

Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge



May 25 – May 31, 2014 [Issue 3]

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Photo of the Week



Photo Credit: USFWS/Yianni Laskaris

A Message from Monomoy

Another eventful week at Monomoy flew by! Staff has been busy with our four main target species and multiple REKNs have been spotted feeding on the refuge. AMOY census has come to a close, 2 more PIPL enclosures have been erected, over 300 horseshoe crabs have been tagged, and the first set of point counts for SMI have been concluded.

But let's not forget about our tern colony. Our birds have returned with a high count of 7000 and the first ROST nest was located on 31 May. Staff is currently gearing up in anticipation for tern census coming up the following week on June 5th.

2014 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 | Black-bellied plover |
| Great black-backed gull | Semipalmated plover |
| Herring gull | Semipalmated sandpiper |
| Ring-billed gull | Sanderling |
| Glaucous gull | Dunlin |
| Iceland gull | Snowy owl |
| Laughing gull | Great egret |
| Bonaparte's gull (5/25) | White-throated sparrow |
| Willet | Turkey vulture |
| Greater yellowlegs | Peregrine falcon |
| Lesser yellowlegs | Tricolored heron |
| Black-crowned night heron | Red-winged blackbird |
| American bittern | Common grackle |
| Barn swallow | Ruddy turnstone |
| White-rumped sandpiper | Wilson's plover |
| Least sandpiper | Red Knot |
| Short-billed dowitcher | Yellow-crowned night heron |
| Black tern | Seaside sparrow (5/30) |
| Spotted sandpiper | Common eider |
| Willow flycatcher (5/25) | American black duck |
| Whimbrel (5/29) | Magnolia warbler (5/29) |

Bird ActivityPiping Plovers (PIPL)

To date, a total of 48 PIPL pairs have been sighted on the Refuge. Nine new nests were located this week, for a total of 33 nests found and 24 active PIPL nests on South Monomoy Island. On Minimoy Island the PIPL nest is going strong with 3 eggs, while a 2nd pair was observed scraping nearby. The PIPL pair continues to be observed scraping at Broad Creek on North Monomoy Island. Ten PIPL nests were lost this week to unknown causes, though one nest displayed signs of gull predation. Non-lethal predator management techniques continue to be implemented to protect nests, with five predator exclosures erected on Plover Beach/Connection as of May 31st.

American Oystercatchers (AMOY)

The AMOY census window closed May 31st, identifying 6 pairs of AMOY on South Monomoy Island, 7 pairs on North Monomoy Island, and 6 pairs on Minimoy Island.

To date, there are a total of 4 active nests on South Monomoy Island, 7 active nests on North Monomoy Island, and 5 active nests on Minimoy Island. One AMOY nest on Minimoy was found predated by an unknown predator on May 30th. The first nest expected to hatch, will occur around June 5th. Staff will continue to monitor pairs that have not yet nested.

Common Terns (COTE)

A total of 35 productivity plots were erected as of May 29th and productivity monitoring commenced in the colony that same day. Staff will begin performing three kleptoparasitism stints per day starting June 1st. The tern census is scheduled to begin June 5th, weather permitting.

Roseate Terns (ROST)

The first ROST nest of the season was identified on May 31st within a small section of the colony where ROSTs are known to have nested in previous years. The nest had 2 eggs, and belongs to a banded adult. Day stints will continue 3 times per day, in hopes of locating additional nesting ROST pairs.

Black Skimmers (BLSK)

No new information to report. BLSK have not been sighted on the refuge.

Least Terns (LETE)

On May 23rd, the first LETE nests of the season were identified. Staff has noticed nests and

scraping at the south end of South Monomoy Island in areas with previous recorded LETE nesting. They will continue to monitor areas with past LETE nesting.

Laughing Gulls (LAGU)

Nothing to report.

Roseate habitat restoration Project

Staff finished taking their 9 photoplots on 5/30 to monitor how the goldenrod will grow throughout the field season. These photos will provide insight on where to plant the 1200 goldenrod plants coming in the fall.

More information on this project will follow as necessary.

iPlover

Refuge staff will begin testing out the new iPlover feature in the coming week. Nest site parameters, like vegetation phenology, substrate, and geomorphic features, will be compiled along with nest site photos to provide a glimpse into how PIPL utilization of nest sites evolves through the season, and from year to year.

Salt Marsh Integrity

Nekton sampling sites for all 3 of our SMI units (Morris Island, North Monomoy Island, and Minimoy/Hospital Pond) have been ground truthed to date. Our partners with the SHARP program came out on May 30th for the first round of bird point surveys. Nine points were surveyed on North Monomoy Island, 4 points at Hospital Pond, and 2 points on Minimoy Island. Highlights from North Monomoy were a low count of 15 saltmarsh sparrow, with 1-3 SALS found at each point. Additional salt marsh species identified included 2 savannah sparrow, 1 seaside sparrow, 15 willet, and 1 song sparrow. Two SALS were counted on Minimoy, and at Hospital Pond. Many shorebird species were also identified using salt marsh habitat during the surveys.

Our water level loggers have been calibrated, and staff are in the process of creating level logger wells to deploy alongside these devices. SMI vegetation surveys are planned to take place shortly, after having been delayed due to weather on May 28th.

Horseshoe Crab Tagging

On Friday, May 30th, staff and 7 volunteers went out to South Monomoy Island for the Refuge's first horseshoe crab tagging window. Though some chilly weather kept many horseshoe crabs in deeper waters, 304 horseshoe crabs were tagged by the end of the day.

****Red Knot (REKN) Raucous****

Along with the major horseshoe crab spawning events on the refuge, REKN have been spotted feeding on eggs on the flats all week. Staff has seen high counts of over 30 in flocks, while Mass Audubon has counted 6 on South Beach. Surprisingly, staff has documented several banded REKN, including red flag (MK) banded in Chili, and light green flag (269), caught last summer and tagged with a geolocator during the Shorebird Project! Two sanderling banded on the Refuge in 2011 were also seen feeding along with these banded REKN!

Current & Upcoming Events

AMOY Census Window	May 22-31
Horseshoe Crab Tagging	May 30
PIPL Census Window	June 1-9
Tern Census	June 5-8
Horseshoe Crab Resighting	June 11-12, 15

JUNE 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
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	1	2	3	4	5