

After a nearly two-year heatwave in the Gulf of Maine, our seabirds had a largely successful nesting season in 2022. Dive inside to learn how GPS tracking efforts are benefiting Maine's seabirds and more about what we accomplished this summer.



GPS tracking device affixed to a Common Tern at Eastern Egg Rock this season.

PHOTO: JEAN HALL

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Graduate Student: Will Kennerley

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The science and educational programming of Audubon's Seabird Institute benefits from the support and partnership of many individuals and organizations. Our program's founder, Steve Kress, continues to advise our efforts and promote seabird conservation widely. We are grateful for support, feedback, and guidance from the members of our Seabird Advisory Council. Our work on Eastern Egg Rock, Jenny Island, and Outer Green Island is in partnership with Brad Allen, Kelsey Sullivan, and others with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Work on Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Pond Island NWR, and Matinicus Rock is in partnership with Brian Benedict, Eddy Edwards, Michael Langlois, Linda Welch, and other staff of the Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge. We thank these partners for their support and collaboration. Work on Stratton Island is in partnership with John Allen and others with the Prouts Neck Audubon Society. Operation of the Hog Island Audubon Camp is in partnership with Juanita Roushdy, Scott Weidensaul, and others with the Friends of Hog Island.

We thank the following for their generous assistance and gifts-in-kind:

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Carol Taylor
Cricket and Chris Tupper
Alan Twombly
Scott Weidensaul
Zeiss Sports Optics



Photo: Capt. Malcolm Faulx

To celebrate the close of the 2022 season, Seabird Institute researchers and staff enjoyed a puffin cruise on the Hardy Boat. While the puffins had already departed from their home on Eastern Egg Rock, the island teams enjoyed swapping stories about their seabird-filled summers.

Friends of Hog Island

President: Scott Weidensaul
Executive Director: Juanita Roushdy
Volunteer Coordinator: Adam DiNuovo

Egg Rock Update

Authors and Editors: Kimberly Keller, Don Lyons, Kelly Bell-Brown, Rachel Guillory, Terry Mingle, Jenny McKee, Keenan Yakola
Design: Diane Tessaglia-Hymes, dianeth.com



MEET OUR Policy and Advocacy Partners



Julie Hill-Gabriel

Vice President, Water Conservation, and Interim Vice President, Coastal Conservation—Washington, D.C.

Julie coordinates Audubon's water and coastal conservation strategies, focusing on places like the Gulf of Mexico, Mississippi River, Everglades, Great Lakes, Delaware River, Saline Lakes in the arid West, the Colorado River, and Audubon's Maine-based Seabird Institute.



Brian Moore

Vice President, Coastal Policy
Washington, D.C.

Brian leads Audubon's legislative work for coastal resilience and marine conservation issues, including federal fisheries policy, coastal restoration and protection, and recovery from the BP oil spill.



Rachel Guillory

Communications Manager, Coasts
New Orleans, Louisiana

Rachel leads strategic communication for Audubon's coastal policy and conservation work, telling stories of how birds and people across our many coastal areas are affected by climate change, overfishing, habitat loss, and oil spills.



Bethany Kraft

Senior Director, Coastal Conservation
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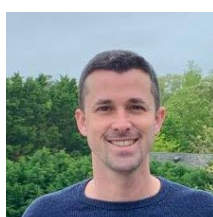
Bethany directs Audubon's national coastal strategy, guiding coastal policy and conservation around the country, including coastal resilience, bird stewardship, marine conservation, and restoring the Gulf Coast.



Romaric (Remy) Moncrieffe

Policy Manager, Marine Conservation
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Remy specializes in protecting marine and coastal environments through policy advocacy, with a focus on fishery resilience and rehabilitation, estuary preservation, and forage fish conservation.



Greg Taylor

Project Manager, Campaigns
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Greg leads project management for Audubon's campaign operations, empowering Audubon's grassroots network of 1.7 million members to advocate for birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow.

