

# Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

July 6 – July 12, 2014 [Issue 9]

Photo Credit: USFWS/Claire Revekant

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## Photo of the Week



Photo Credit: USFWS/Kate Iaquinto

## A Message from Monomoy

The Refuge has bounced back into the swing of things following tropical storm Arthur, which brought sustained winds of 45mph, and gusts over 60mph to the area. Refuge staff pieced together the impacts of the storm, covering all areas left unmonitored while camp was closed. A total of 4 piping plover nests were lost during the storm, while productivity plots within the tern colony had 50 missing chicks. Storm-related mass casualties of tern chicks were estimated at 17%, though this data is preliminary. Though the storm's impact was substantial, it appears many of the Refuge's breeding birds have weathered the storm successfully!

## 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	White-throated sparrow
Willet	Turkey vulture
Greater yellowlegs	Peregrine falcon
Lesser yellowlegs	Red-winged blackbird
Black-crowned night heron	Common grackle
Yellow-crowned night heron	Ruddy turnstone
Tricolored heron	Wilson's plover
Green heron	Red Knot
American bittern	Seaside sparrow
White-rumped sandpiper	Northern gannet
Least sandpiper	Common loon
Pectoral Sandpiper (7/8)	Common eider
Hudsonian Godwit (7/10)	American black duck
Marbled Godwit (7/10)	Magnolia warbler
Short-billed dowitcher	Cedar waxwing
Black tern	Brant goose
Spotted sandpiper	Eastern kingbird
Whimbrel	Willow flycatcher
Razorbill	Barn swallow
Mississippi kite	Black Scoter
Glossy Ibis	Gull-billed tern (7/12)

## **Bird Activity**

### Piping Plovers (PIPL)

Data this week represents PIPL observations dating after Hurricane Arthur.

There are currently 22 active broods, 32 fledged chicks, and 1 active nest documented on the refuge. Between these active broods are a total of 46 chicks with 1 nest hatching this week. Included in this count are the broods on Minimoy and North Monomoy Island, which have 2 chicks and 1 chick, respectively. No new nests were found this week. Four nests were lost due to Arthur, although previous evidence could have been lost before the storm.

### American Oystercatchers (AMOY)

There are currently 10 broods, with 4 nests currently being incubated, and 11 chicks documented. SMNY holds the lead with 7 chicks distributed between 3 broods. Two chicks have been seen with one brood on NMNY, although 4 broods are suspected based on parental behavior.

Minimoy was checked once this week on 7/10, where 3 active broods are suspected based on parental behavior. Two chicks were seen on this date. One nest continues to be incubated past its hatch date.

Many chicks are due to fledge in the coming week and staff have plans to continue banding them.

### Common Terns (COTE)

The colony continues to deal with predator problems, noting multiple GBBG appearances all week and a harrier observed on 7/10. The colony also dealt with consequences from Arthur noting 17% loss in chick survival and 50 unaccounted chicks from plots.

Feeding stints were initiated on 6/27, allowing staff to identify, and measure the relative proportions of fish species provided to chicks. Staff has noticed sand lance, herring, and hake being fed to chicks, as well as butterfish, blue fish, and squid being fed to chicks outside of feeding stints. Feeding stints have been halted due to chick age. The colony has past the point when chicks remain around their nest area. Additionally, the first empty plot was closed on 7/12 in preparation to the end of the breeding season.

Mass banding was initiated on 7/12 with 257 soon-to-be fledglings receiving bands. The

refuge plans to band 1000 chicks (aged 20+) outside of plots within the next few weeks.

### Roseate Terns (ROST)

6 of 8 ROST nests have hatched to date for total of 11 chicks (2 of which are hybrids!) between 6 broods. All ROST chicks have received PFR bands and 3 chicks fledged this week for a total of 5 fledglings. Three nests continue to be incubated, one of which has already hatched one chick. Day stints will continue, in hopes of locating additional nesting ROST pairs.

### Black Skimmers (BLSK)

BLSK sightings continue on the Refuge, though no signs of nesting have been observed. One BLSK was seen on High Tide Island off NMNY on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

### Least Terns (LETE)

No new information to report.

### Laughing Gulls (LAGU)

No new information to report.

## **Roseate habitat restoration Project**

No new information to report.

## **iPlover**

Staff has recorded 41 plover nests with iPlover to date, with 3 nest entries taken this week.

## **Salt Marsh Integrity**

Nekton sampling preparations continue this week, with nekton stations marked on Morris Island and North Monomoy. The Hospital Pond and Minimoy unit is planned to be marked this coming week. Water level data continues to be collected at the Morris Island and Hospital Pond units. Throw trap fabrication is set to begin on July 14<sup>th</sup>, with a test run planned for later in the week. Additionally, volunteers are being sought out to assist in sampling efforts which begin July 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **Northeast beach tiger beetles**

Two teams set out to perform surveys for Northeast beach tiger beetles (NBTB) this week on July 10<sup>th</sup>, spanning from South Beach to the overwash. A total of 1,695 beetles were counted. Surveys are planned again for this week to obtain additional high counts for this year's larger cohort.

