



Egg Rock Update

Newsletter of the Seabird Restoration Program
of the National Audubon Society

2004

SEAL ISLAND NWR PROJECT CELEBRATES 20TH YEAR

Puffin pairs increase by 26%

This past summer, when Audubon researchers observed the 20th anniversary of the seabird program at Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)¹, there was much to celebrate.

The most notable achievement is the dramatic restoration of the puffin and tern colonies. After a 105-year absence, seven pairs nested in 1992. This tiny core of mostly Newfoundland birds has now attracted puffins from other Gulf of Maine puffin colonies—notably Matinicus Rock and Machias Seal Island (see map, page 2). The colony has grown exponentially, increasing to 290 pairs in 2004 (Fig. 1). This is a 26% increase over last year's total of 231 pairs!

Terns also provide cause for celebration. Terns were attracted using decoys and sound recordings—a method first pioneered at Eastern Egg Rock. Seventeen pairs nested near the decoys in 1989 and the colony increased to a peak of 1,568 pairs of Common Terns and 1,046 pairs of Arctic Terns in 2002. The colony has since stabilized with 1,167 pairs of Common Terns, 1,172 pairs of Arctic Terns and two pairs of endangered Roseate Terns in 2004 (Fig. 2). It currently ranks as the largest Maine tern colony. ❖

Figure 1. Growth of Atlantic Puffin colony on Seal Island NWR, 1992–2004

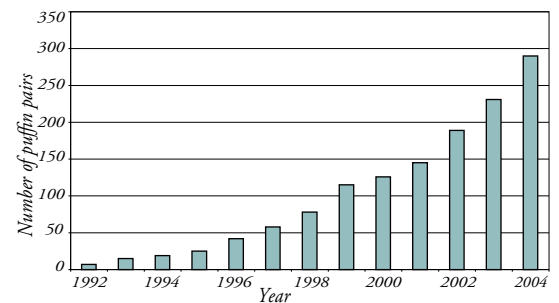
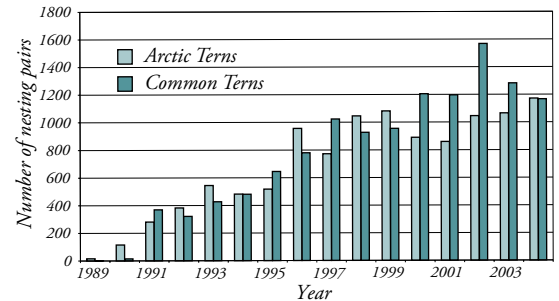


Figure 2. Growth of Arctic and Common terns on Seal Island NWR, 1989–2004



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BILL SCHULTZ

¹Seal Island NWR, named for its population of grey and harbor seals, is a 65-acre island located 18 miles south of Rockland, Maine in outer Penobscot Bay. By 1887, Atlantic Puffins had disappeared from the island following years of hunting for food and feathers. Common and Arctic Terns also nested on Seal Island until about 1890, but were extirpated by market hunting for feathers for ladies' hats by 1887. The program to restore puffins and terns on Seal Island NWR was inspired by early successes at Eastern Egg Rock, where, by 1981, Audubon biologists had restored a small breeding colony of puffins. Between 1984 and 1989, a total of 871 puffin chicks were translocated from Newfoundland to Maine, then hand reared, banded, and released at Seal Island. A resident team of interns fed the chicks for about a month until they reached fledging age. As on Egg Rock, puffins were slow to recolonize Seal Island; the first pair nested eight years after chick translocation was initiated. Tern restoration began in 1984 when resident Audubon biologists began displacing Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls, which prey on tern eggs and chicks, from the northern eight acres of the island. The Seal Island NWR puffin restoration project is a cooperative program of the National Audubon Society, Canadian Wildlife Service, and Petit Manan NWR, owner of the island.

