



Egg Rock Update

Newsletter of the Seabird Restoration Program
of the National Audubon Society

2008

PUFFINS SET NEW RECORDS IN 35TH YEAR

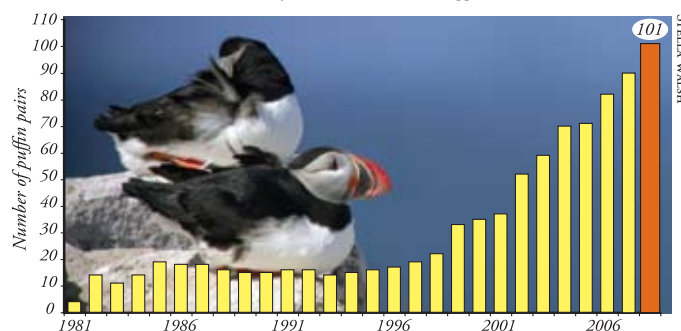
Nesting pairs of puffins at Eastern Egg Rock and Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) reached new record high counts this summer as Project Puffin staff celebrated the project's 35th year. These islands supported thriving puffin populations in the mid 1880s until excessive hunting led to the end of both colonies. The program to restore these colonies began in 1973 when five puffin chicks translocated from Great Island, Newfoundland were released at Eastern Egg Rock.

Milestones were set this summer when 101 puffin pairs were found nesting at Eastern Egg Rock and 375 pairs were counted at Seal Island NWR. The numbers are considered minimums, as Maine puffins nest in hidden burrows under boulders.

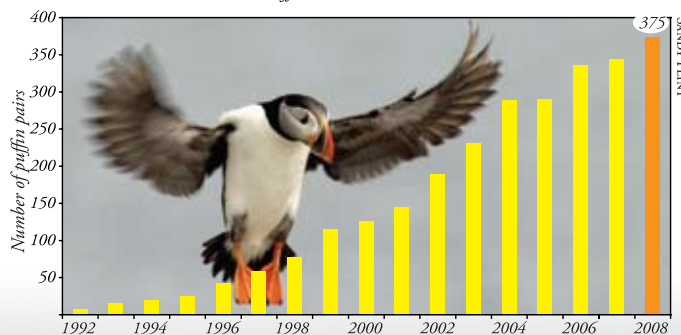
Between 1973 and 1986, 954 puffin chicks were moved from Newfoundland to Eastern Egg Rock. From 1984 and 1989, an additional 950 puffin chicks were brought to Seal Island. A total of 914 of the chicks successfully fledged from Egg Rock and 912 from Seal Island NWR, with the first nesting birds appearing in 1981 and 1992, respectively. For both projects, there was an eight year wait from the time of fledging until the first nesting. These colonies have grown from returning young produced at the sites and from puffins immigrating from other Gulf of Maine colonies, such as Petit Manan Island NWR near Milbridge (93 pairs), Machias Seal Island NWR near Cutler (about 2,800 pairs), and nearby Matinicus Rock (about 350 pairs).

This summer, nearly all of the puffin pairs at Egg Rock and Seal Island NWR produced a fledgling. The number of puffins sitting on top of the boulders at any one time is another measure of success; 107 loafing puffins were counted at Eastern Egg Rock and 492 at Seal Island NWR this summer. As the colonies increase, they are also expanding into new habitat on both islands. ❖

Increase in Atlantic Puffin Pairs at Eastern Egg Rock, 1981–2008



Increase in Atlantic Puffin Pairs at Seal Island NWR, 1992–2008



Puffin populations at Eastern Egg Rock and Seal Island NWR reached all time highs this year as older puffins (some are now 31 years old) were joined by many younger pairs nesting for the first time.

INSIDE

- Managing Tern Islands
- Geolocators
- Graduate Students
- Island Updates
- International Highlights
- Education

Storms brought heavy rain to Eastern Egg Rock in July, but puffin chicks stayed dry in secure burrows under boulders.



