



Combining authoritative seabird science with policy and advocacy leadership, the Seabird Institute is a hub for global conservation action for seabirds.



CELEBRATING  
**50** YEARS  
OF  
**Project  
Puffin**

*The inspiring story that  
has impacted seabirds  
across the globe.*



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**THE NATIONAL AUDUBON Society Coasts team held its first ever annual work-planning meeting at Hog Island this summer. The team used this time to strategize their efforts to make the biggest impact for coastal birds and, of course, snuck in a trip to Eastern Egg Rock!**

From left to right. Back Row: Bethany Kraft, Senior Director, Coastal Conservation; Brian Moore, Vice President, Coastal Policy. Middle Row: Romaric (Remy)

Moncrieffe, Policy Manager, Marine Conservation; Portia Mastin, Policy Manager, Coastal Conservation; Kara Fox, Director, Gulf Coast Conservation; Don Lyons, Director, Conservation Science. Front Row: Julie Hill-Gabriel, Vice President, Water Conservation; Rachel Guillory, Coastal Communications Manager. Photo: Eva Lark/Audubon.

Cover photos, from top: Duryea Morton/Courtesy of Project Puffin; Jean Hall. Illustrations: Alex Tomlinson/Audubon





## Introducing Katherine Luscher

### THE SEABIRD INSTITUTE WELCOMES KATHERINE LUSCHER

as Senior Coordinator, Tufted Puffins. Working with conservation partners in the Pacific Northwest, Katherine will coordinate Tufted Puffin conservation efforts across the region. With almost three decades of nonprofit experience, Katherine thrives in positions that allow her to work with, support, and elevate the voices of people participating in value-driven efforts to protect our natural environment. For 20 years, she worked at River Network, where she edited a quarterly journal for the river conservation movement; coordinated the River Rally, a national training conference for over 500 participants; oversaw a \$1.2 million grant program supported by the U.S. EPA; and created the National River Heroes Award as a way to ensure we take time to celebrate our victories and the people who make them possible. In 2015, she joined the staff at Waterkeeper Alliance, where she conducted and facilitated numerous in-person and online trainings, created an online resource library, and helped facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices among clean water activists working across the globe. Katherine continuously seeks to leverage the limited resources available to nonprofits by seeking out new partnerships, and communicating and engaging with organizations and stakeholders that have like-minded missions.

Welcome to the team, Katherine!

## A Note from the Director of Conservation Science, Dr. Don Lyons

WHILE THE WEATHER IN MAINE THIS SUMMER was unusually wet and chilly, we experienced many heartwarming moments as we celebrated Project Puffin's 50th Anniversary and looked to the future. I'm thrilled every year to advance our work alongside always-dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, supporters, and so many others, but this year was truly special. Our science progressed through tracking studies and informed offshore wind development as quickly as data were collected. Our engagement reached new heights through the "Welcome to Egg Rock" art exhibit, in-demand Hog Island programs, a full event slate at the Project Puffin Visitor Center, and exciting new media opportunities. Our impact grew through partnerships new (Friends of Haystack Rock) and long-standing (Friends of Hog Island, Prouts Neck Audubon Society, and many others). And the bonds we share grew and were renewed at events like the Puffineer Reunion and 50th Anniversary Seabird Symposium on Hog Island. I hope you enjoy the efforts highlighted in these pages and will join us to launch our next 50 years of seabird conservation!



Photos, from top: Lorra Gillam; Derrick Z. Jackson





Collecting 10-day-old puffin chicks to be translocated from Great Island, Newfoundland, Canada to Eastern Egg Rock in an attempt to restore the historic colony. Photo: Richard Podolsky/ Courtesy of Project Puffin

## Cheers to 50 Years!

**NEARLY 100 YEARS AFTER ATLANTIC PUFFINS WERE** eliminated from all but one nesting island in Maine, a dream to bring this now-iconic seabird back to its historic nesting colony on Eastern Egg Rock was born. The dreamer, a young dishwasher working at Hog Island Audubon Camp, learned how the birds were extirpated from the nearby island when he found Ralph Palmer's *Birds of Maine* in the Hog Island library. From that point on, Dr. Stephen Kress has dedicated his life to protecting these beloved birds.