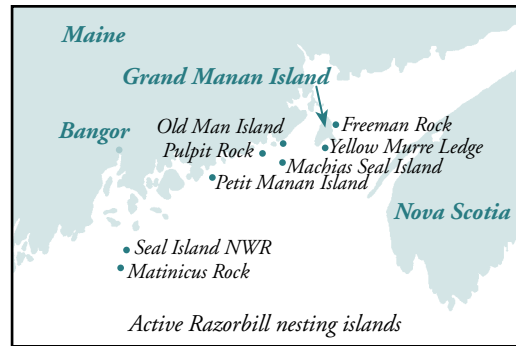
MAINE RAZORBILL NUMBERS REBOUNDED

Razorbills, like their relative the Atlantic Puffin, are enjoying dramatic population growth in Maine. Between 1984 and 2004, the Maine population increased from approximately 46 to 410 pairs¹. Most of this growth has occurred at Matinicus Rock (MR), an Audubon-managed island that is part of the Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge and on Old Man Island, an unmanaged seabird colony in Eastern Maine.

Razorbills and puffins reach the southern limit of their North American breeding range in the Gulf of Maine (GOM). Historic records are scant, but suggest that Razorbills have nested on Machias Seal Island (MSI) and Yellow Murre Ledge, located in the Bay of Fundy since the mid 19th century. Razorbills have nested on Yellow Murre Ledge since about 1850 and on MSI until at least 1891. Razorbills were nesting at MSI by 1922, but disappeared again in the late 1940s before re-establishing in 1955. MSI currently hosts the largest colony of Razorbills in the GOM with more than 600 pairs.

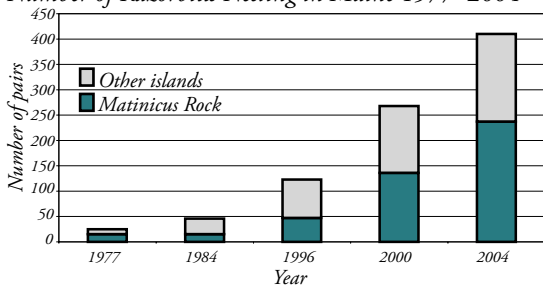
In Maine, Razorbills summered in small numbers as far west as Muscongus Bay in the 1880s, with one breeding pair recorded on Western Egg Rock and one pair on Metinic Green Island. However, Razorbills were extirpated from the state during the late 1800s when most birds were heavily hunted for food and feathers. None nested after 1894. Unconfirmed reports suggest Razorbills were present at MR during the 1940s and throughout the 1950s; however, breeding wasn't confirmed until 1965 by Carl Buchheister. Nesting was confirmed on Old Man Island in 1973.

Four additional Maine islands were colonized by Razorbills since the early 1970s. These include two managed islands (Seal Island NWR and Petit Manan NWR) and two unmanaged islands (Freeman Rock and Pulpit Rock). During this period, the number of breeding pairs has increased on MR and Old Man Island. The Razorbill

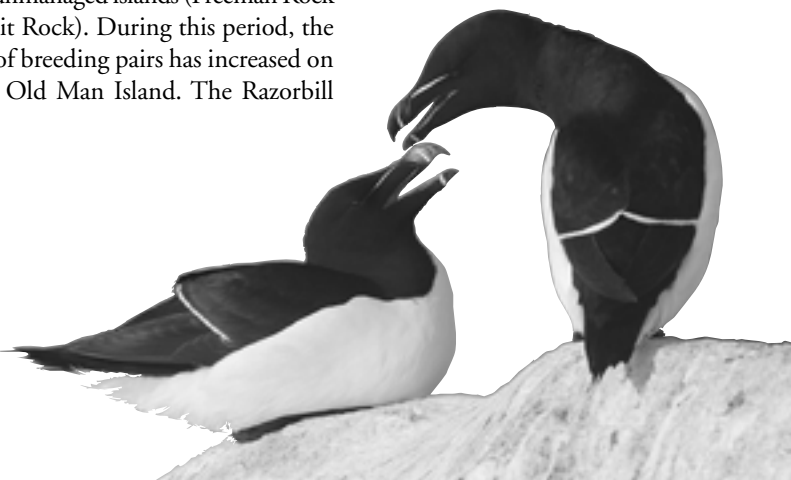


colony on MR is now the largest in Maine with 237 pairs (~58 % of the state population) and has grown 300% since 1996 and 75% since 2000. Razorbill expansion in Maine is likely fueled by the growth and saturation of MSI and Yellow Murre Ledge. ❖

