



Egg Rock Update

Newsletter of the Seabird Restoration Program
of the National Audubon Society

2002

COMMON TERNS NEST AT OUTER GREEN ISLAND

New Restoration Program Brings Terns Back After 88-Year Absence

Using decoys and sound recordings, Audubon biologists succeeded in luring Common Terns back to Outer Green Island—a six-acre, state-owned wildlife sanctuary located 5 miles offshore from Portland, Maine. Common Terns nested here until 1914, but these state-threatened seabirds were displaced here and on many other prime nesting locations by burgeoning numbers of Herring Gulls. The terns made a comeback this summer when 11 pairs nested and more than 60 terns frequented the island.

Although tern restoration has gone well along other parts of the Maine coast, recent setbacks in Casco Bay required a new initiative. The bay, once an important tern-nesting region, had at least six productive colonies in the 1930s, but these numbers have greatly diminished in recent years. Most Casco Bay tern colonies have suffered chronic nesting failure because Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls forced the birds to nest near the mainland, resulting in increased predation from feral dogs and cats, mink, raccoons and Great Horned Owls.

The new project was deemed necessary because of serious setbacks at Jenny Island where mink, Black-crowned Night-herons and Great Horned Owls decimated this restored colony in 2000.

To encourage terns to re-colonize Casco Bay, Audubon hired Matt Martinkovic as Outer Green Island Supervisor and arranged for a rotating team of project interns to help Matt bring back the terns.

On April 29 2002, Matt and his assistants set out 100 life-sized tern decoys and a non-stop, solar-powered CD system that broadcasted Common Tern colony sounds. They also set up camp on the island and began disrupting the nesting cycle of the Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls by firing screamer shells over the gull-nesting habitat. The gull colony soon dispersed. On Mother's Day, Matt was elated to see the first Common Tern settle among his decoys—just 10 days after placing them on the island. The first tern egg was laid on June 9th and the first of 11 chicks hatched on July 9th. Most importantly, there were no sightings of either mammalian or avian predators!

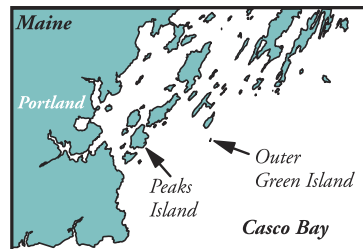
The program to restore tern colonies in the Gulf of



CHRISTINE DOWENOWER



STEPHEN W. KRASS



STEPHEN W. KRASS

Counterclockwise from top: (1) The first Common Tern chick hatched on Outer Green Island. (2) Common Tern eggs on Outer Green Island. (3) Map showing location of Outer Green Island. (4) Matt Martinkovic (seated), Supervisor at Outer Green Island and crew members (standing from left) Rosalie Borzick and Heather Eijzena at their campsite.

Maine began in 1984 and was implemented by the Gulf of Maine Tern Working Group, an informal coalition of state, federal, and non-profit wildlife conservation groups from the U.S. and Canada. Working together, the group has achieved remarkable success by restoring productive tern colonies to 12 islands. ❖

The following people and agencies provided invaluable support to the crew on Outer Green Island. Camp set up: Peter Novelli, Paul Hai, and Susan Schubel. Transportation & Logistics: Clark Smith, Rosita Hartley and Dan Doan of Peaks Isl; Bob Houston, USFWS; Rachel Nixon and Karen Stimpson of the Maine Island Trail Assoc; Brad Allen and John Kenny of the Maine Dept of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; and Peter Milholland, Casco Bay Keeper. We also thank: Town of Falmouth Harbormaster John Dalton; Holy Martyrs Catholic Church and Maine Audubon.

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SEABIRD RESTORATION HIGHLIGHTS

The techniques developed for restoring puffins, terns and other seabirds to Maine Coast Islands are helping seabird managers in many places. Here are a few highlights from some of these programs:



DANIEL ROBY

Caspian Terns nest among decoys and sound system on East Sand Island.

EAST SAND ISLAND

Columbia River estuary, Oregon

For the second consecutive year, all Caspian Terns in the Columbia River nested on East Sand Island (ESI), a restored site located in the mouth of Columbia River that hosted 9,933 breeding pairs this summer. Caspian Tern decoys and non-stop recordings of colony sounds lured the terns to ESI from Rice Island, a dredge spoil island positioned 13 miles further upriver. At Rice Island, the terns were eating mostly salmon, but at ESI they continue to find a more varied diet of herring, anchovies, and other marine fish. This summer, salmon comprised 31% of fish identified in the tern diet at ESI. For more information on this project, visit: <www.columbiabirdresearch.org>.