ROSALIE BORZIK

NEW CHALLENGES FOR MANAGING MAINE'S TERN ISLANDS

In this 35th year of Project Puffin, we are celebrating the successful restoration of 11 tern colonies in the Gulf of Maine, using techniques pioneered at Eastern Egg Rock. These techniques include placement of island stewards during the nesting season and the use of social attraction methods such as decoys and sound recordings. Currently, more than 80% of Arctic, Common, and Roseate terns from Cape Cod to Cape Sable, Nova Scotia nest on islands protected by resident island stewards during the nesting season. The social attraction methods have helped us develop a “recipe” for bringing terns back to historic nesting islands. Without such management, these terns are forced to nest on inshore islands, where nests usually fail due to human disturbance and the proximity of mainland-based predators

(e.g. mink, raccoons, and Great Horned Owls).

While these successes have permitted tern populations to rebound after more than 50 years of decline, the challenges for long-term management are great. Populations of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls remain high and they would readily displace the restored colonies if not for the presence of resident island stewards. Without tern colonies, puffin populations would also suffer, as terns chase off predators from their own nests, which helps to protect puffins, guillemots, storm-petrels and other seabirds. Island stewards are the single best way to resolve most gull problems.

Laughing Gulls and invasive plants are two of the most pressing current challenges.

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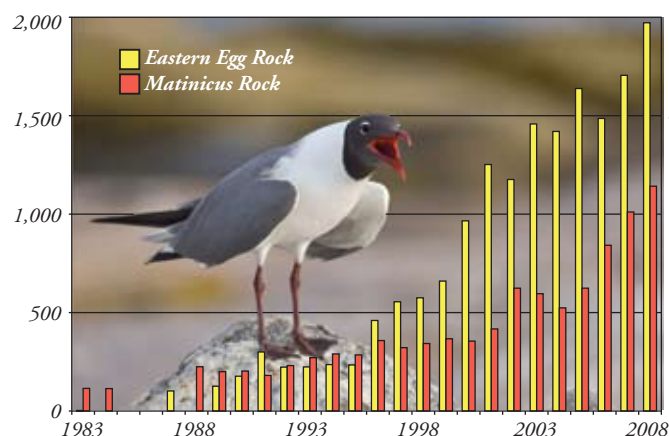
STEPHEN W. KRESS

LAUGHING GULLS

Like puffins and terns, Laughing Gulls were displaced from most of their historic nesting islands by Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls. Maine Laughing Gulls now nest within three large colonies of Common, Arctic and Roseate Terns, where they find protection from larger gulls that

would eat their eggs and chicks. Laughing Gulls colonized Eastern Egg Rock in 1983 and remained below 500 pairs until 1996. But by 2008, the number of Laughing Gulls nesting at Egg Rock had increased to 1,992 pairs—a record high count. Similarly, less than 500 pairs nested at Matinicus Rock until 2002, but this colony also exploded to a record high of 1,142 pairs in 2008.

The challenge for seabird managers is that Laughing Gulls compete for nesting habitat with terns. In addition, some steal fish from parent terns eat tern eggs and chicks. Also, guano produced by Laughing Gulls fertilizes vegetation, which improves Laughing Gull habitat, but degrades habitat for terns, which prefer to nest in sparse vegetation.



RAGHU RAMANUJAN

In the past ten years, Laughing Gull populations have increased by 243% at Eastern Egg Rock, and by 233% at Matinicus Rock.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Seabird guano is a well-known plant fertilizer on dry-climate Pacific seabird islands, such as those in Peru. However, Maine's wet climate directs guano nutrients into the soil, favoring tough non-natives such as quack and timothy grasses that exclude low-growing, native grasses in which terns nest. As an island's interior tern habitat is degraded by increasing vegetation, terns are forced to nest at island edges, where they are more vulnerable to predators, as well as flooding from extreme storms and high tides. To create more tern habitat, several methods were employed this summer.



OUTTER GREEN ISLAND QUACK GRASS AND BIRDWEED MEADOW BY ROSALIE V. BORZIK



STEPHEN W. KRESS

Above: Seabird guano fertilizes vegetation causing it to overrun tern nesting habitat. Below: Laughing Gulls are prolific breeders, raising two or three young per pair. Fledglings obtain adult plumage in their third summer.