Skeptics were plentiful, resources were limited, and no one knew how to reestablish a seabird colony when the first suitcase of puffins arrived in Maine 50 years ago. As the saying goes, "fortune favors the bold." In this case, that meant thinking like a puffin and not taking "no" for an answer. Thanks to this tenacious spirit and creative approach, Steve developed groundbreaking conservation techniques that made his dream become reality and has impacted seabird species around the world.

Now, fifty years later, seabirds face new threats to their populations. The changing climate creates multiple challenges that were highlighted during the 2023 season. An unusually wet summer meant that young tern chicks fledged at rates lower than normal because they nest above ground and had difficulty regulating their body temperature. Puffins and guillemot chicks were largely able to weather the storms in the shelter of their underground burrows. As ocean temperatures rise, birds have difficulty finding enough forage fish, like hake and herring, to raise strong, healthy chicks. An influx of sand lance in seabird diets appears to have served as an adequate substitute this season. While puffin? fledge rates were lower this season, the chicks that did fledge appeared especially strong.

Just like Steve, the breeding adults did everything they could to ensure their chicks were prepared for life after the island. It seems this year's seabirds embraced the 50th anniversary spirit, as well.

*Want the full story? Read Audubon magazine's oral history now! [audubon.org/oralhistory](https://audubon.org/oralhistory)*





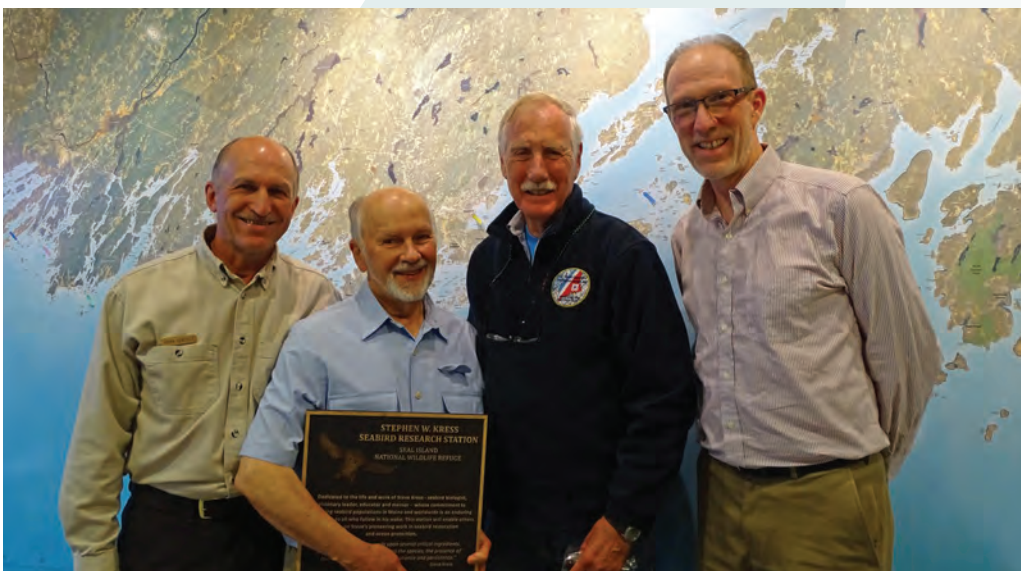
## The Future's So Bright, You're Gonna Need Shades

**DID YOU KNOW THAT OVER 800 PEOPLE HAVE WORKED** or volunteered on seabird colonies managed by Audubon over the past 50 years? As the seabird season ended, former puffineers, volunteers, conservation partners, and staff gathered together to celebrate the momentous occasion. The Project Puffin 50th Anniversary Symposium was held on Hog Island on August 12. Following Steve's keynote address were lectures that look back on how Project Puffin has shaped seabird conservation from the Gulf of Maine to the Pacific Coast and beyond, and has impacted the careers of those who've worked for the program.

After a champagne toast, the attendees gathered on the mainland for a Puffineer Reunion Party. This quintessential Maine celebration was filled with laughter, lobsters, and (of course) cream puffins. Puffineers and staff, past and present, shared stories from the past five decades. Thanks to such passionate scientists, partners, and volunteers, we know the future is bright for seabirds.