DEVIL'S SLIDE ROCK

Half Moon Bay, California

This restored colony of Common Murres continued its increase this summer with a total of 123 nesting pairs—a steady rise over the 113 pairs that nested there in 2001. The project was in its seventh field season this past summer and has already surpassed its 10-year goal of 100 pairs. About 2,800 Common Murres nested on this tiny rock in 1982, but the colony disappeared following the 1986 oil spill from the *Apex Houston* barge. In 1996, biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Audubon Society, and Humboldt State University set out 400 decoys, along with sound recordings, and mirrors. Six pairs nested in 1996 and the colony has grown each year since. The colony continues to demonstrate excellent reproductive success, producing 95 fledglings this summer.



STEPHEN W. KERRIS

A pair of Common Murres alloprens among decoys.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand is home to about 40% of the world's burrowing petrels and shearwater species. Included amongst these are some of the rarest species on Earth. To help protect rare seabirds, New Zealand wildlife biologists are using translocated chicks and social attraction techniques to establish new colonies for many species. The pioneering work of our New Zealand colleagues builds on our demonstration in Maine that translocation of puffin chicks and social attraction of Leach's Storm-Petrels can lead to viable new colonies. Here is a sample of the New Zealand projects:

BLACK PETREL (*Procellaria parkinsoni*)

Feral cats all but eradicated Black Petrels from Little Barrier Island. Following a cat eradication program, researcher Michael Imber and Ian McFadden of the New Zealand Department of Conservation transferred 249 Black Petrel fledglings from Great Barrier Island, about 25 miles away from Little Barrier Island, between 1986 and 1990. Most received no feedings before fledging. These birds do not usually breed until they are 5 to 10 years old.

Results: Only the birds fledged in 1990 are known to have returned and two out of three bred at Little Barrier Island; more would likely be discovered with additional searching. This project demonstrates that relocated petrels can learn the location of a new release site and may return there to breed.

FLUTTERING SHEARWATER (*Puffinus gavia*)

A total of 334 shearwater chicks were transferred from Long Island to Maud Island (about 35 miles) by researcher Brian Bell from 1990 to 1995. This project moved large, downy chicks that were fed for about a month on a blend of fish, water, oils and vitamins. While the chicks were maturing within their burrows, the calls of a Fluttering Shearwater colony were played outside.

Results: 285 of the translocated chicks successfully fledged. Six years after translocations began, two pairs nested on Maud Island during the 1996–97 nesting season. The Maud Island colony increased from two pairs during the 1996–97 nesting season to 12 pairs by 2001–02. The nesting pairs have produced a total of 24 chicks.

DIVING PETREL (*Pelecanoides urinatrix*)

A total of 239 Diving Petrel chicks were transferred from 1997 to 1999 from large New Zealand colonies to Mana Island; they were hand-fed a krill-based diet by Graeme Taylor and Colin Miskelly of the New Zealand Dept. of Conservation.

Results: About 120 chicks fledged, with a 15% return rate by 2001. Diving Petrels and White-faced Storm-Petrels were attracted to the release site with non-stop recorded calls. About 30 unbanded Diving Petrels have been attracted to the new colony in addition to 18 translocated birds. Six chicks fledged from the new colony in 2001.



COLIN MISKELLY

Diving Petrel Chick

TERN HIGHLIGHTS

ARCTIC TERNS NUMBERS INCREASE

Arctic Terns nesting at Audubon-managed islands increased for the first time in three years. The 2,134 total pairs recorded at Stratton Island (eight pairs), Eastern Egg Rock (81 pairs), Matinicus Rock (part of Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge—999 pairs) and Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge (1,046 pairs) is the second highest total recorded at Audubon-managed islands since 1984 when the Gulf of Maine Tern Working Group (GOMTWG) began its region-wide tern restoration program.

GOMTWG, now the Gulf of Maine Seabird Working Group (GOMSWG) is a U.S.-Canadian partnership of conservation organizations and agencies. It was formed in response to five decades of declining tern numbers in Maine. Through restoration and management of historic tern colonies, this downward trend has been reversed for Arctic, Common, and Roseate Terns. From 1984 to 2002, Arctic Terns increased 220%, Common Terns 1,022% and Roseate Terns 732% at Audubon-managed islands. In 2001, 71% of Maine's nesting terns were using Audubon-managed islands.