Farewell, Tiffany!

In September, the Seabird Institute team said “see you later” to Tiffany Huenefeldt who has transitioned to Senior Director, Audubon Center and Sanctuary Operations. Tiffany joined Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program in 2016 as its first Managing Director. Since then, the program has evolved to more effectively advocate for seabirds, sustainably managed fisheries, and marine protected areas as Audubon's new Seabird Institute. During her tenure, the program won several federally funded grants, launched its decoy business and online Hog Island courses, facilitated corporate partnerships and consolidated its now year-round operations in Bremen, Maine.



PHOTO: JES GOLUMBESKI

A Message From DR. DON LYONS, DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION SCIENCE



PHOTO: DERRICK Z. JACOBSON

Dear Friends,

As I look back over the past summer season, the word “rejuvenation” keeps coming to mind. After a nearly two-year Gulf of Maine marine heatwave—which significantly challenged seabirds' ability to raise young—our seabirds had a largely successful nesting season in 2022. Our education and engagement efforts were rejuvenated by a return to pre-pandemic levels of programming at the Hog Island Audubon Camp, along with the initiation of several new events elsewhere in Mid-Coast Maine. And our efforts to protect seabirds across the hemisphere had broader reach than ever. We're grateful for the help of our many partners, supporters, Audubon colleagues, and Audubon members everywhere—thank you for making all the work presented in this year's *Update* possible!

For the staff,

Don Lyons



ATLANTIC PUFFIN CHICK PHOTO: STEPHEN W. KRESS

Marine Spatial Planning in the News



LEACH'S STORM-PETREL. PHOTO: PETER FLOOD

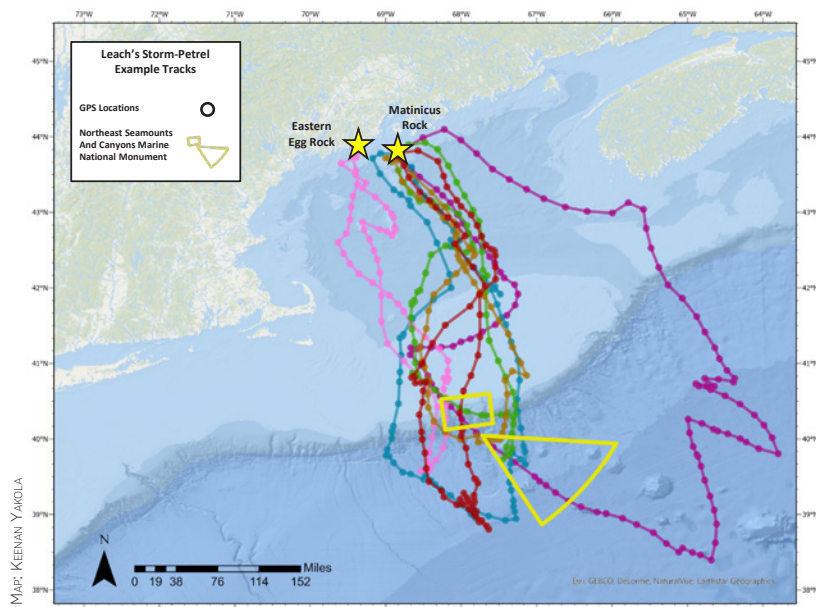
The Seabird Institute's efforts to ensure protections for important ocean foraging areas continued and expanded in 2022. The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, first set aside by President Obama in 2016 in part to protect wintering habitat for Maine's puffins, is again at risk. After the Trump Administration rolled back protections for the Monument, President Biden restored them in October 2021,

but in April commercial fishing interests brought a new lawsuit seeking to rescind the monument designation and reopen the area to commercial activity. The litigation is ongoing.