From top: The Project Puffin 50th Anniversary Symposium speakers; Seabird celebrants showing off their snazzy shades; Cream Puffin pro, Seabird Sue, and Steve pose in front of the mile-high masterpiece made for dessert. Photo: Amy Simmons/Audubon (3)



Brian Benedict (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge Complex), Dr. Stephen Kress, Sen. Angus King, and Dr. Donald Lyons at a dedication event in Rockland, July 2023. Photo: Amy Simmons/Audubon

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Dedicates Field Station

**THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE** Service installed a plaque at the field research station on Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge, dedicating it as the Stephen W. Kress Research Station. The ceremony followed a mainland event, attended by Senator Angus King, announcing the dedication. He commended Dr. Kress and remarked that Project Puffin exhibits four key traits of any successful conservation effort: planning, partnership, perseverance, and passion.





## Unlocking the Movements of Maine's Roseate Terns

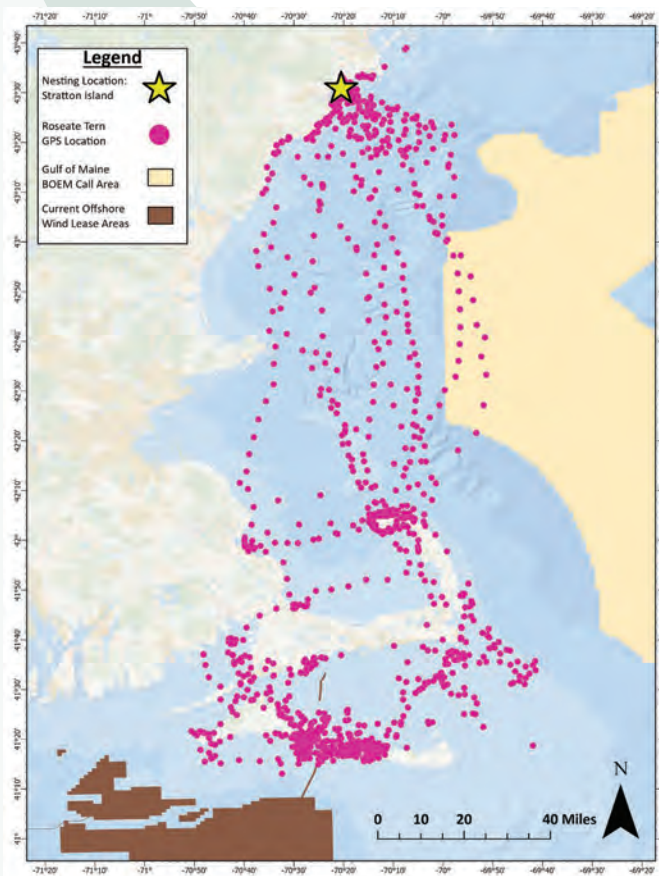
### LIKE MANY BREEDING

seabirds in New England, the Roseate Tern was heavily hunted for the millinery trade in late 1800s and early 1900s, leading to rapid population declines throughout the region. Unfortunately, unlike the similar Common Tern, their populations has been slow to recover and today are considered a federally endangered species. While the majority of the population breeds in Long Island Sound in New York and Buzzards Bay in Massachusetts, the Seabird Institute manages Maine's two largest Roseate Tern colonies, Eastern Egg Rock and Stratton Island. In the face of climate change, these two islands could become ever more important if, or when, birds shift their nesting northward following shifting prey or suitable habitat conditions.

The Roseate Tern is currently the only federally endangered bird species breeding in the state of Maine and has been a focal point of the Seabird Institute's restoration initiatives. To date, substantial effort has been dedicated to the improvement of nesting habitat to enhance the fledging success of each nesting pair. This has included the removal of invasive plant species, predator management, and