In 2002, more than 2,900 pairs of Arctic Tern pairs nested along the Maine coast. This is the highest level since 1972. In addition, breeding success exceeded one chick per pair at the five largest colonies in Maine for the first time in many years. An estimated 3,668 Arctic Tern chicks fledged from these five sites, including a record 2,567 from Audubon-managed islands. During the past five years, Maine's Arctic Terns have increased from 2,432 pairs in 1998 to 2,918 pairs in 2002—an increase of 20%. ❖



Arctic Tern and fledgling

24. By the time a mink was trapped on June 26th the majority of this colony had abandoned—only a few chicks fledged from this once-thriving Casco Bay colony.

Pond Island NWR***

Despite the presence of at least two Great Horned Owls in 2002, nesting Common Terns enjoyed record success. On June 19 the field crew, with the assistance of neighbor Walter Gamble, counted 109 Common Tern nests. These nests produced 1.6 chicks per pair—a Pond Island record! The number of fledglings would have been much higher, but about 20% of the chicks died of an unknown disease or contaminant similar to that which plagued Stratton Island. Diagnostic studies have not yet identified the problem.



Eastern Egg Rock**

In 2002, Roseate Terns on Egg Rock increased from 145 to 160 pairs and enjoyed high breeding success. While Arctic Terns were also very successful in 2002, Common Tern numbers declined to 1,004 pairs—a third lower than in 2001. A prolonged storm on June 15 destroyed hundreds of Common Tern nests in low-lying sections of the island just before the annual census.

Matinicus Rock***

Although the Matinicus Rock Arctic Tern colony decreased by 15 pairs to 999, Common Terns increased by 35% to 198 pairs. Arctic Tern breeding success was 1.31 chicks fledged per nesting pair—the highest breeding success since 1988!

Seal Island NWR***

The Seal Island Common and Arctic Tern colony grew to an amazing 2,642 pairs this summer, making it the third largest tern colony in the Gulf of Maine, and the largest Maine coast colony. Arctic terns increased by 23% and Common Terns by 32% above the 2001 totals. About 1,700 Common Tern and 1,200 Arctic Tern chicks fledged from the island this summer. ❖

OTHER TERN NEWS

Stratton Island*

The Stratton Island tern colony declined by 31% from 2001 to 1,279 pairs of Common Terns, 98 pairs of Roseate Terns, and 8 pairs of Arctic Terns. Many of the missing terns likely rejoined the former Jenny Island colony or moved to Seavey Island (managed by New Hampshire Audubon) where the colony increased for the fifth consecutive year. The season started with a Snowy Owl that disrupted much of the colony and was followed by a Black-crowned Night-Heron that destroyed about 500 nests before it was removed. Many chicks from the remaining nests began dying shortly after hatching from a disease or contaminant problem. Several dead chicks were collected and sent to a diagnostic lab for testing, but at this time the cause of death still remains a mystery.

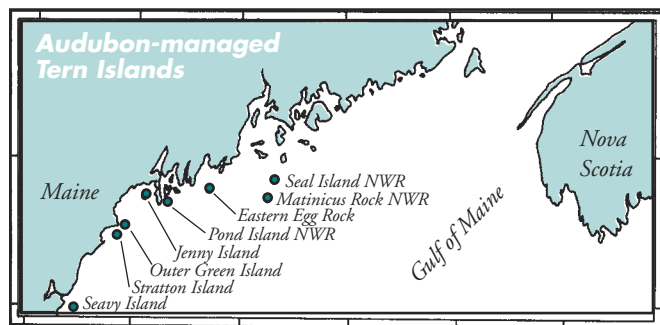
Jenny Island**

A total of 379 pairs of Common Terns and two pairs of late-nesting Roseate Terns re-colonized the island this summer, but mammalian predators continued to disrupt the colony. On June 6, Supervisors Heather and Jaap Eijzenga found numerous broken eggs. Two days later, a skunk was discovered and removed. Caches of eggs, dead chicks, and a crippled tern were discovered on June

*Stratton Island is an Audubon-owned island supported by the Prout's Neck Audubon Society.

**Eastern Egg Rock and Jenny Islands are owned by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

***Pond Island NWR, Matinicus Rock, and Seal Island NWR are part of the Petit Manan NWR.





Puffins in the C

PUFFIN NUMBERS SET NEW RECORDS!

Puffin numbers increase by 41% at Egg Rock and 25% at Seal Island NWR!