The Institute's science continues to support advocacy for protection of this important ocean habitat, however. A technical paper describing in detail the winter movements of puffins from Eastern Egg Rock and Machias Seal Island has

been accepted for publication in the peer-reviewed journal *Waterbirds*. This article formally documents the puffins' winter use of the Monument and adds strength to calls for protection. Further, current tracking efforts at Matinicus Rock and Eastern Egg Rock have now documented use of the Monument by nesting Leach's Storm-Petrels. Individual birds have been tracked conducting multi-day foraging trips that reach the monument more than 250 miles from their colony! This discovery was unexpected, and adds to our understanding of the Monument's importance.

We have also entered into collaborations with Audubon geospatial scientists to identify additional key ocean areas across the hemisphere that need protection. Data layers capturing bird distributions, colony locations, important habitat attributes, and potential conservation challenges will be synthesized to prioritize large scale regions for conservation action. Analyses will focus on the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (3–200 miles offshore), as well as coastal areas in Chile and Columbia.

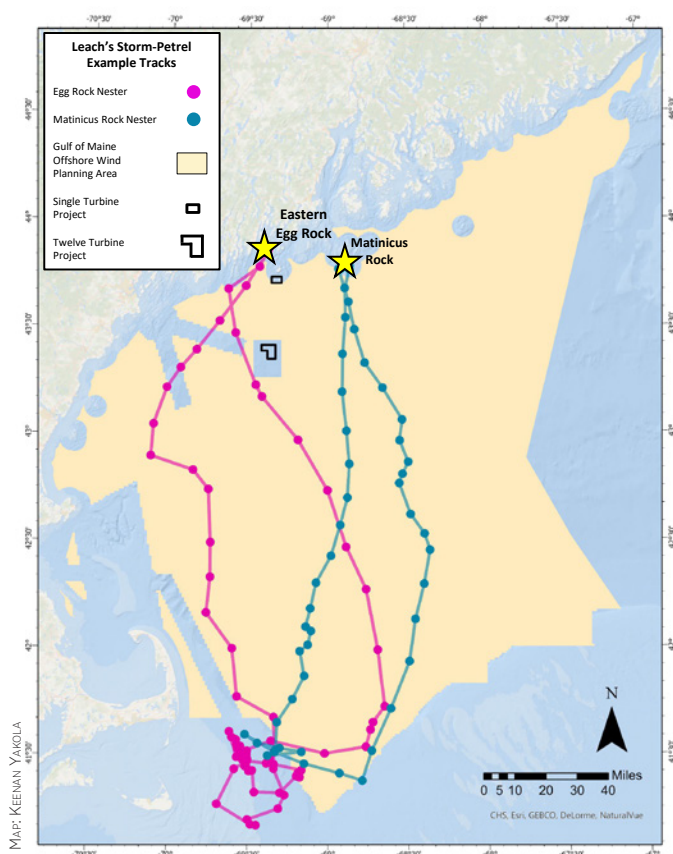


Tracking data from Leach's Storm-Petrels nesting on Eastern Egg Rock and Matinicus Rock demonstrates that the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument is critical habitat for seabirds.

Tracking Efforts Continue to Inform Offshore Wind Siting

The Seabird Institute's efforts to inform offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine took a major step forward in 2022. This work couldn't be timelier, as two initial offshore wind projects are already moving forward: a single turbine and a 12-turbine array only 11 and 30 miles away from Eastern Egg Rock, respectively. In addition, the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy and Management is gathering information from various stakeholder groups to identify areas suitable for larger, commercial scale offshore wind development in the region. To advocate for siting of commercial lease areas which minimize impacts to breeding seabirds, the Seabird Institute has established efforts to track foraging movements using miniaturized Global Positioning System (GPS) tags. We continued tracking puffins at Matinicus Rock, and expanded our tern tracking project to include three-islands spanning the Gulf of Maine: Stratton Island, Eastern Egg Rock, and Seal Island NWR.