Number of Razorbills Nesting in Maine 1977–2004



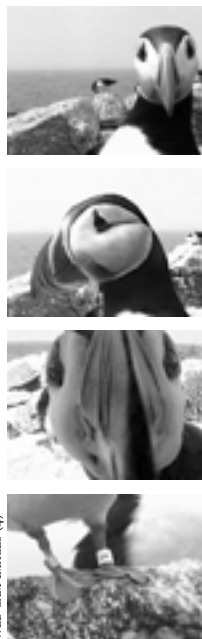
¹ 2004 census data courtesy of John Drury (Coastal Bird Surveys), Brad Allen (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife), Steve Agius (Petit Manan NWR), Paula Shannon and Carlos Zavalaga (NAS).



BILL SCHULTZ

Seabirds on Candid Camera


The live-streaming video from Eastern Egg Rock was more popular than ever this past summer. The website received more than 36,000 visits from mid-May until the camera was removed at the beginning of September. Audubon interns and volunteers directed the camera from the Audubon visitor center in Bremen, Maine, providing close-up views of nesting terns, puffins, eider ducks, guillemots, and Laughing Gulls. The camera, an invention of SeeMore Wildlife Systems of Homer, Alaska, is a weather-tight unit with a lens so clear that viewers at Audubon's mainland visitor center could read puffin leg band numbers! During the winter months, our website www.project-puffin.org will display a collection of the "Best Seabird Cam Photos." ❖



WEB CAM IMAGES (4)

Seventy Puffin Pairs Nest at Egg Rock

The number of breeding puffin pairs at Eastern Egg Rock increased from 59 in 2003 to at least 70 pairs in 2004—an 11% increase. Not only did the number of pairs increase, but also the season was longer than usual with sightings as late as September 4th.



ADOPT-A-PUFFIN

Puffin devotees who contribute \$100 or more (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 online at www.projectpuffin.org or call us at (607) 257-7308.

ROSALIE V. BORZIK

AUDUBON TERN NEWS



ROSEATE TERN BY BILL SCHOLTZ

Eastern Egg Rock

In 2004, the Roseate Tern population declined by 33%—the largest annual decline in 17 years. In addition, Common Terns declined by 42% since 2001. Predation by Herring, Great Black-backed Gulls and Laughing Gulls is the main factor causing the decline. Since 2001, the Egg Rock Laughing Gull colony has increased by 14% to 1,420 pairs.

Outer Green Island

Outer Green Island was the bright spot for Maine terns this summer. There were two waves of nesting that produced approximately 740 Common Tern and 13 Roseate Tern chicks.

Jenny Island

Jenny Island also had two waves of nesting this summer. Only minor predation by gulls and crows was observed this year, permitting the Common Terns to fledge just over one chick per pair.

Eastern Egg Rock, Jenny Island, and Outer Green Island are owned by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Matinicus Rock

Two Peregrine Falcons harassed the Matinicus Rock Arctic Tern colony early in the nesting season. Although the terns eventually nested (two weeks late), the colony

	Common Tern	Arctic Tern	Roseate Tern
Seal Island NWR	1,167	1,172	0
Matinicus Rock	116	830	0
Eastern Egg Rock	873	84	110
Pond Island NWR	429	0	9
Jenny Island	210	1	2
Outer Green Island	510	0	8
Stratton Island	232	7	11

Above: Number of pairs of nesting terns at Audubon tern islands in 2004. Grey shading indicates numbers that decreased from 2003; green shading shows increases.

produced few fledglings. Common Terns also declined.

Seal Island NWR

The Seal Island Common and Arctic Tern colony remained stable this year—the largest number nesting on any Maine Island. Summer-long rain and fog interfered with nesting here as at most islands, resulting in low nesting success.