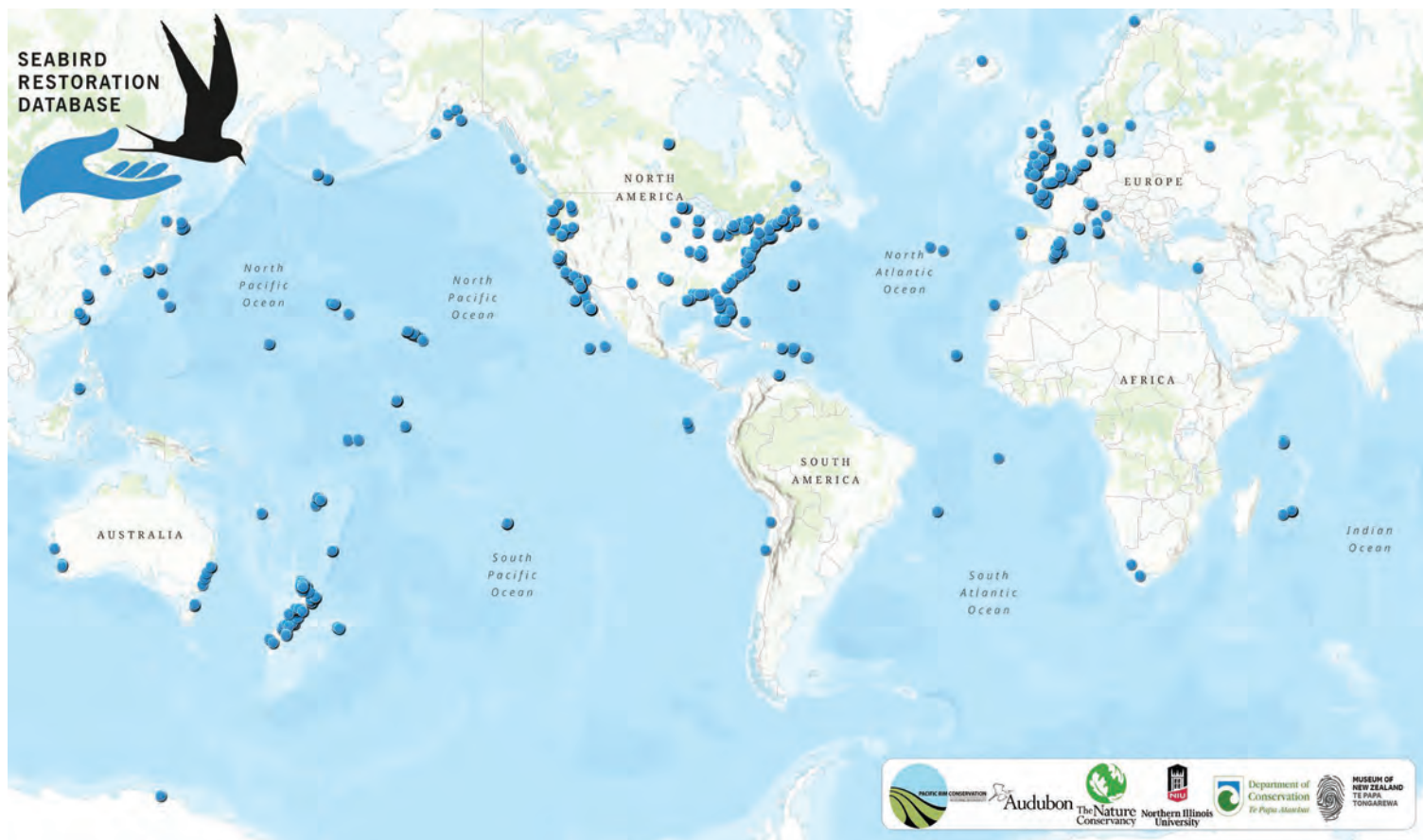
the construction of artificial nest sites. While much has been learned regarding their nesting behavior over the past several decades, little is known concerning their movement patterns during the breeding season, migration, and at overwintering sites.

This season the Seabird Institute moved forward with a pilot project to track six breeding Roseate Terns at Stratton Island. This work was led by our Director of Conservation Science Don Lyons and PhD student Keenan Yakola, who attached GPS tags on Roseate Terns using techniques proven on Common and Arctic terns. Tags collect estimates of the bird's location every 10 minutes and remotely offload data to small base stations located at both breeding colonies and important pre-migratory staging sites, such as Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Researchers can then download data from base stations without the need to recapture individual birds to retrieve data. This groundbreaking work led to the collection of some of the first tracking data for this species in our region, and which will quickly be included in the decision-making process for offshore wind energy lease areas in the Gulf of Maine.