A particularly exciting addition to our tracking work in 2022 was the inclusion of Leach's Storm-Petrels. This seldom-seen species is a common breeder on Eastern Egg Rock, as well as other offshore islands in the Gulf of Maine. Embarking on three- to four-day foraging trips covering hundreds of miles, these birds only return to their nesting colonies at night. Using GPS tags weighing about as much as a paperclip, over 50 Leach's Storm-Petrels were tracked on Matinicus Rock and Eastern Egg Rock. Typical foraging trips ranged between 200 and 400 miles, but occasionally storm-petrels travelled beyond the continental shelf. One intrepid individual flew over 1,200 miles in four days and passed through the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Marine Monument created by President Obama in 2016 (related story on previous page).



Tracking data obtained from Leach's Storm Petrels provide insight into how their foraging trips could be impacted by wind turbines in the Gulf of Maine.



LEACH'S STORM PETREL. PHOTO: PETER FLOOD

During the course of the breeding season, over 130,000 GPS locations were collected between all the species combined. These data will be instrumental in identifying critical foraging areas that warrant further protection for nesting seabirds throughout the Gulf of Maine.

This research is being led by Oregon State University PhD student Keenan Yakola under the advisement of Dr. Don Lyons of the Seabird Institute. This work would not be possible without our island research staff and key partners including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge), University of New Hampshire / Shoals Marine Lab, and the Biodiversity Research Institute.

Figuring Out Adult Diet From Puffin Poo

Decades of observations by researchers at the National Audubon Society's Seabird Institute have shed light on Atlantic Puffins' diet: white hake and Atlantic herring are common and nutrient-rich fish. However, these data are biased to pufflings. To uncover what adults eat, Will Kennerly, a long-time Audubon researcher and now graduate student at Oregon State University, is turning to puffin poo.

Kennerly opportunistically collects fresh guano, which ranges in color from black to bright yellow, from loafing puffins on Matinicus Rock. Later in the lab, he and Gemma Clucas, an ornithologist at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, painstakingly

extract DNA from each sample, providing a snapshot of what the birds recently ate. This method—known as fecal DNA analysis—can reveal “species from feces,” Kennerly says.

In 2021, he found 21 unique fish, including Atlantic salmon never seen during previous observations. This diversity seems encouraging that the puffins are adjusting to a drastically warming Gulf of Maine, but the starving chicks in 2021 suggest otherwise. An additional 100-plus samples collected in 2022 may divulge more secrets about the puffins' ability to adapt to climate change.

—Jenny McKee



PHOTO: WILL KENNERLY.

Above, an Atlantic Puffin provides data for the researchers.



PHOTO: AMY SIMMONS.

Right: Gemma Clucas (left) and Will Kennerly (right) review data in the field and wait for a puffin-poop moment to strike.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Arrives in Maine

Increasingly deadly strains of avian influenza have swept through the bird world in recent years. During the spring of 2022, a strain spread from Europe to North America and wreaked havoc on both sides of the Atlantic during the summer breeding season. In Europe, several Roseate and Common Tern colonies suffered extensive losses of adults and chicks. In Canada, Northern Gannet colonies were severely impacted. By mid-June, one or two mysteriously dead adult terns were beginning to appear at a few Seabird Institute islands each day. Common Tern carcasses collected at Pond Island NWR were shared with Dr. Wendy Puryear and colleagues at the Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine and a highly pathogenic strain of avian flu was quickly confirmed. Eventually, Common Terns from Stratton Island and Common Eiders from Pond Island were also confirmed to have died from avian flu. Steps were taken by our island research teams to minimize the possibility of human-aided transmission between birds. For example, research equipment (banding and measuring gear) were sterilized or swapped out between birds or plots. Thanks to these efforts and perhaps a bit of good luck, the total number of dead adult terns did not rise above an average of 1–2 per day at any colony throughout the season. We were also relieved that no outbreaks were observed among puffins, guillemots, storm-petrels, or the other priority species we safeguard. It is currently unclear if this latest strain of avian influenza will fade away before the 2023 field season, or perhaps linger or further mutate. We will remain vigilant and prepare additional cautionary monitoring protocols if needed.