Twenty-nine years after the first puffin chicks were transplanted from Great Island, Newfoundland to Eastern Egg Rock, puffins are thriving at Audubon-managed islands in Maine. A record 52 burrows were confirmed at Egg Rock, a record 179 at Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and more than 200 pairs on Matinicus Rock (MR), which is part of the Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge. Reproductive success (a measure of how many puffin chicks each pair produces in a season) was high at all Audubon colonies this summer (Egg Rock had 0.85 chicks per pair; Seal Island NWR 1.0 chicks per pair; and Matinicus Rock 0.83 chicks per pair).



STEVEN WALKER

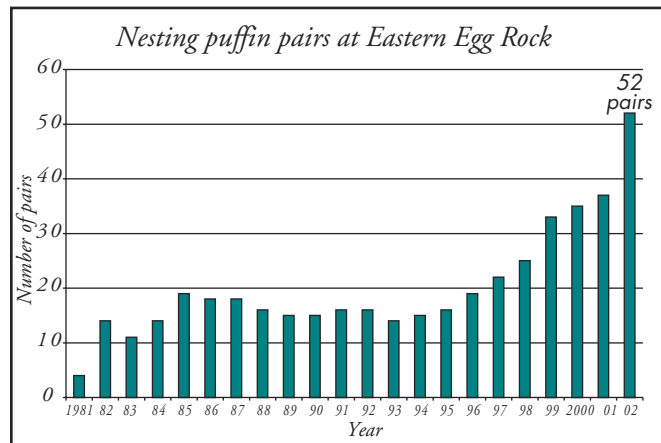
Puffins were nearly extirpated from the Gulf of Maine at the turn of the 20th century due to excessive hunting for food and feathers; only one pair survived at Matinicus Rock and about 300 were recorded at Machias Seal Island in 1902.

The restoration of Maine's puffin colonies is the direct result of hands-on management by Project Puffin that began in 1973. A total of 1,832 transplanted puffin chicks from Great Island, Newfoundland, fledged from Audubon-managed islands (940 from Egg Rock and 892 from Seal Island NWR) between 1973 and 1989. A total of 19% of these transplant fledglings (339) were later re-sighted with many returning to nest at Egg Rock and Seal Island NWR colonies. Five other puffin colonies also occur in the Gulf of Maine, including Petit Manan Island NWR (20 pairs), Machias Seal Island, New Brunswick (2,800 pairs) and in Nova Scotia: Green Rock (90 individuals), Noddy Island (60 individuals), and several pairs on Round Island.

Today, transplants constitute just 9% of Egg Rock and 4% of Seal Island nesting puffins. By contrast, in 1981 and 1992, transplants accounted for 80% and 71% respectively of nesting puffins in these colonies. While transplants fueled the re-colonization of these sites, the current growth at restored sites is likely due to immigration from the largest colonies (Machias Seal Island and Matinicus Rock), resulting from high reproductive success combined with high adult and juvenile survival at all colonies.

Eastern Egg Rock

A record 52 puffin pairs were confirmed breeding in 2002; this represents an astounding 41% growth in the number of breeding pairs since 2001. Since 1998, the number of breeding pairs has increased by 112%—from 25 to 52 pairs. By looking closely at the individual puffins sighted on Egg Rock this summer and comparing these birds to those sighted in past years, we can glean some information about the growth of this colony. For example, 18 more banded individuals were seen in 2002 than in 2001—54 more than in 1998.



In 2002, puffins from all Maine and New Brunswick colonies visited the island—including 76 originally banded on Egg Rock, 26 from Matinicus Rock, 6 from Seal Island NWR, 4 from Machias Seal Island and 2 from Petit Manan Island. In contrast, in 1998, 82% of re-sighted puffins were originally banded on Egg Rock, 11% on Matinicus Rock, 5% on Seal Island NWR and 2% on Machias Seal Island. These numbers include 37 chicks that fledged from other Gulf of Maine colonies in 2002, which contrasts with just 10 in 1998. Puffins are noted for their longevity, and this was well demonstrated by the island's four oldest puffins, all of which turned 24 years old this summer.

The growth that we are now seeing at Egg Rock is likely due to both immigration and recruitment of native chicks (although we are uncertain how many native Egg Rock chicks have joined this colony because we are usually able to band just one or two chicks per year).



STEVEN WALKER

Egg Rock Puffins Bi98 and U16 billing.