Pond Island NWR

Nesting was high on Pond Island this year, but visits from three Great Horned Owls impacted nest success. Many parent terns abandoned their chicks at night in response to owl visits, which resulted in further mortality due to the summer's wet and chilly weather. Pond Island tern

chicks continued to suffer from “funk,” a mysterious malady that claimed the lives of about 30% of the chicks. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is analyzing the chicks to determine their cause of death.

Pond Island NWR, Matinicus Rock, and Seal Island NWR are part of the Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge.

Stratton Island

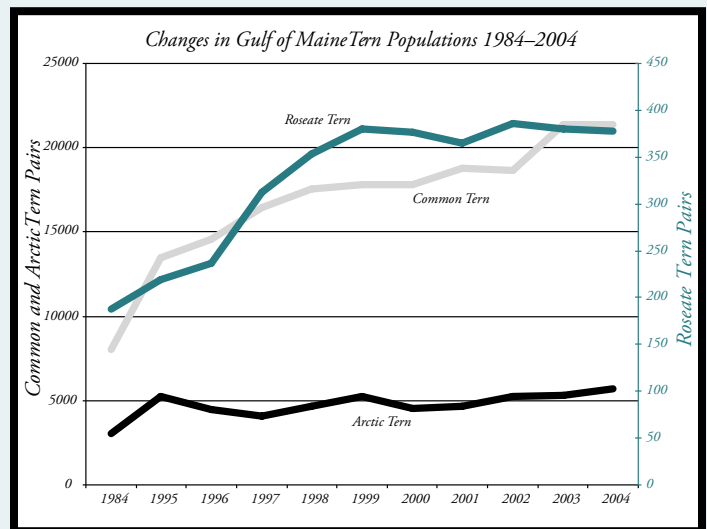
Stratton Island terns have not rebounded from the appearance of a Black-crowned Night-heron in 2002 and a mink in 2003. Although both predators were removed, incursions by at least four predatory Black-crowned Night-herons led to near reproductive failure again this summer.

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

Seabird Group Celebrates 20 Years

The Gulf of Maine Seabird Working Group (GOMSWG) is a partnership of seabird biologists from the United States and Canada. It was formed in 1984 in response to five decades of declining tern numbers in Maine. At this year's annual summer meeting, 72 participants, representing 21 groups, reported on their research and management in the Gulf of Maine. This contrasts with just 18 participants in 1987.

In response to GOMSWG's restoration efforts, populations of Arctic, Common, and Roseate Terns have shown dramatic recovery over the past 20 years. Gulf of Maine (GOM) population estimates now include approximately 21,400 pairs of Common Terns, 5,670 pairs of Arctic Terns and 377 pairs of Roseate Terns. In Maine, from 1984 to 2004, the number of nesting Arctic Terns has increased 100%, Common Terns 119% and endangered Roseate Terns 122%. Much of the growth in Maine has occurred at the seven islands that are cooperatively managed and protected by Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program (SRP).



Today, an informal system of 14 tern nesting sanctuaries spans the Gulf of Maine. This regional success is the result of management of key nesting islands.



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.

COMMON MURRES

Devil's Slide Rock, California

The program to restore Common Murres to Devil's Slide Rock near Half Moon Bay, California moved into its ninth summer in 2004. As recently as 1982, about 2,800 murres frequented this important central California nesting place, but the colony disappeared following the Apex Houston oil spill in 1986. The program to bring the murres back to Devil's Slide Rock began in January 1996 using social attraction methods (decoys, recorded calls, and mirrors). Murres quickly responded to the approach; six pairs nested in the first year of the project. The population of murres has increased each year, even as biologists reduce the number of decoys and mirrors placed on the island. During the 2004 nesting season, 190 pairs laid eggs and 142 chicks hatched, almost double the original goal of 100 nesting pairs in ten years. ❖



GERRY MCCHESENEY

A USFWS researcher removes guano-covered murre decoys from Devil's Slide Rock at the end of the nesting season.