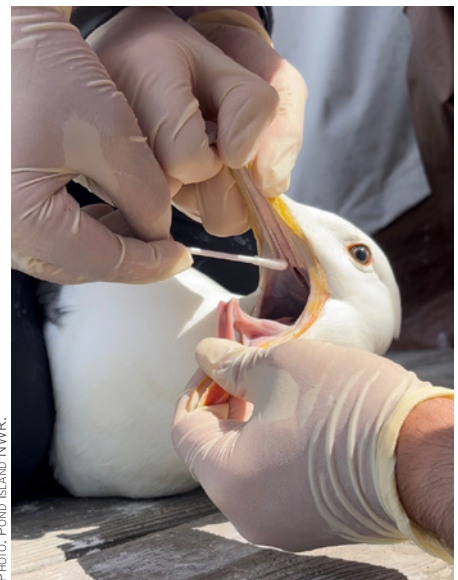


PHOTO: POND ISLAND NWR.

Researchers on Pond Island NWR swab a Great Black-Backed Gull, testing for suspected avian flu.

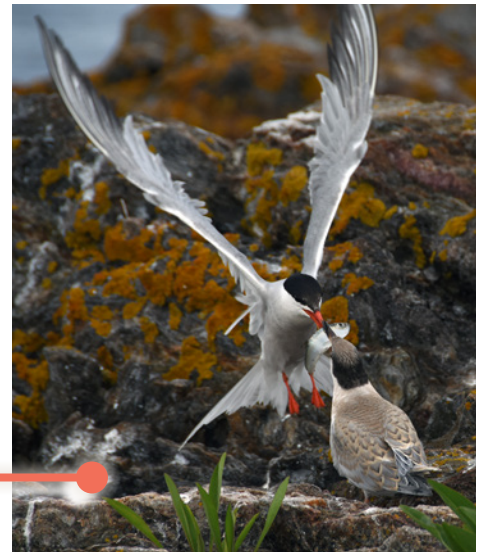
2022 Maine Island Highlights

Eastern Egg Rock

- **Parenting Puffins:** 171 puffin nests were confirmed, down from 188.
- **Historic Find:** The research team rediscovered a Cruickshank plaque.
- **On Camera:** The island was highlighted in a spot on NBC's Today Show.

Jenny Island

- **Order up!** Herring was the prime fish in both Common and Roseate Tern chick diets.
- **Surprising find:** A dead ram washed up on the island in early June.



COMMON TERN. PHOTO: DERRICK Z. JACKSON.

Matinicus Rock

- **Record Productivity:** An average of 1.41 Common Tern chicks fledged per pair, among the highest recorded at the site.
- **Seniority Rules:** A 33-year-old puffin (pictured right) was confirmed to be nesting on the island. The bird was older than each member of the research team stationed there for the summer.



ATLANTIC PUFFIN. PHOTO: DERRICK Z. JACKSON.

Outer Green Island

- **Record Roost:** 1,994 pairs of Common Terns nested, another new record for the island.
- **Grand Guillies:** 28 active Black Guillemot nests were confirmed, the highest number documented so far.



BLACK GUILLEMOT. PHOTO: JEAN HALL

Pond Island NWR

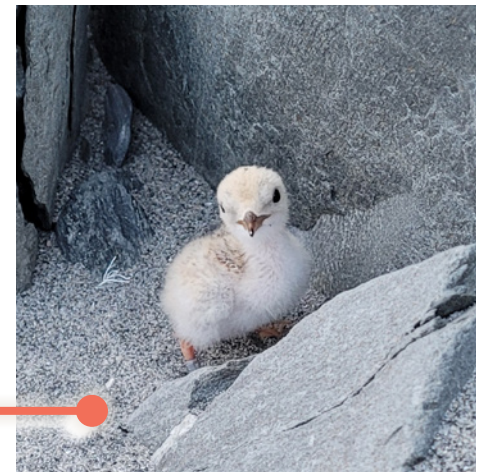
- **Tern-tastic!** 1,580 pairs of Common Terns nested, the highest number recorded since restoration began.
- **Spotted:** A Great Shearwater was seen floating offshore.