This page: A Roseate Tern fitted with a GPS tag near Stratton Island. Photo: Alfonso Rodriguez; Map: Kennan Yakola; Opposite page: Map Courtesy of the Seabird Restoration Database





## Seabird Restoration is Helping One-third of Seabirds Worldwide

A NEWLY PUBLISHED RESEARCH PAPER IN THE *Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences*, led by our partners at Pacific Rim Conservation and co-authored by Don Lyons and Steve Kress, shows the scale and success of seabird restoration efforts around the world. The authors compiled the Seabird Restoration Database of all known seabird recovery efforts that use translocation and social attraction and created an interactive map of over 850 efforts across 36 countries and spanning nearly 70 years.

The authors analyzed the success of these seabird projects, finding the outcomes largely positive—within an average of 2 years from the project's start, 80 percent of seabird projects resulted in birds visiting the restoration site, and 76 percent achieved breeding.

The authors found that terns, gulls, and auks are among the seabird groups seeing the most success, as these groups are among the most commonly restored. The most highly threatened seabird group—petrels, shearwaters, and albatrosses—have also been common targets for active

restoration, typically using social attraction or a combination of social attraction and translocation, both of which have also had high success rates.

Fifty years ago, Audubon first combined translocation and social attraction to successfully bring a healthy population of Atlantic Puffins back to Maine's coast. These projects are a powerful testament to the dedication of seabird practitioners around the globe, and we are proud to have supported restoration training for many of these devoted conservationists. To learn more, visit [seabirddatabase.org](http://seabirddatabase.org).

# 80%

OF SEABIRD PROJECTS  
RESULTED IN BIRDS  
VISITING THE SITE,  
AND 76 PERCENT  
ACHIEVED BREEDING.





*Mad River Decoy spreads its wings and continues to broaden the seabird restoration spectrum. Visit us online to learn more about our conservation decoy program. [audubon.org/decoy](https://audubon.org/decoy)*







## Island Highlights

*Rain and fog dominated the breeding season, creating tough conditions for chick-rearing seabirds. Abundant sandlance was on the menu across the islands, providing nourishment for chicks in the wet weather.*

### Stratton Island

1,016 Common Tern nests, 83 Roseate Tern nests, 4 Arctic Tern nests, and 75 Least Tern nests were active during the Gulf of Maine Seabirds Working Group census.

2 Black-crowned Night-Herons and a mink took a toll on the breeding terns and guillemots.

4 pairs of American Oystercatchers were confirmed nesting, producing 4 fledglings.

### Outer Green Island

1,741 pairs of Common Terns nested.

A pair of American Oystercatchers nested for the 3rd year and fledged two chicks.

27 active Black Guillemot burrows were located.

### Jenny Island

1,857 Common Terns nests were counted during census.

22 Roseate Terns pairs nested. The nesting season was the earliest on record this year, with the first tern chicks hatching on June 7!

Herring was the main food fed to tern chicks.

### Pond Island NWR

1,641 pairs of Common Terns nested, a new high for the island.

9 pairs of Roseate Terns nested, another increase from recent years.

4 pairs of Arctic Terns nested.

A mink and an owl impacted the tern colony, along with

a persistent Sharp-shinned Hawk that preyed on tern fledglings for two days in July.

Sandlance was the main food fed to tern chicks.

### Eastern Egg Rock

Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom: Protecting the Wild filmed an episode, that aired in October, on the island.

3 Razorbills were present on the island for most of the season.

### Matinicus Rock

The Common Murre colony continued to grow, with at least 18 pairs nesting.

4 active Manx Shearwater burrows were located.

A pair of Ruddy Turnstones arrived on the island in early June and predated about 50 tern nests over two days before moving on.

### Seal Island NWR

95 active Razorbill burrows were found and productivity was 0.62 chicks fledged per pair.

43 pairs of Great Cormorants nested, the largest colony in Maine.

Puffins fed mostly sandlance and haddock to their chicks.

Photos clockwise from top left: Atlantic Puffin with sandlance, Derrick Z. Jackson; Black-crowned Night-Heron, Alfonso Rodriguez; Razorbill, Black Guillemot, Jean Hall (2); Common Tern, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Alfonso Rodriguez (2).