Information provided courtesy of Gerry McChesney (San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge). For further information see: <<http://desfbay.fws.gov/murre.htm>>

CASPIAN TERNS AND DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS

East Sand Island, Washington

Caspian Terns nesting in the Columbia River became controversial in 1998 when biologists discovered that a colony of about 8,700 pairs nesting on Rice Island were eating millions of salmon smolt yearly. In 1999 a program commenced to relocate the colony to East Sand Island (ESI), an historic Caspian Tern nesting colony located in the Columbia River estuary, about 18 miles from Rice Island. Here, it was hoped the terns would find a more diverse diet and eat fewer salmon. Now, for the fourth consecutive year, East Sand Island hosted all the Caspian Terns associated with the river. About 9,500 pairs nest at this island, where salmon comprised only 17% of the tern's diet in 2004.

The ESI site also currently contains about 50% of all Pacific Coast Double-crested Cormorants. Experiments to attract Double-crested Cormorants to new nesting locations also show promising results. Cormorant decoys, sound recordings, and rubber tire "nests" were used this year to encourage cormorants to form new satellite colonies. Multiple sites offer security from catastrophic disasters such as disease and predators, while also reducing impact on local fisheries. ❖

Information provided courtesy of Ken Collis (Real Time Research) and Daniel Roby (Oregon State University). For further information see: <www.columbiabirdresearch.org>.

CASSIN'S AUKLETS

Asunción Island, Mexico

Asunción Island is located about 400 miles south of the U.S. border on the west coast of Baja California. Asunción and neighboring San Roque Island were once breeding locations for the southernmost subspecies of Cassin's Auklet, as well as the globally threatened Xantus's Murrelet, Elegant Tern, and Heerman's Gull. Guano harvesters began living on the island in the 1930s and brought cats to the islands as pets and to control introduced rats. When the guano harvesters departed during WW II, the cats and rats remained, devastating the once-vast seabird colonies by the early 1970s. To attract seabirds back to the islands, the conservation group Island Conservation (IC) removed the feral cats and rats. In December, 1996, IC biologist Brad Keitt and Audubon biologist Susan Schubel installed a sound system to broadcast the calls of the missing seabirds. The systems played without apparent success for seven years, but on January 28, 2004 researchers from IC and Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program discovered nesting activity near the sound system on Asunción Island—the first auklet nesting activity in 30 years. ❖

Information provided courtesy of Brad Keitt (Island Conservation). For further information see: <www.islandconservation.org>.



ELISSA WOLFSON



STEPHEN W. KRESS

Above: Brad Keitt from Island Conservation and Stephen Kress with sign explaining need for need for a mammal-free island. Below: Sound playback equipment on Asunción Island near artificial burrow entrances around the speaker.



KEN COLLIS



KEN COLLIS

Double-crested Cormorants with decoys on rubber tire nests.



GOULD'S PETRELS

Boondelbah Island, Australia

The Gould's Petrel is an endangered species that breeds only in Australia and New Caledonia. The Australian subspecies was restricted to just two colonies—Cabbage Tree Island in New South Wales and Boondelbah Island located 1.4 km away. Because suitable natural nesting cavities were restricted to a few small rock piles, the number of Gould's Petrels nesting on Boondelbah was limited to only 12 pairs. One hundred plastic nest boxes were installed and over two years, 200 petrel chicks were translocated from Cabbage Tree to Boondelbah. In 2004, 41 Gould's Petrels were recorded in 27 nest boxes on Boondelbah Island. Ten translocated fledglings have returned to take up nest boxes that were, on average, 5.5 m from the boxes from which they fledged. An additional 27 non-translocated birds, of unknown origin, have also nested on Boondelbah, along with four birds previously known from Cabbage Tree Island. Two translocated nestlings have returned to Cabbage Tree Island. Within five years of the first translocation, the newly established colony on Boondelbah Island has produced a total of 24 eggs; 14 have produced fledglings. ❖

Information provided courtesy of Dr. David Priddel and Nicholas Carlile, Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW). For further information, see: <www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au>.