Seal Island NWR

- **Absent:** "Troppey," the Red-billed Tropicbird and summer resident of Seal Island since 2009, was not sighted this year.
- **On the Rise:** 55 Great Cormorant pairs nested, an increase of 8 nests over last year.
- **Peculiar Puffin:** A single Tufted Puffin visited the island in July.

Stratton Island

- **Tiny Terns:** 91 pairs of Least Terns nested, with 67 nests hatching chicks; 138 pairs of Roseate Terns nested, the largest colony in Maine.



LEAST TERN CHICK. PHOTO: STRATTON ISLAND.

Education and Outreach

Hog Island Audubon Camp

Hog Island Audubon Camp resumed to a full summer season, hosting 16 camp sessions over 12 weeks! We awarded over a dozen scholarships to recipients who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color across our programs and had the most diverse instructor staff in camp history with over 15% of our instructors being people of color. Our summer was filled with lots of special events including the return of our popular Day Trips, hosting the new National Audubon Society Executive Retreat, facilitating a Gulf of Maine Seabird Working Group meeting and our first Hog Island Open House since the pandemic. Highlights of the summer included successful puffin trips, landing on Harbor Island and resuming our international Costa Rica Teen Trip. Our COVID-19 guidelines provided a safe summer without any transmission and lots of happy campers!

PHOTO: TIFFANY HUNEFELD



Audubon's Executive Team landed on historic Eastern Egg Rock while in visiting in late May. Eastern Egg Rock Island Supervisor Keara Nelson (left) showed Audubon's CEO Elizabeth Gray (center) and former Vice President of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Jamaal Nelson (right) how the team grubs for Leach's Storm-Petrels.



PHOTO: SHERRIE TUCKER

Each year the Seabird Institute partners with Cap'n Fish's Cruises and Hardy Boat Cruises to provide narrated Puffin Cruises for Mid-Coast Maine's residents and visitors. Audubon's Education and Outreach Assistants teach participants how to identify seabirds commonly seen around Eastern Egg Rock and share the miraculous story that brought these birds back to this historic island.

Project Puffin Visitor Center

This summer's seabird season was a massive success for our education and outreach team! The Project Puffin Visitor Center reopened its doors in Rockland after a two-year hiatus. We eagerly welcomed visitors to crawl into the human-sized puffin burrow, admire the Hog Island Artist Residency exhibit, and fulfill their seabird shopping needs. The Wednesday Night Lecture series continued this season, including presentations from Dr. Steve Kress about Project Puffin's founding history and a kid-friendly workshop on bird-themed stamp carving led by local artist Susan Bebee. As always, people flocked to Maine to catch a glimpse of our visiting seabirds. Visitors were guided this year by a team of enthusiastic Audubon naturalists and educators who narrated boat tours three times daily throughout the breeding season.

PHOTO: BRIAN GENGE

Adopt a Puffin Today!

projectpuffin.audubon.org/get-involved/adopt-puffin

Donate \$100 or more to support Project Puffin.



PHOTO: JEAN HALL



Audubon

Hog Island
Audubon Camp

2023 Tentative Hog Island Camp Sessions

- Returning in 2023: Day Trips
 - Monhegan
 - Eastern Egg Rock
 - Midcoast Maine
- Puffin Islands
- Field Ornithology
- Arts & Birding
- Educators Week
- Family Camp I & II
- Birds of Maine Islands
- Migration and Monhegan
- Spring Migration & Monhegan
- Building Better Birding Skills
- Creating Bird-friendly Habitats
- Raptor Migration and Monhegan
- Mountains to Sea Birding for Teens
- Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens I & II



Save the date!

