

(PHOTO: USFWS) Through June 14th, 2019

MONOMOY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



BI-WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
ISSUE ONE
2019

THIS ISSUE'S SPOTLIGHT: TERN VOLUNTEERS



C. BRADLEY/USFWS

GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS FOR TERN CENSUS

As the season gets busier, we want to extend our gratitude to the countless volunteers that keep the refuge running. Each issue we will highlight a different group of people who support our mission. This week's shoutout goes to the volunteers that helped during our annual tern census. These folks spent long days in the sun braving the wilderness and aggressive common terns as they defend their nests. We couldn't do it without them!

KICKING OFF THE SUMMER

Monomoy kicked off the summer months on June 1st by celebrating its 75th anniversary! With summer officially right around the corner, our biweekly newsletter is also back. In this publication you'll find updates from the field, our visitor center, and current events and activities available at the refuge!



C. BRADLEY/USFWS

MONOMOY POINT LIGHTHOUSE ON CLOUDY DAY

MONOMOY OPEN HOUSE



M.HILLMAN//USFWS
NATIONAL WEATHER
STATION DEMONSTRATION

Staff hosted an open house on June 8th with many events for members of the community to get to know the refuge. Visitors interacted with the new media exhibit, listened to live music by BaySong, discussed shellfishing with the Chatham Shellfish Constable, attended National Weather Service demonstrations about the upper air weather observation station, observed fly fishing demonstrations, and attended guided nature walks. The Friends of Monomoy also hosted a Mudflat Mania event exploring the tidal flats in search of horseshoe crabs and other intertidal organisms. It was a fun and informative day; our thanks to everyone who came out!

LOST ALONG THE WAY



A.ADAMS//USFWS
WILSON'S PHALAROPE THROUGH SCOPE

We've seen some unusual visitors this season that seem to have become lost during migration, including a curlew sandpiper and a Wilson's phalarope. If you were around last season, you might remember a snowy owl on South Monomoy all summer. Like *déjà vu*, a snowy owl was observed lingering on South Monomoy again this spring. Fortunately for the nesting birds, the owl appears to have departed for the season, retreating to cooler temperatures; but we never know what new visitors might pop by next!

TERN CENSUS



C.BRADLEY//USFWS
COMMON TERNS IN FLIGHT

On June 9th we conducted our annual census of tern nests on South Monomoy Island! During the census, volunteers and staff walk grids over multiple long days, counting each nest and noting the number of eggs -- while making sure not to step on any! Laughing gulls and willets are also counted. Those conducting the census wear hard hats to protect themselves from the dive-bombing common terns in the raucous colony. Look for the final count of nesting pairs in the next edition -- last year there were over 13,000!

BEST TIME TO NEST

It's an exciting time on the refuge for our biology team as we are in what is called 'peak lay' for the tern colony on South Monomoy. The birds are most active laying eggs during this time, although the colony was late to get started this spring. The biology team has been hard at work checking nests and preparing for tern census. This past week they located the first roseate tern nest, a federally endangered species. Now we await the first tern chick of the season, likely to hatch any day now!



C.BRADLEY//USFWS
COMMON TERN ON NEST

COTTONTAILS IN NOMAN'S LAND



USFWS
NEW ENGLAND COTTONTAIL

Our wildlife and fisheries biologist Eileen McGourty has been leading a New England Cottontail project and oversaw the release of 13 rabbits originally captured on mainland Cape Cod onto Nomans Land Island National Wildlife Refuge. So far, all rabbits are surviving and seem to be finding habitat patches that may become their home range! The next scheduled monitoring trip is June 17th.

CHATHAM ORPHEUM EXPLORES MONOMOY

On May 18, with financial support from the Friends of Monomoy and the FWS Retirees Association, Monomoy showcased its new interactive exhibit during a free public screening at the Chatham Orpheum Theater as part of the refuge's 75th anniversary celebration. For the first time, visitors unable to access the refuge's wilderness islands can explore them virtually while learning about Monomoy's mission in our improved exhibit room. Refuge staff thanks the many volunteers and partners who made this all possible, especially Media Volunteer Jan Crocker, who contributed over 4,000 hours since 2016 to produce the exhibit!



M.HILLMAN//USFWS
GUESTS AT THE ORPHEUM AS
JAN CROCKER GIVES AN
INTRODUCTION

UPCOMING EVENTS

Chatham History Weekend

The refuge is taking part in Chatham History Weekend with guided trail walks, talks for bus tours, and limited boat rides to tour the Monomoy Point lighthouse. Come to the refuge to learn about the interesting history of Monomoy.

June 21st and 22nd
At the Refuge and
throughout Chatham

Guided Walks

Guided walks will be hosted regularly now that seasonal staff has arrived. More walks will be available upon request Thursdays through Mondays from 10am-3pm. The visitor center is more than happy to answer any questions you may have!

Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays
Guided Walks Leaving from the
Visitor Center at 10:30am and
2:30pm

Meet the Author



I'm Crystal and I'm the visitor service intern! I'm currently a student at the University of Kentucky studying natural resources and environmental science! I'll be the one releasing this series! If you have any comments or questions about the newsletter or the refuge you can reach me at crystal_bradley@fws.gov.



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MORE FROM THE FIELD

FIRST PLOVER CHICKS!

On May 29th, the first piping plover chicks of the season hatched! With a current nesting population exceeding 30 pairs, many more are soon to come. Check back in a future newsletter for more updates.



A. ADAMS//USFWS
PIPING PLOVER CHICKS

CATCHING A COUNT



K.TITHERINGTON//USFWS
AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER ON
BEACH

The last week of May marked the end of the annual census window for American oystercatchers. So far there have been 11 nests with 22 adults!

REMINDERS ABOUT SEALS

Remember to always be cautious around seals. The Marine Mammal Protection Act prohibits harassment and observers must remain at least 150 feet away. The ocean and shoreline is their home so when you enter be respectful and aware that they are wild animals.



USFWS
GRAY SEAL AT MONOMOY