

# Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

May 17 – May 23, 2015 [Issue 2]

Photo Credit: USFWS/Cheryl Horton

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## Photo of the Week



Photo Credit: USFWS/Derek Trunfio

## A Message from Monomoy

Hear-ye, hear-ye! Listen up and listen close, because we have news to share with you. The tern colony has been bustling with activity as camp set-up and the first tern nest both took place on 18 May. And that's not all! Staff has been erecting productivity plots, as the Refuge re-welcomed Emilie Seavey to Monomoy. Emilie served as an interpretive intern last year, but returned this year to work in the field as a tern intern.

But let's not forget about the rest of Monomoy's birds! Staff has been scouring the beaches in search of new American oystercatcher and piping plover nests, and with great success I might add. Staff has also been re-sighting AMOY pairs for census, as the Refuge prepares to start banding and nanotagging plovers as soon as next week, weather permits.

## 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	Black-bellied plover
Great black-backed gull	Semipalmated plover
Herring gull	Semipalmated sandpiper
Ring-billed gull	Sanderling
Iceland gull	Dunlin
Laughing gull	White-winged scoter
Bonaparte's gull	Common eider
Great egret	Red-breasted merganser
Snowy egret	Black duck
Killdeer	Horned lark
Willet	Saltmarsh sparrow
Greater yellowlegs	Turkey vulture
Black-crowned night heron	Peregrine falcon
Whimbrel	Bald Eagle
Barn swallow	Northern Harrier
Magnolia warbler (5/20)	Red-winged blackbird
Least sandpiper	American crow
Ruddy Turnstone	

## **Bird Activity**

### Piping Plovers (PIPL)

Six new nests were located this week, for a total of 28 active PIPL nests on the Refuge. Nests were located throughout South Monomoy Island, including Plover Beach, the Connection, old Powder Hole Inlet, and the east side of the island. Scraping was noted on Minimoy on 15 May. The first nest expected to hatch on 5/22, remains a 4 egg nest. More information will be provided once it becomes available. In the meantime, staff will continue to monitor nesting areas for new nests.

Non-lethal predator management techniques (plover exclosures) have not been implemented at this time. Staff will erect exclosures once predation becomes an issue.

### American Oystercatchers (AMOY)

The AMOY census window began on 22 May. Staff conducted nest checks and documented all pairs seen on North Monomoy and South Monomoy Island this week. Two new nests were found on North Monomoy on 5/22 and three new nests were noted on South Monomoy. A total of 6 nests on South Monomoy, 3 nests on North Monomoy, and 4 nests on Minimoy have been located, for an updated total of 13 nests on the Refuge. The first nest is expected to hatch the first week of June. Multiple additional pairs have been sighted and documented scraping.

### Common Terns (COTE)

Camp set-up and the first overnight occurred on 18 May. During set-up, the first COTE nest was found in camp on South Monomoy Island. Camp area and the colony are scattered with tern nests and staff has been working to install 9 productivity plots and the grid system by 5/23. Overall, Monomoy expects to erect ~35 plots in total by the end of next week and start stints and productivity soon after. The high count is estimated at ~7000 pairs and growing.

Five eggs were found predated by black-crowned night heron (BCNH) on 5/21, and continue to be found in the colony. Flocks of 9 and 5 BCNH were seen flying from the north tip of the colony to Minimoy on the nights of 5/21 and 5/22, respectively. Sightings and evidence of gull predation was also observed in the colony.

### Roseate Terns (ROST)

The first ROST of the season was spotted on 5/18! Staff installed a sound system south of the main colony and is hoping to start day/ROST stints next week in hopes of locating ROST nests and pairs.

### Least Terns (LETE)

LETES have been seen scraping on South Monomoy and Minimoy Islands. Staff will continue observing nesting areas for the first nest.

### Laughing Gulls (LAGU)

The first LAGU nest was identified on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **Roseate habitat restoration Project**

New new information to report.

## **Wading Bird Census**

Our wading bird colony was censused on North Monomoy Island on 15 May. Refuge staff located black-crowned night heron, snowy egret, and great egret nests. Results from the census indicate 248 nests; 11 GREG, 81 SNEG, and 156 BCNH. GREG nests are down from 25 and SNEG nests are up from 46 last year. BCNH numbers have remained the same.

## **Nanotag Project**

Efforts for the nanotag project have shifted towards focus on Monomoy's plovers. The Refuge hopes to start nanotagging plovers next Monday and Tuesday (5/25 & 5/26), if weather permits. Monomoy plans to tag 25 plovers within 1km of the radio tower installed at Hospital Pond.

In addition, staff from Region 5 Migratory Birds will be bringing on two participants from the International Professional Fellows Program in Environmental Sustainability from the U.S. State Department. The programs was designed to give professionals in environmental careers from Latin American countries and the U.S., an opportunity to understand environmental issues in different countries and experience how agencies from other countries operate and address these issues. Monomoy plans to have these two professionals help put nanotags on plovers next week.

**Exclosure Study**

Preliminary data was submitted for review on 5/23. Staff continues to collect necessary data for the project.

**Salt Marsh Integrity**

No new information to report.

**BREAKing News and Accessibility**

This winter, most of the sand existing between the 2013 and 2014 cuts was pushed into the southway. As of now, access to the southern half of the southway is limited to 3 hours before and 2 hours after high tide. The current navigable channel to the southern end of the Southway flows from the refuge headquarters, east past the south tip of South Beach into the Atlantic Ocean, around a series of shoals, and then westward around the north tip of the southern section of south beach. To navigate to the Southway, boat operators are currently required to enter the ocean side of the break then turn back into the Southway. In addition to tide restrictions, northward and eastward winds causing large waves to roll into the shoals can make the break impassable. We expect weather and tides to play an even larger role in accessibility this year and are embracing the logistical conundrum as best possible.

**Current & Upcoming Events**

- AMOY Census Window** **May 22-31**
- Plover Census Window** **June 1-9**
- Shorebird Survey Window 3** **May 14-29**
- Plover Trapping Window** **May 24-26**
- COTE/ROST Census** **June 9-10**
- HSC Tagging** **June 2, 3, 16, 17  
& July 2**

May 2015

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						