Landscape Fabric

In early May, six-foot-wide strips of landscape fabric were placed on Jenny and Outer Green Islands, and then covered with straw. The open space created by the landscape fabric provided nesting spaces for the terns, which built nests in the straw and around the edges of the fabric.



STEPHEN W. KRASS

Commercial landscape fabric, laid over potential tern habitat and covered with straw, provides a temporary oasis for nesting terns.

Native Grasses

In relatively undisturbed sections of our most remote islands, we see terns nesting on low-growing native grasses. We hope to replicate this habitat on other islands currently dominated by taller invasive grasses and annuals. To test this method, a 10-meter-square plot was cleared with herbicide on Outer Green Island and planted with native red fescue in September. If we find that terns nest successfully in this plot, then similar native grasses could be planted on areas cleared in previous years with black plastic. Once established, these grasses can potentially exclude taller vegetation.



STEPHEN W. KRASS

ROSALIE V. BORZIK

Pete Salmansohn spreads native red fescue seed at Outer Green Island to create improved tern nesting habitat. Terns will nest in these low-growing native grasses. Inset: Common Tern nest in low grass at Pond Island NWR.

Black Plastic

At Outer Green Island and Eastern Egg Rock, two 10-meter-square plots of commercial grade black plastic were placed over tern habitat, following weed-whipping in spring, 2008. These were covered with a second layer of black polyethylene fabric in September. These plots will be covered for at least two years; the extended time is necessary to kill established vegetation. When the material is removed, we anticipate that terns will quickly colonize the bare ground. This method also may provide a non-chemical approach to preparing soil in which low-growing native grasses can be planted; terns can then nest in the resulting habitat.



ROSALIE V. BORZIK

Black plastic prevents sunlight from reaching plants. If left in place for two or more years, it can provide patches of bare ground for nesting terns.

Prescribed Burns

At Outer Green Island and Eastern Egg Rock, two 10-meter-square plots of vegetation were burned in late September, following weed whipping and treatment with clove oil herbicide. The goal of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of fire in clearing accumulated dead plant material, and for altering the composition, height, and density of plants within the plots. Next summer, vegetation growth here will be compared to data collected both prior to burning, and within untreated control plots. ❖



ROSALIE V. BORZIK

Research coordinator Scott Hall manages a prescribed burn on Outer Green Island.

DISCOVERING THE PUFFIN'S WINTER HOME

Little is known about the puffin's winter range. It is generally assumed that they stay in the North Atlantic, floating on the sea surface far from the coast, but the specific locations of their winter home remain largely a mystery. As offshore drilling and wind farms become more prevalent, discovering the puffin's winter habitat is the first step in ensuring its protection. To learn about the puffin's life at sea, Audubon staff working on Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) fitted four geolocators on nesting puffins late last July.

Geolocators are paper clip-sized instruments capable of tracking the movements of migratory birds by measuring light levels (sunrise, sunset, and day length) to determine latitude and longitude. This method offers great hope for learning about the non-breeding season movements of seabirds. With new innovations in battery technology, sensors, and memory storage, logging units weighing as little as 1.5 grams, and capable of storing two to six years worth of data, are now available. Marine birds once thought too small to carry geolocators are now the focus of studies that are revealing remarkable insights about behavior and habitat use. For example, the annual migration of southern hemisphere-nesting Sooty Shearwaters exceeds 43,000 miles!

To alleviate uncertainty about an Atlantic Puffin's ability to carry a three-gram package attached to a leg band, we first conducted a pilot behavioral study on captive puffins at Sea World in Orlando, Florida. In April, Scott Hall, research coordinator for Project Puffin, traveled to Orlando to help attach "dummy" units to four puffins that reside in Sea World's Penguin Encounter exhibit. Overall, the trial revealed few problems and was encouraging enough for Audubon staff to proceed with the study on Seal Island NWR.