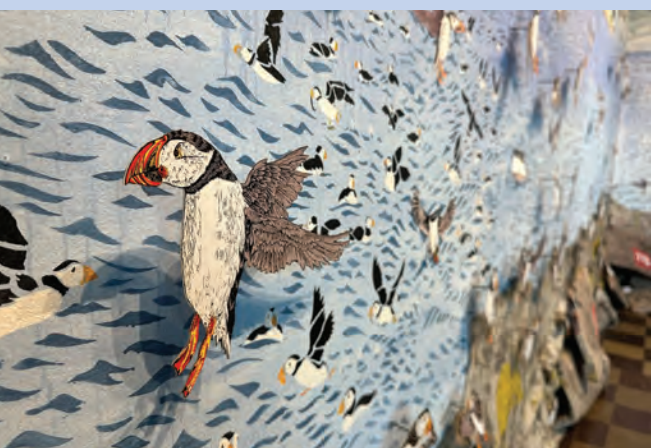
# Using Art to Share the Egg Rock Experience

**IT TAKES A CERTAIN TYPE** of person to spend months on a seabird island. Even if only for a day, one must be prepared to scramble over slippery rockweed, climb up large granite boulders, get “dive bombed” by territorial terns protecting their chicks and nests, and embrace the compostable outhouse. If you’re feeling adventurous and have an opportunity to visit one of these islands, don’t forget your poop shirt and Dramamine™!

Through a collaboration between Audubon, Maine-raised artist and printmaker, Pippin Frisbie-Calder, her mother and fellow artist, Terrie Frisbie, and Waterfall Arts, a nonprofit arts center in Belfast, ME, an opportunity to visit Eastern Egg Rock was brought to the mainland through an immersive, multimedia art installation.

Titled “Welcome to Egg Rock: 50 Years of Seabird Conservation,” the exhibit transported visitors to the bustling colony through floor to ceiling murals of Muscongus Bay, and hundreds of puffins dot the walls. These paper puffins were crafted from woodcuts, screen-printed, and attached to the wall with a magnet, where they waited to be plucked from the exhibit and taken to their new owner’s home. The only price of taking home a puffin was signing an action card to Congress, passage of the Forage Fish Conservation Act to protect the food that puffins and other seabirds rely on.

“Art can communicate to people of all ages and backgrounds enabling them to understand this powerful story and contemplate their



own actions for the future of seabirds.” said Pippin Frisbie-Calder

The show was open at Waterfall Arts from mid-April through August as part of Project Puffin’s 50th Anniversary celebration. The exhibit hosted hundreds of school-age children, as

well as Maine’s residents and visitors, and more than 800 people from across the country were inspired to act in support of seabirds and the resources they need. Exploring the intersection between art and science has opened the door for a new audience of puffin and seabird advocates.

*“Art can communicate to people of all ages and backgrounds enabling them to understand this powerful story and contemplate their own actions for the future of seabirds.”*

*– Pippin Frisbie-Calder*



Left: Sitting at the center of the gallery was a recreation of Egg Rock’s only permanent structure, a field station affectionately known as the Egg Rock Hilton. The exterior walls highlight the Seabird Institute’s key focus areas. Inside, the shack is filled top to bottom with notebooks, flashlights, binoculars, a coffee pot, a camp stove—the list goes on! It’s everything a team of researchers needs to rough it for three months on an uninhabited island. Photo: Mike Fernandez/Audubon

Photo, top: Preeti Desai/Audubon





## Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary Proposed in California

### THE UNITED STATES' FIRST TRIBAL-LED NATIONAL MARINE

sanctuary nomination has been officially advanced for designation by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Located between the Monterey Bay and Channel Islands national marine sanctuaries, the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will protect thousands of square miles of ocean off California's Central Coast. The Northern Chumash Tribal Council has been working for 40 years to establish this sanctuary, home to the Chumash Peoples both historically and presently. The underwater portion of the proposed sanctuary includes important sacred sites of the Chumash Peoples.

The proposed sanctuary area encompasses an important transition zone in the ocean, where cooler, nutrient-rich waters from the north meet warmer waters of the subtropics, providing a haven for marine mammals, invertebrates, seabirds, and fish. It includes kelp forests, vast sandy beaches, and wetlands. These ecosystems support the tourism-based economy in the region, and a 2014 study estimated that sanctuary would bring in \$23 million in economic activity each year and nearly 600 new jobs.

Seabirds like Sooty Shearwaters gather in the thousands in this area, and Morro Bay, an Important Bird Area, hosts up to 20,000 shorebirds in its mudflats every winter. Sixty percent of the California Brown Pelican population is found within the proposed sanctuary.