Matinicus Rock NWR

On August 7, Paula Shannon and her capable team banded the 81st chick of the season, breaking the previous record. They placed a metal USFWS band on one leg and a plastic band on the other. After being banded, weighed and measured, “Guinness” was released back into the burrow. One more chick was banded this summer, bringing the total to 82. This is significant not only because it is a new record high, but because this information is contributing to our understanding of early puffin survival.

Since 1982, 752 puffins have been banded on Matinicus Rock. Although each puffin’s USFWS band is engraved with a unique number, it is hard to read from a distance, so researchers rely on plastic bands—marked with large numbers and letters—to identify each bird. By re-sighting the bands of these individual puffins, we are able to determine survival of the adults and the success of each year’s fledglings.



STEPHEN W. KRESS



ROSAMIE V. BOEZIK

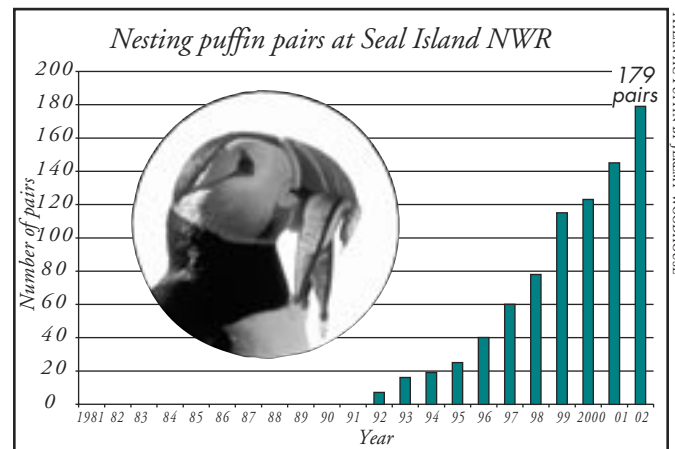
Top: Supervisor Paula Shannon (right) and intern Sarah Case band a puffin chick at Matinicus Rock. Bottom: Steve Kress (left) and Sue Schubel replace the bands on an adult puffin. Adults are occasionally trapped to change worn plastic bands.



Puffin devotees who contribute \$100 or more (it’s tax deductible) to the Seabird Restoration Program will receive a certificate of adoption for one Eastern Egg Rock puffin, along with a photograph and a biography of the bird. Adopt via our web site <www.projectpuffin.org> or call us at (607) 257-7308.

Seal Island NWR

The Seal Island NWR colony surpassed last year’s count of 145 pairs, and reached 179 active burrows—an increase of 23% over last year and an extraordinary 130% increase since 1998 (when there were only 78 burrows). Like Egg Rock, puffins re-sighted on Seal Island NWR in 2002 were all from Maine and New Brunswick colonies; 121 of the 197 puffins re-sighted (61%) were native chicks from Gulf of Maine islands and 14 were Seal Island transplants. Native chicks banded on Matinicus Rock accounted for 35% of all re-sighted puffins on the island this summer. Also, like Egg Rock, the growth of this colony is likely due to both immigration and recruitment of native chicks. Only nine native chicks were re-sighted in 1998, compared to 34 in 2002.



ATLANTIC PUFFIN BY JERRAN WOODHOUSE

Want to see puffins in Maine?
To Eastern Egg Rock from New Harbor
 Hardy Boat Cruises
 PO Box 326
 New Harbor, ME 04552
 (207)677-2026 or (800) 2-PUFFINS
 e-mail: <Hardy@gwi.net>
 Internet: <<http://www.hardyboat.com>>

To Eastern Egg Rock from Boothbay Harbor
 R.N. Fish and Son, Inc.
 PO Box 660, 65 Atlantic Ave.
 Boothbay Harbor, ME 04538
 (207)633-3244 or (207)633-2626

STEVEN WALKER

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

"Puffin Pete" wins Visionary Award

Pete Salmansohn, Education Coordinator for the Seabird Restoration Program, received the Gulf of Maine Council's Visionary Award on June 25 at the governor's mansion in Augusta, Maine. This annual presentation recognizes "innovative and highly committed visionaries who have devoted years to making the Gulf a better place." During the past 12 summers in which Pete has provided narration for boat trips around Eastern Egg Rock, he has spoken to more than 40,000 people. In 1996 he created the Seabird Education Project, our popular school outreach program.