To learn where puffins spent the 2008–2009 winter, the four puffins carrying the



SCOTT HALL



KATE FREEMAN; INSET BY SCOTT HALL



Scott Hall, research coordinator for Project Puffin, applied the first of four geolocators to puffins on Seal Island NWR this summer.

geolocators will need to be recaptured next summer to download information. Because puffins typically return to the same burrow each year, our chances of recapturing them are good. Recent success with a similar project in Britain also offers encouragement that our puffins will return carrying the geolocators. ❖

This study was made possible through a grant from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation. Seal Island NWR is managed cooperatively with the Maine Coastal Islands NWR.



WENDY DONCASTER

Sherry Rodriguez (top), aviculturist at Sea World, Orlando, assists with a feasibility study with captive Sea World puffins. In July, Sherry travelled to Maine to assist on Seal Island NWR.

See Puffins in Maine!

Join Audubon interpretive guides aboard puffin-watching boat tours to Eastern Egg Rock. A portion of each ticket price is donated to Audubon for the management of Eastern Egg Rock.

To Eastern Egg Rock from New Harbor
Hardy Boat Cruises
(800) 2-PUFFIN or (207) 677-2026
email <cruises@hardyboat.com>
www.hardyboat.com

To Eastern Egg Rock from Boothbay Harbor
R.N. Fish and Son, Inc.
(800) 633-3244 or (207) 633-2626
http://mainewhales.com/puffins

BILL SCHOLTZ

SEABIRD RESTORATION GRADUATE STUDENTS

Since Project Puffin began in 1973, 936 volunteers, undergraduate students, and graduate students have received training and inspiration from Project Puffin by working on our Maine islands. Many are now conservation leaders, holding responsible positions in academia, agencies, and non-profit groups. Among our graduate students, many have received Ph.D. and masters degrees. Here we highlight three current graduate students whose work typifies the variety of projects presently underway:

Jeff Kimmons

Now in the fifth year of his Ph.D. program at the University of Arkansas, Jeff is studying foraging dynamics and life history variation of Common Terns nesting in Maine. The title of his thesis is "Influence of prey availability on life history expressions in Common Terns along the Maine coast: a stable isotope approach." He extracts and compares carbon and nitrogen isotopes from tern chick feathers and fish dropped in Maine tern colonies. In 2009, Jeff will study the physiology of breeding Common Terns on two islands.



Jeff Kimmons collects dropped fish at Eastern Egg Rock for carbon analysis.

Katie Kauffman

Katie returned to Matinicus Rock for her second summer as supervisor and her first field season working with Razorbills. The title of her masters project at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst is "Foraging behavior of Razorbills (*Alca torda*) at the southern limit of their range." Katie is using diet observations and information collected by time depth recorders (TDRs) placed on adult Razorbills to answer questions about foraging. Each TDR collects data on water temperature, diving depth, dive frequency, and travel time to foraging areas. In 2008, Katie and her field assistant, Kyla Zaret (who received support from the Maine State Wildlife Grants program), placed TDRs on seven Razorbills and have so far retrieved two.



Katie Kauffman with a Razorbill that will be fitted with a time depth recorder for studying foraging behavior.

Juliet Lamb

Juliet is a first year master's student at the University of Massachusetts and will be studying habitat management techniques for ground-nesting terns. She has worked for Project Puffin for each of the last three summers, most recently as the supervisor of Eastern Egg Rock. This summer she began field work related to her thesis, including a vegetation monitoring program and pilot vegetation manipulation studies. Test projects included evaluating the use of corn gluten meal to suppress sprouting weed seeds, planting native cool season grasses, conducting controlled burns to alter and improve habitat, using black plastic to suppress vegetation, and creating herbarium collections.



Juliet Lamb contemplates methods for restoring this tangle of cow parsnip and bindweed to tern habitat at Outer Green Island.

THE 2008 MAINE RESEARCH TEAM

First Row (left to right): Steve Kress; Peter Salmansohn; Maria Cunha.

Second Row (left to right): Rosalie Borzik; Charlie Governali; Arminda Mejía; Katie LaCreta; Peggy Friar; Liz Zinsser; Sharon Hoover; Katie Kauffman; Kate Freeman; Emily Golson; Meera Howe; Anne Bloomfield; Robert Kiley; Pam Loring.