Registration opens October 25, 2022.

Sessions subject to change.

Education and Outreach

PHOTO: KIMBERLY KELLER



Participants from the first-ever Sips & Seabirds event at Tin Top Cider learn how social attraction techniques developed in the Gulf of Maine benefit seabirds around the world.

Bringing Conservation to the Community

The Seabird Institute launched several new initiatives to connect Maine communities to our conservation work. The first program to take flight, Sips & Seabirds, was a Least Tern decoy paint-and-sip style event in partnership with local breweries and cideries. At Pemaquid Point Lighthouse, Seabird Saturdays provided park visitors with information about the conservation work occurring a few short miles away on Eastern Egg Rock. Finally, Puffin Palooza engaged families in an educational seabird scavenger hunt in search of decoys, sponsored and decorated by local businesses.

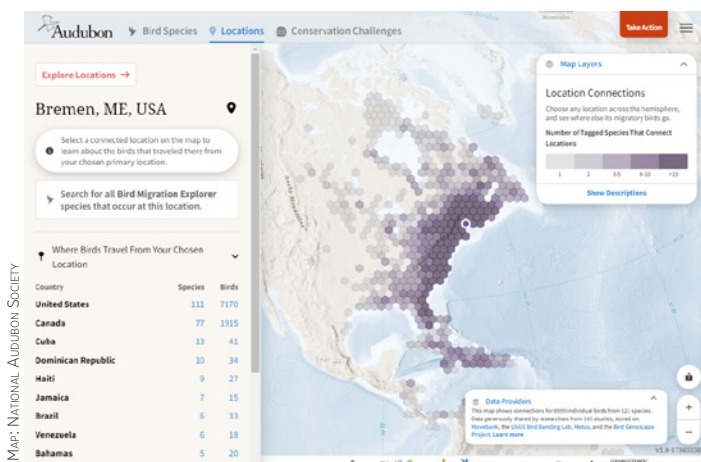
Thank you to our Puffin Palooza! sponsors:

Event Sponsor: The Beach Plum Company

Decoy Sponsors: Bangor Savings Bank, Bixby Chocolate, Camden Hospital for Animals, Cap'n Fish's Cruises, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Gifts @ 136, Hardy Boat, Peapod Jewelry, Reny's, Rising Tide Co-Op, and S+P Plant Based Cooking.

Bird Migration Explorer

Check out explorer.audubon.org for a great new tool that shows the migration of more than 400 species of North American birds! Arctic Terns and Osprey are two of our species that are exciting to explore, and more seabirds will be included in a future update.



Decoy Distribution

Sales of our social attraction tools continued to benefit seabirds around the world in 2022! We were very excited to send Masked Booby decoys and a sound system to Round Island, a small offshore island in Mauritius where the Durrell Foundation is working with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. A flock of Common Tern decoys were deployed to the Farne Islands in the U.K. for use by The National Trust. Other decoys winged their way to Sweden, South Carolina, Australia, British Columbia, Wisconsin, Hawaii, Oklahoma, and California for conservation work. We learned a lot about complicated human geopolitics in Cyprus trying to send Audouin's Gull decoys there—birds of course, don't understand political borders. Education and fun accounted for the rest of our sales, helping people to learn about the perils and wonders of birds while enjoying their beauty.



PHOTO: SUE SCHUBEL



GET YOUR SEABIRD SWAG!

shop.projectpuffin.org

2021-2022 CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions listed were received from September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022. Space restrictions prevent us from listing our 1,651 Supporter-level friends. Every donor is important to us and we sincerely regret any omissions. Your continuing generosity makes our work possible.