NICHOLAS CARLILE



NICHOLAS CARLILE

Above: Gould's Petrels.
Below: View looking down on artificial petrel burrows, showing lids for researcher access.

BERMUDA PETRELS

Castle Harbor, Bermuda

Although thought to be extinct for 300 years, in 1951 a few Bermuda Petrels (known locally as Cahow) were rediscovered nesting on a tiny, rocky islet in Castle Harbor, where they were relatively safe from predators. The Bermuda Conservation Department is working to eliminate rats and provide safe nesting burrows, and the population responded by increasing to 70 pairs by 2003.

Presently, the entire population nests on just four tiny sandstone islets only a few feet above sea level. On September 5, 2003, Fabian—a Category 3 hurricane—overwhelmed three of the four Cahow islands with 35-foot waves. This storm damaged or destroyed 40% of the nest sites.

A cooperative project began in 2004 to encourage nesting in more secure habitats. Mark Reaves from the Macauley Library of Natural Sounds at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology made recordings of the birds in November, 2003, and Susan Schubel from the Seabird Restoration Program installed a solar-powered audio system to broadcast the recordings near new artificial burrows on higher ground. A future goal of the program is to use social attraction methods to encourage Cahows to pioneer a new colony on nearby Nonesuch Island, a larger, higher island. To further this project, 15 Cahow chicks were translocated in 2004 from the vulnerable islets to Nonesuch Island, where they were hand fed and permitted to fledge from artificial burrows. ❖

Information provided by Jeremy Madeiros (Bermuda Department of Conservation) and David Wingate.



STEPHEN W. KRASS

DIVING PETRELS

Mana Island, New Zealand

The project to restore Common Diving Petrels to Mana Island achieved further success this year as the first locally-reared chicks were recruited to the breeding population. A total of 239 Diving Petrel chicks were transferred to Mana Island during 1997–99 and hand fed until they reached fledging age, while nonstop recordings of four petrel species were played at night throughout the year. Twenty translocated chicks have now returned, along with 57 non-banded birds and



COLIN MISKELLY

Adult Common Diving Petrel

eight locally-bred chicks. Fifteen of the translocated birds have nested and 14 chicks fledged from the new colony in 2002. In 2004, two chicks that hatched on Mana Island returned there to breed for the first time. In addition to this promising work, the New Zealand Conservation Department has similar projects in place with Chatham Petrels, Pycroft's Petrels and Fairy Prions. These species do not usually breed until they are at least four years old, so the outcomes of these projects will not be known for several more years.. ❖

Information provided by Colin Miskelly and Graeme Taylor (New Zealand Dept. of Conservation). For further information see: <www.doc.govt.nz>; Friends of Mana Island Society <www.manaisland.org.nz>; and the Chatham Island Taiko Trust <www.taiko.org.nz>.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

A Tern's Journey

A Tern's Journey is our new CD-ROM interactive curriculum. Designed for primary and middle schools, it introduces students to the incredible lives of ocean-going terns via compelling video footage, animation, photographs, and sound recordings. It includes a teacher's guide with suggestions for implementing lessons in the classroom. *A Tern's Journey* will be distributed as a premium from Project Puffin or through Audubon Marketplace; visit <<http://audubon.k-online.biz>>.



Students Learn About Seabirds

"Seabird Sue" Schubel introduced a record 2,165 students to the wonderful world of seabirds this past school year through our school outreach program. She visited 31 schools, and also presented her creative and memorable lessons to students at two huge conservation fairs. "Puffin Pete" Salmansohn also visited classes in May and June, and narrated many student boat trips to Egg Rock out of Port Clyde and New Harbor. The Horizon Foundation and the Mid-Coast Audubon Society provided generous scholarship funds so that under-funded schools could participate. For program details, visit <www.projectpuffin.org/education.html>.