Third Row (left to right): Lauren Scopel; Jennifer Knight; Kyla Zaret; Scott Hall; Stuart Fety; Matt Klostermann; Malcolm Grant.

Absent from photo: Morgen Alden; Sean Beckett; Daniel Boritt; Andre Bretón; Scott Cronenweth; Diane DeLuca; Christi Diamond; Caitlin Dixon; John Drury; Pedro Fernandes; Karin Fraser; Ted Gaine; Kirk Gentelen; Alisa Glassman; Alan Hale; Nicki Hall; Bill Hancock; Anthony Hill; Merrin Howe; Eric Hynes; Jeff Kimmons; Mark LaBarr; Juliet Lamb; Robby Lambert; Adrienne Leppold; Mandy Lightcap; Ruth Likowski; Nicolas Louis; Mike Mangiaracina; Arthur Marchese; Joe Masi; Susan Meadows; Terry Mingle; Thomas Mullin; Keri Parker; Kristin Pennock; Maggie Lee Post; Raghuram Ramanujan; Nicholas Record; Holly Lynne Reinhard; Sherry Rodriguez; Susan Schubel; Jason Sears; Carolyn Sedgwick; Anton Seiger; Luke Seitz; Sam Slater; Rick Smith; Will Taubman; Kaih Walker; Ian Wallace; Stella Walsh; Ellen Westhaver; Debbie Wood





Maine Island Updates



SCOTT HALL

Large sand lance, typically warm water fish rare in puffin diets at Seal Island NWR, were abundant this summer.

SEAL ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

On Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), puffin numbers increased to record numbers. The island was also home to Maine's second largest tern colony this year, with an estimated 1,283 pairs of Common Terns and 1,084 pairs of Arctic Terns. Gull predation caused much of the colony to disperse during the 2007 season; this year 500 more pairs returned than in 2007. The terns had the most successful summer for raising chicks since 2003 because of diminished predation, good weather during early chick rearing, and an abundance of herring and sand lance early in the nesting season. In total, more than 2,450 tern chicks fledged. Seal Island NWR is managed cooperatively with the Maine Coastal Islands NWR.

MATINICUS ROCK

Large sand lance dominated the diets of puffins and razorbills early in the nesting season, comprising 70% of the food delivered to razorbill chicks and 26% of the overall diet of puffins. While unusual at this island, large sand lance is one of the best foods for seabirds. The razorbill colony increased by 10%, spreading to new parts of the island and setting a new all-time-high record of 343 pairs.

A single pair of Roseate Terns also nested on the island—the first nest confirmed since 1993. A Manx Shearwater burrow was notable as only the second nesting record in Maine. The first recorded was also at Matinicus Rock. Remarkably, a Red-billed Tropicbird (likely the same one that has visited the island over the past three years) was observed here for ten days, and at nearby Seal Island NWR for 20 days. Matinicus Rock is managed cooperatively with the Maine Coastal Islands NWR.



SCOTT HALL

A lone Red-billed Tropicbird visited Matinicus Rock and Seal Island NWR for the fourth consecutive summer.

EASTERN EGG ROCK

STELLA WALSH

Nesting puffins increased to a record high of 101 pairs (see page one). Likewise, Arctic and Roseate Terns increased from 101 and 118 pairs respectively in 2007, to 111 and 129 pairs in 2008. The increase in Roseate Terns is notable considering their general decline throughout New England this summer. Common Tern numbers stayed about the same this year with more than 1,000 pairs nesting. In contrast, Laughing Gulls increased 14%, from 1,705 pairs in 2007 to a record high of 1,992 pairs. To help frighten predatory Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls away from critical tern nesting habitat, a robotic mannequin, dubbed "Robo-Ranger," was placed near puffin and tern nesting habitat in late June. Built by students and teachers at Dewitt Middle

A single Black Tern laid one egg—the first nesting record for the species at Eastern Egg Rock.

School in Ithaca, New York, in collaboration with engineers from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, the six-foot-tall male "scaregull" arose from its box at random intervals determined by a computer. (Watch it in action on YouTube—search for "Project Puffin.") Interns that continually scared gulls off the island dressed similarly to "Robo-Ranger" so that gulls would learn to fear the interns, and then transfer this learning to the robot. Terns and puffins nesting nearby became accustomed to the scaregull, and as we hoped, few gulls were observed roosting nearby.