\$50,000 and more

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Leave a Legacy for Seabirds

With the addition of the following paragraph to your will, you can leave a legacy for seabirds through the Seabird Institute: Project Puffin Endowment Fund.

"I/we bequeath _____% of my residuary estate (or a specific sum of \$_____) to the National Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit environmental conservation organization with its headquarters at 225 Varick St., 7th Fl, New York, NY 10014 for the permanent endowment of its Seabird Institute (also known as "Project Puffin"). Federal Tax ID #13-1624102

IN MEMORY:

Walter Pomeroy (1947–2022)

Walt Pomeroy loved to tell the story about his good fortune of being on Hog Island when I announced the discovery of the first Egg Rock puffin carrying food for a chick. Walt and Lin Pomeroy were attending a Hog Island session at the time— an appropriate first assignment given the legendary role of the island in Audubon's history. That momentous puffin event was July 4, 1981. Walt and Lynn returned to Maine in 1983, volunteering at Matinicus Rock to help protect seabirds. These experiences galvanized their enthusiasm for seabird conservation and their deep commitment to Project Puffin and the Hog Island Audubon Camp. Walt and Lin returned to Hog Island many times where Walt served as VP of Friends of Hog Island and as a founding member of the Seabird Institute's Advisory Council.

Walt's long career as an environmental advocate advanced the work of many conservation organizations, including 17 years as regional vice president for Audubon in the mid-Atlantic states. We miss our friend Walt's infectious enthusiasm but know that his passion for wildlife lives on in the seabirds that he cared so much about and in the many lives enriched by the Hog Island experience.

—Stephen Kress, Founder, Project Puffin

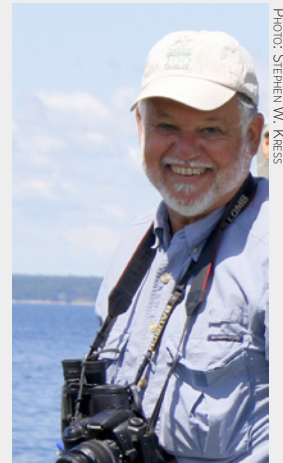


PHOTO: STEPHEN W. KRESS



Suzi's family and friends gathered together at the Todd Wildlife Sanctuary during a celebration of life.

PHOTO: JUANITA ROUSHDY

IN MEMORY: Suzi King

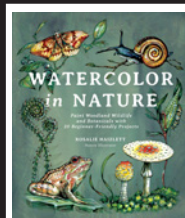
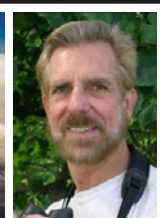
This spring, Project Puffin and Friends of Hog Island lost a steadfast friend and supporter. Suzi King, a beloved local icon, who considered the view of Hog Island her "church."

Steve Kress wrote, "We have lost a very special soul with Suzi— always kind to everyone and everything, deeply curious, generous, and intrepid. I will miss her gracious persona and brave way of dealing with life and its twists—I recall 'UTR CAOS' as her 'woody' license plate, which always seemed somehow perfect."

—Juanita Roushdy



Tern the Page: our BOOK CLUB
for bird enthusiasts around the world!



Learn more about the featured books and how to join at hogisland.audubon.org/programs/book-club

INSIDE

- Find out what scientists have learned from Leach's Storm-Petrels.
- Get the scoop on puffin poop.
- Meet our new Policy and Advocacy partners.
- Learn how new programming has brought seabird conservation to new audiences.

PHOTO: JEAN HALL

 30% POST-CONSUMER RECYCLED CONTENT.

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Project Puffin

50
YEARS

**Join us in 2023 as we commemorate the
50th Anniversary of Project Puffin!**

With virtual and in-person programming, everyone can enjoy the seabird celebration. Connect with us online at seabirds.audubon.org, Facebook (@AudubonProjectPuffin) and Twitter (@AudubonPuffin) to learn more and get involved.