Boat Tours Draw Crowds

Despite weeks of rain and fog that dampened people's eagerness to embark on boat tours, Audubon's puffin watching cruises succeeded in bringing 4,007 passengers out to Eastern Egg Rock—200 more than in 2003. Education Coordinator Pete Salmansohn was ably assisted by naturalists Tom Mullin, and Sue Schubel, and by education intern Chad Witko, a recent graduate of the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse.



Saving Birds Wins Award

Saving Birds: Heroes Around the World by Pete Salmansohn and Stephen Kress was chosen by the John Burroughs Association as one of the best natural history books for children published in 2003. Tilbury House of Gardiner, Maine published the book. Pete Salmansohn accepted the award at the American Museum of Natural History.



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: <cruises@hardyboat.com>
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
www.capnfishboats.com

STEPHEN WALKER



2004 SEASON STAFF

First Row (left to right): Rosalie Borzick (Associate Director); Robbie Lambert (Stratton Island Resident Intern); Steve Kress (Director); Rebecca Junco; Martin Junco; Matt Martinkovic (Pond & Jenny Island Supervisor)

Second Row (left to right): Anthony Liss (Audubon Camp Manager); Mark Pokras, DVM (Staff Training Guest Speaker); Suzanne Sanborn (Stratton Island Supervisor); Ellen Peterson (Eastern Egg Rock Supervisor); Frank Mayer (Matinicus Rock Resident Intern); Paula Shannon (Matinicus Rock Supervisor); Maryka Lier; Gillian Brooks (Egg Rock Resident Intern); Debbie Wood (Gifts Manager); Geri Vistein

Third Row (left to right): Scott Hall (Research Coordinator); Anala Miller (Seal Island Resident Intern); Chad Witko (Education Intern); Julia Corwin; Carlos Zavalaga (Seal Island Supervisor); Emily Thompson; Julie Hart (Outer Green Supervisor); Jeff Groves

Absent from photo: Paul Bailey; Thomas Mullin (Naturalist); Pete Salmansohn (Education Coordinator); Sue Schubel (Education Outreach Specialist); Chris Allen; Paul Bailey; April Belzung; Andre Breton (Database Manager); David Buege; Christina Donehower; Laura Dray; John Drury; Beth Fitzpatrick; Ted Gaine; Mary Roman Gunther; Nicki Hall; Anthony Hill; Johanna Hiscock; Jessica Jozwiak; Jonathan Kyne; Amanda Lightcap; Susan Long; Matthew Medler; Clare Miller; Sara Moses; Melissa Ocana; Kristin Pennock; Crystal Phillips; Sam Radcliffe; Suzann Gerber Regetz; Angela Rouse; Jeff Rouse; Susan Schmid; Bill Scholtz; Andrea Shaw; Barbara Shurman; Sam Slater; Cricket Tupper; Emily Tupper; Jennifer Wagner; Emily Wallace; Stella Walsh; Erin Walters; Erik Wilson Weiberg; Jennifer Wilcox; Nicholas Wobbrock



The Seabird Restoration Program's field researchers present for the pre-training session outside the Fish House on Hog Island Maine in May.

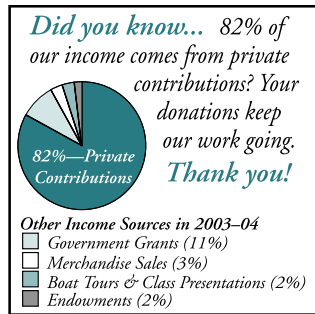
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2003-2004 CONTRIBUTORS HONORARY AND MEMORIAL GIFTS

In memory of Josephine Herz

The Philanthropic Collaborative, Inc.

In memory of Melville H. Ireland

William C. & Ann Ireland Coughlan

In honor of Karen

Wendy Lester

In memory of Robert Kommerstad

Mrs. Robert M. Kommerstad

In honor of Herman Kress

Linda Davis & David Oppenheimer

In memory of Dorothy Jane Porter

"The Puffin Posse"

In memory of Fritz Schwartz

Deborah A. Sullivan

In memory of Bill Waggoner

Rev. Marvin J. Caldwell

BENEFACTORS

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\$25,000 and over

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