Scaregull installation on Egg Rock was assisted by Dewitt Middle School students Jake Langenbacher, Yu Young Lee, Joey Menzenski, and Issac Wagner, and coordinated by teachers David Buchner and Evelyn Weinstein with technical assistance from Robert MacCurdy, an engineer from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Anthony Liss, Eric Snyder and Leonard Duffy coordinated its delivery from the mainland to the island. Eastern Egg Rock is managed in cooperation with the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.



STEPHEN W. KRASS

Island supervisor Juliet Lamb dressed like Robo-Ranger, a computerized robot designed to frighten gulls from tern nesting habitat.

	Common Tern	Arctic Tern	Roseate Tern	Least Tern
Seal Island NWR	1,283	1,084	0	0
Matinicus Rock	298	1,494	1	0
Eastern Egg Rock	1,129	111	129	0
Pond Island NWR	437	3	0	0
Jenny Island	556	0	2	0
Outer Green Island	828	1	0	0
Stratton Island	951	9	67	59
Total	5,482	2,703	199	59

Above: Number of pairs of nesting terns at Audubon-managed sanctuaries as of the June 2008 census. Yellow boxes indicate numbers that increased from 2007; gray boxes show declines.

OUTER GREEN ISLAND

A total of 828 Common Tern pairs nested on Outer Green Island, home to the largest tern colony in Casco Bay. This year, terns nesting on southern Maine islands suffered from a food shortage that began during the second week of July and continued through the remainder of the season. This forced the terns to switch from hake, large sand lance, and herring to tiny crustaceans, insects, and low-quality fish. Outer Green Island is managed in cooperation with the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, with special logistic support from the USFWS Gulf of Maine Program and Clark Smith of Peak's Island, Maine.

JENNY ISLAND

Jenny Island hosted 556 pairs of Common Terns in 2008. This 18% decline from 2007 resulted from a visiting mink that killed at least 12 adult Common Terns and one adult Roseate Tern, causing widespread nocturnal abandonment in late June. Coupled with rain and a shortage of quality food in late July, the mink predation resulted in fewer chicks than usual; still,

about 500 Common Tern chicks fledged this year. Jenny Island is managed in cooperation with the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and managed by Project Puffin. Logistical assistance was provided by Helen and Chris Tupper of Cundy's Harbor, Maine.



CHARLES GOVERNALI



STEPHEN W. KRASS

Island supervisor Charles Governali bands the first albino tern chick ever observed at Jenny Island.

POND ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

A total of 437 pairs of Common Terns and three pairs of Arctic Terns nested this year—a 38% increase over 2007, and the second highest number ever recorded at the island. However, Great Horned Owls disrupted the nesting season, causing parent terns to abandon their chicks at night. The owls were captured unharmed on July 5th and 21st, and later released in northern Maine with the assistance of Marc Payne and Diane Winn, licensed rehabilitators at Avian Haven in Freedom, Maine. Pond Island NWR is managed cooperatively with the Maine Coastal Islands NWR. Logistical assistance was provided by Anne and Walter Gamble of Georgetown, Maine.



STEPHEN W. KRASS

Ten pairs of Black Guillemots nested at Outer Green Island; some nested in burrows built by island supervisor Jennifer Knight.



JULIE MCKENRIGHT/ENVIRONMENT CANADA 2008

A Great Horned Owl trapped on North Brothers Island, Nova Scotia in June 2008 killed at least 23 terns, 11 of which were Roseate Terns. Great Horned Owls are also an ongoing threat to Pond Island NWR, where two were safely trapped and relocated far from the island in 2008.