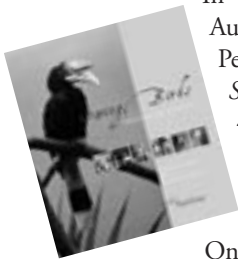
New Book by Salmansohn and Kress

In October, Tilbury House Publishers and Audubon released the latest collaboration by Pete Salmansohn and Stephen Kress, *Saving Birds: Heroes Around the World*. This 40-page children's book presents six international bird preservation projects, and focuses on the heroic efforts of the highly dedicated people that conduct this important work.

One chapter includes Audubon's involvement in restoring Common Murres to Devil's Slide Rock in California, while other sections describe projects in Israel, Mexico, China, Sarawak, and New Zealand. Each chapter is richly illustrated with color photos.

Summer Puffin-Watching Tours

A record 4,646 puffin watchers joined Audubon educators Pete Salmansohn and Jackie Borza this summer for trips to Eastern Egg Rock to see the restored puffin and tern colonies. Since our eco-tourism program began in 1988, more than 50,000 people have heard our conservation message, and enjoyed sightings of puffins and terns, as well as occasional razorbills, murres, and minke whales. See page 5 for details.



2002 Opening Season Staff

First Row: Scott Hall (Research Coordinator) and son Caleb; Jennifer Nagy; Risha Sparhawk; Corina Jung; Meg Harper; Pete Salmansohn (Education Coordinator); Steve Kress (Director).

Second row (seated): Rosalie Borzik (Assistant Director); Shawn Devlin; John Carpenter; Hilary Walter (Stratton Island Supervisor); Sarah Case; Paula Shannon (Matinicus Rock NWR Supervisor); Dede Heath.

Third Row (standing): Matt Matinkovic (Outer Green Supervisor); Jaap Eijzenga and Heather Eijzenga (Pond Island NWR Co-Supervisors); Jackie Borza; Christina Donehower; Ereik Napora; Christine Caurant (Seal Island NWR Supervisor); Rachel Bickel.

School Visits

"Seabird Sue" Schubel was busy this past school year, presenting an engaging and creative array of lessons to more than 1,700 Maine schoolchildren in 26 schools. One of Sue's most popular and inventive offerings is a two-part lesson she calls "Learning to be a Scientist," in which students play the role of island field biologists, identifying and graphing the different fish species that adult terns bring to their chicks. Sue visited 80 individual classrooms, seeing some students as many as six or seven times.

Watching Seabirds on the Internet

With support from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, viewers worldwide watched real-time video of puffins and terns through our web camera on Eastern Egg Rock. The camera was installed in mid-May and broadcasted uninterrupted streaming video until mid-August. Visitors to the Audubon Visitor Center in Bremen, Maine were able to control the camera. Our "seabird cam" returns to our website next May. Pete Salmansohn and Sue Schubel are now writing an interactive web-based book and teacher's guide on the life history and migration of terns that will include archival film clips collected during the summer from the web cam. Watch for this next fall!



Visitors observe live-streaming video provided by a SeeMore Wildlife, Inc. remote camera on Eastern Egg Rock.

New on our "web" site: www.projectpuffin.org

Visit our website to see film clips from the new video, "Fish Out of Water," produced by filmmaker Daniel Breton. Dan lived on Seal Island NWR for five months while filming this award-winning documentary. The film won a Finalist Award, a Merit Award for Conservation Message, and a Merit Award for Presentation of a Sustained Conservation Effort at the 2002 International Wildlife Film Festival. "Fish Out of Water" includes the first Maine video footage of puffins feeding and raising their young in underground burrows!

THE 2002 MAINE RESEARCH TEAM

Absent from photo:

Debbie Wood
Gifts Manager
Ellen Peterson
Egg Rock Supervisor

Research Assistants

Meredith Fleiger
Joseph Kocsis
Amanda Lightcap
Kristin Pennock
Susan Schubel

Volunteer Research Assistants

Kate Banks
David Buege
Julia Dodge
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Dana Glennon
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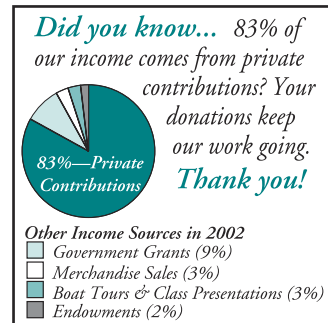
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- David Smus
- Larry Thompson
- Helen, Chris & Emily Tupper
- Dr. Gerald Urquhart
- Robert and Karin Watson
- Rick Woodruff



2001-2002 CONTRIBUTORS

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In Honor of Steve Kress & Elissa Wolfson Marriage

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Alyssa Burger Israel
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