOY Working Group Meeting</b>	<b>August 11</b>
<b>"The Fury of the Tempest" Talk</b>	<b>August 12</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	