INTERNATIONAL SEABIRD RESTORATION PROJECTS

Techniques that brought puffins and other seabirds back to Maine are now helping rare and endangered seabirds worldwide. Here are three examples:

SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSS

On February 19, 2008, biologists from the Yamashina Institute for Ornithology, along with Rob Suryan from Oregon State University, and Paul Sievert from University of Massachusetts in Amherst, translocated ten Short-tailed Albatross chicks



Tomonino Dierckx

Short-tailed Albatross chicks just after arrival at their new home on Mokuojima Island.

from Japan's Torishima Island by helicopter to Mukojima (in the Ogasawara (Bonin) Islands, about 250 miles southeast of Torishima. About five million Short-tailed Albatross were killed by feather hunters in the late 1800s. Torishima Island, an active volcano where 382 pairs

were recorded in 2007, is home to almost all of the surviving birds. In contrast, Mukojima is a non-volcanic island which offers promise as a safer nesting place.

The translocated chicks were raised by Japanese biologists until all ten fledged in late May. Five of the ten had satellite transmitters taped to their backs and five different chicks from Torishima were also equipped with transmitters. Upon leaving Mukojima, these chicks also showed very similar behavior to that of the Torishima



SUSAN SCOTT

Surrounded by Laysan Albatross and their chicks, a lone adult Short-tailed Albatross (left) has waited among decoys for years for a mate. On January 11, 2008, an immature arrived and the two were seen courting—the first Midway Island Short-tailed Albatross pair could form here next year.

chicks. The translocations will continue for at least the next four years, with an increase to 15 chicks planned for 2009.

Biologists at Midway Islands National Wildlife Refuge in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands report that an immature Short-tailed Albatross was observed courting with a Short-tailed adult that has resided alone on Eastern Island for the past ten years. Both birds frequented a group of 42 Short-tailed Albatross decoys near an iPod system broadcasting continual recorded albatross calls. The rare pair did not nest in 2008, but biologists are hopeful the birds will return again this winter. ❖

HEERMANN'S GULL

This year marked the beginning of a new program to increase the diversity of nesting seabirds on Asunción and San Roque Islands, both located off the Baja California Pacific coast. Predation by rats and cats introduced by local fisherman and guano harvesters resulted in the extirpation of Heermann's Gulls, Elegant Terns, storm-petrels, and Cassin's Auklets. In 1994 and 1995, Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas and Island Conservation eradicated cats and rats from the islands, but the Heermann's Gulls and Elegant Terns did not return. Now that the habitat is safe, the birds are benefitting from some of the techniques developed by the Seabird Restoration Program in Maine. From Conservación de Islas, Marlene Rodríguez-Malagón, María Félix-Lizárraga and Arminda Mejía-Rebollo have travelled to Maine as Josephine Daneman Herz International Seabird Fellows to learn restoration methods which they can apply in this new program.

From mid-March to mid-June, Conservación de Islas biologists camped on Asunción and San Roque islands to observe responses to the decoys, sound playbacks, and mirrors set out to attract Heermann's Gulls and Elegant Terns. The Heermann's Gulls established a colony with 23 nests and 64 eggs among the decoys on San Roque. Terns visited the decoys on Asunción

Island, but did not nest. Restoration of these Audubon Watch List species is important because presently their entire world population is concentrated on just a few islands. This project is funded by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation. ❖



RICARDO ROSAS

Heermann's Gulls nested for the first time in many years at San Roque Island in response to decoys (foreground) and recorded calls.

EDUCATION

PROJECT PUFFIN VISITOR CENTER

In July, Project Puffin Visitor Center (PPVC) hosted Swedish wildlife artist Karl Mårtens and his exhibit, “Zen and the Art of Seabird Conservation,” sponsored by The American-Scandinavian Foundation (see photo at right). To support Project Puffin internships, we are selling limited edition lithographs from the exhibit through the PPVC’s online store. Until December 30, tickets are also available for a raffle of two framed lithographs.

Since last May, more than 10,000 visitors have enjoyed the exhibits and real-time video that streams directly from the puffin cam on Seal Island to the PPVC.

PUFFIN TOURS

The increased puffin population at Egg Rock provided passengers with excellent views. Pete Salmansohn, education coordinator for Project Puffin, assisted by education interns Jeff Kimmons and Bob Kiley, guided 99 puffin-watching tours for 4,347 passengers aboard Hardy Boat Cruises from New Harbor and Cap’n Fish’s Whale Watch from Boothbay Harbor.



