

Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

July 18th – July 24th, 2016 [Issue 3]

Photo Credit: Luke Rein

Inside This Issue

- 1 Message from Monomoy
- 1 Bird Sightings
- 2 Bird Activity
- 3 Roseate Habitat Restoration
- 3 Nanotag Project
- 3 Exclosure Study
- 3 Horseshoe crab
- 3 Salt Marsh Integrity
- 3 Predator Removal and Invasive Species Control
- 3 BREAKing News & Accessibility
- 3 Visitor Services
- 3 Current & Upcoming Events

Photo of the Week



Photo Credit: USFWS/Becca Mattson

A Message from Monomoy

Even though Monomoy is a sanctuary for threatened and endangered migratory shorebirds, we are also a home to the federally protected Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetles. Our refuge staff and volunteers recently performed several surveys for these wonderful species.

As the season is coming to an end, staff is watching their beautiful chicks fledge, continuing their journey down south. Even though lots of biological work is being done on the islands, lots of exciting work is also being done in our visitor center. Our visitor services staff has been working on several upcoming events and programs, available on the last page if interested!

2016 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	Sanderling
Laughing gull	Dunlin
Bonaparte's gull	White-winged scoter
Great egret	Common eider
Snowy egret	Black duck
Killdeer	Horned lark
Willet	Saltmarsh sparrow
Black-crowned night heron	Peregrine falcon
Barn swallow	Northern Harrier
Least sandpiper	Red-winged blackbird
Ruddy Turnstone	American crow
Common Loon	Osprey
Red-tailed Hawk	Gray Catbird

Bird Activity

Piping Plovers (PIPL)

On South Monomoy Island, of the 43 active pairs, 19 pairs have fledged 34 chicks. There are 12 pairs with 30 chicks that will fledge in early August. There are still 2 nests with a total of 4 eggs that are set to hatch this week. Three pairs lost their broods, 2 to Laughing Gulls and 1 to unknown causes. Seven pairs lost their nests to predation or unknown causes and failed to have a successful re-nest.

The 2 PIPL nest on North Monomoy have hatched and staff have been unable to locate those broods this week. They will continue to be monitored.

The one pair of PIPL on Minimoy has successfully hatched 4 chicks and staff will continue to monitor that brood.

Mass Audubon is currently monitoring 6 plover nests (6 fledged chicks) and 2 AMOY nests (3 fledged chicks) that are technically within our administrative boundary.

American Oystercatchers (AMOY)

On South Monomoy Island, of the 9 active pairs, 4 have fledged 8 chicks and there are 3 pairs that have 4 unfledged chicks between them. Two pairs have lost their nest and have not re-nested.

On North Monomoy Island of the 5 active pairs, 1 pair has fledged 1 chick while 2 pairs have 4 unfledged chicks between them. Two pairs of AMOYs have lost their nest and failed to re-nest.

On Minimoy all three pairs have fledged a total of 9 chicks as of 7/18. There are no remaining broods or nest to monitor.

Common Terns (COTE)

Approximately 580 chicks have been banded inside productivity plots and will continue to be monitored throughout the nesting season. With the season starting to wind down, staff is now monitoring the last 10 plots.

Since the last update we have received a report from the National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) stating that salmonella was most likely not the cause of the fledgling deaths we have been documenting. While preliminary results were consistent with salmonellosis, further analyses of lab results

have ruled out salmonella. The exact cause of the fledgling deaths is believed to be bacterial in nature, but the exact cause is still unknown. We have been working closely with the NWHC to determine exactly what is causing otherwise healthy fledglings to die. In the meantime, work in the colony is limited to activities that are necessary for data collection and activities deemed stressful that involve long periods of disturbance have been eliminated from daily work. Currently, tasks have been limited to 3 hours of kleptoparasitism stints and 1 hour of productivity daily within the colony. Staff is taking extra precautions to avoid spreading the bacterium from dead to live birds and to protect themselves.

Roseate Terns (ROST)

As of July 17th, 12 ROST chicks have fledged from 7 nests, though refuge staff is expecting more in the coming weeks. There are still 3 active pairs remaining that have 5 chicks between them. Of these 5 chicks, 1 is a hybrid ROST/COTE chick and 1 is a COTE chick. No new nests have been found this week.

Black Skimmers (BLSK)

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

Least Terns (LETE)

Least terns have been spotted on South Monomoy between plover beach and the Lighthouse on the east side of South Monomoy Island and have also been scraping on Minimoy Island! Least tern census was performed on South Monomoy Island and Minimoy Island between June 16th and 20th though numbers have yet to be compiled.

Laughing Gulls (LAGU)

No new information to report.

Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle (NBTB)

Two weeks ago, one of our volunteers conducted the first NBTB survey, finding 2,349 adult NBTB. This week, refuge staff performed a range survey from the southern tip of South Monomoy Island up to the break in South Beach. The range survey revealed a total of 8,135 NBTB adults: 7,960 on South Monomoy Island and 175 on South Beach.

Roseate habitat restoration Project

Monomoy's dedication to create suitable habitat for the endangered roseate tern was accomplished through last years efforts.

A habitat restoration controlled burn was conducted last year in order to make the habitat more suitable for Common and Roseate terns. The project proved successful as the main colony's nesting area has expanded. Staff continue to monitor the roseate tern habitat area by taking photo to document growth of plantings and long term success of the project.

Nanotag Project

As the season is winding down, the birds are starting to travel down south. One of the PIPs monitored in this project was detected in Cedar Island, North Carolina.

Exclosure Study

No new information to report.

Horseshoe Crab (HSC)

No new information to report.

Salt Marsh Integrity

No new information to report.

BREAKING News and Accessibility

Over the winter, the break continued to follow a similar pattern as in 2014 and 2015. Sand from outside of the cut continues to push into the southway, creating new shoals for boat operators to navigate. Access to the southern half of the southway is similar to 2015 where it is navigable 3 hours before and 2 hours after high tide. The current navigable channel is complex to describe however the Chatham Harbormaster has marked the northern portion of the break with a series of red bouys. This channel is accessible off of H bouy on the eastern end of the Morris Island Channel. The southern portion of the break is unmarked but staff have currently been using a small channel off the north tip of South Beach. 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 continue to play an important role in accessibility of the northern portion of South Monomoy Island this year and are embracing the logisitcal conundrum as best possible.

Visitor Services

The second addition of Exposure To Nature Day will be held on 7/24. This event is purposed to bring people of all ages from

around the area to enjoy the great wildlife and environment the refuge has to offer. The event consists of a wildlife presentation, an interpretive trail walk, an interactive game, and a fun craft station.

The visitor services staff is introducing a new Youth Leadership Program, aimed towards involving young community members in local conservation efforts. The program will give participants the opportunity to lead interpretive walks and participate in outreach events that communicate Monomoy NWR's mission to visitors.

Monomoy is also excited to be hosting camp groups from Mass Audubon in upcoming weeks. Visiting children will participate in a variety of fun activities geared towards environmental education and explore all that the Morris Island trail and Visitor Center have to offer.

Current & Upcoming Events

Exposure to Nature Day

July 24th

Shorebird trapping

July 30th-August

6th, August 26th-

September 1st

2016 JULY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					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						

2016 AUGUST						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	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			