VILLY MÅRTENS

2008

Volunteers:
Sharon Hoover
Tom Schwamb

Located at 311 Main Street in Rockland, Maine, PPVC is open daily from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. from May through October and weekends until Christmas. The puffin cam is sponsored by Barbara's Bakery.

AWARDS FOR PROJECT PUFFIN STAFF

Rosalie Borzik, associate director of Project Puffin, was named a TogetherGreen Fellow under sponsorship of a grant from Toyota. The grant recognizes Rose's leadership in working with Project Puffin volunteers over the past 20 years. Her project, entitled “Turning Earth for Terns,” will engage volunteers to restore nesting habitat for Common and Roseate Terns at Outer Green Island.

Susan Schubel received a 2008 Disney Wildlife Conservation Hero Award in recognition of her inspired and creative classroom teaching programs in Maine elementary schools. The award is given annually by the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund to 11 conservationists worldwide. This year, “Seabird Sue” delivered her creative hands-on activities to 1,143 children in 61 classes at 22 elementary schools in the mid-coast Maine region.



Contribute \$100 or more (tax deductible) to the Seabird Restoration Program and receive a certificate of adoption for one Eastern Egg Rock puffin, a photograph and biography of your bird, and your choice of premium including our new Karl Mårtens T-shirt! Call us at (607) 257-7308 or adopt online at <www.projectpuffin.org>



International Seabird Restoration Projects (continued)



JEREMY MADERIOS

CAHOW

Bermuda's national bird, the Cahow, is among the rarest of all seabirds, presently nesting on only four tiny islets that are vulnerable to erosion and predation by rats. Rats killed at least four chicks on one of the islets, but the number of confirmed breeding pairs increased from 80 in 2007 to 85 in 2008, fledging a record high count of 40 young. For the fifth consecutive year, Jeremy Maderios and colleagues from the Bermuda Department of Conservation Services translocated Cahow chicks to Nonsuch Island, a nearby historic nesting island. Of the 24 chicks moved this year, 23 successfully fledged, continuing a remarkable record of success; 102 out of 105 translocated chicks have fledged over the last five years. Six to eight birds have been observed performing courtship flights over the island (the first such flights in nearly 400 years) and returning Cahows visited six artificial burrows located near speakers broadcasting recordings of petrel vocalizations. Bands on four of these “prospectors” proved that they were translocated to Nonsuch Island.

This fluffy Cahow chick is one of 24 chicks translocated to Nonsuch Island in 2008. The towel gently restrains the chick during feeding, reduces the risk of damage to new feathers and provides protection from spilled food.

MAINE ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP INNS SUPPORT PROJECT PUFFIN

The Historic Inns of Rockland, Certified Maine Environmental Leaders, have lent their support to Project Puffin. A portion of each booking is reserved for local environmental programs to help travelers offset their carbon footprint. Support from Historic Inns of Rockland recognizes that puffins and other seabirds are an important part of the quality of life in coastal Maine and Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program's role in protecting and restoring seabirds. Donations contributed by the inns will help sponsor summer internships for college students who will protect important Maine nesting islands.

We thank the following Historic Inns of Rockland for their generous support and encourage puffin enthusiasts to stay with these environmental leaders when visiting coastal Maine: Berry Manor Inn; Captain Lindsey House; LimeRock Inn; Granite Inn. ❖



Frank Isganitis from LimeRock Inn, Ellen Barnes from the Capt. Lindsey House, and Cheryl Michaelsen from Berry Manor Inn present the first check of support to Education Outreach Specialist Susan Schubel.

MAKE A GIFT FROM YOUR IRA

Help Project Puffin plan for its next 35 years and beyond by making a gift to our endowment.

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 renews provisions of the Pension Protection Act allowing donors to make charitable gifts from their IRAs. At age 70½, owners of IRAs must begin taking taxable distributions. If you are 70½ years old or older, you can make a gift (up to \$100,000) from your traditional or Roth IRA. Distributions will not be subject to income tax as would a non-charitable distribution; however, as it is not taxable, there is no charitable deduction for the gift.

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