The sanctuary bans harmful practices like seabed mining, boosts the economy, and promotes research and education. Audubon supports this designation, and are engaging our members around the country to show their support as well.



Photos, from top: cormorants in Morro Bay, California, Rick Derevan/ Audubon Photography Awards; Brown Pelican, Odalys Munoz Gonzalez/ Audubon Photography Awards





A Tufted Puffin was seen again this season on managed puffin islands. Even explore.org viewers caught a glimpse of this Pacific seabird! Screen grab by explore.org

## Conservation Cams Fuel a Passion for Puffins Around the World

### IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EXPLORE.ORG, THE SEABIRD

Institute has facilitated the presence of five live-streaming cameras on Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge. Viewers can watch a host of seabirds hanging out during the summer months on the Loafing Ledge cam, or catch a panorama of the seabird island on the Puffin Burrow Exterior View cam. The Boulder Berm cam proved, with its infrared capabilities, to be an excellent stream for watching pufflings during their nighttime fledges. Featured comments and live webinars have allowed cam fans worldwide to engage with bird life in the Gulf of Maine.

Perhaps the most exciting live cams are those located inside of an Atlantic Puffin burrow and a Black Guillemot burrow. This year, the returning puffin pair Willie and Millie welcomed a hatchling to the burrow in early June. The puffling, named Duryea after former Hog Island Audubon Camp director and early supporter of Project Puffin Duryea Morton, quickly earned a reputation for being an especially tough chick after fighting back against puffin intruders in the burrow. Duryea fledged in early August—we wish Dur well on the high seas!

The Guillemot burrow is one to watch next year. This year, viewers observed a turf war in the burrow between a Black Guillemot pair and a pair of exploratory puffins. It remains to be seen who will claim the burrow as their own next season.

*To see highlights from the explore.org cameras, visit [audubon.org/seabirdcams](https://audubon.org/seabirdcams)*

## Seabird Advocates Return to Washington, D.C.

**FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN,** Audubon's Coasts team held its annual Save the Seabirds Fly-in both virtually and in person in October 2022. Staff and chapter members from eight states met with 15 congressional offices to advocate for seabirds and the forage fish and coastal habitats they rely on. As a result of Audubon's education during this event, new members of congress added their support to the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act, which helps protect forage fish.

In October 2023, we convened in Washington again—this time fully in person with members of the Audubon on Campus chapter program. Audubon staff trained students from around the country to meet with their members of Congress and speak up for seabirds and the places they need, elevating a new generation of conservation advocates.



Photo: Luke Franke/Audubon



# Sharing Seabirds on Land and Sea

**THE PROJECT PUFFIN VISITOR CENTER CELEBRATED ITS** second successful summer in operation after a brief hiatus due to COVID-19. Located in downtown Rockland, ME, the Project Puffin Visitor Center is a site for outreach and education, welcoming visitors from around the world every summer. The Center offers interactive exhibits, a gift shop, and summer programming for all ages to get involved with seabird restoration.

This summer, the Project Puffin Visitor Center debuted a new documentary film to be shown on a daily basis at the center as an educational tool. The new film replaced an older documentary that had been shown at the center since it opened its doors in 2007. The new film, produced by Audubon's Storytelling Team, highlights how climate change is impacting seabirds in the Gulf of Maine.

A new mural by "Seabird Sue" Schubel and Sherrie York also debuted at the center this season. Titled "Terns Around the World," the mural depicts a map of the earth with placards identifying where the technique of social attraction has helped to restore bird colonies.

The Summer Wednesday Night Lecture series at the center featured guest speakers and experts in fields such as ornithology, conservation, and art. For the season's first lecture, Project Puffin's own Dr. Steve Kress joined Emily Greenberg of The Maine Conversation podcast. The two discussed the origins of Project Puffin in celebration of its 50th year. Other guest speakers included local artist Susan Beebe, who led a workshop on drawing birds and local author Don Reimer, who extolled the joys of identifying and observing corvids in your own backyard.

*The Project Puffin Visitor Center celebrated Project Puffin's 50th year anniversary this year with new t-shirt designs—check them out on the Project Puffin online store to get some seabird swag and support seabird conservation! [shop.projectpuffin.org](http://shop.projectpuffin.org)*



When they're not at the Project Puffin Visitor Center, Outreach and Education Assistants, like Jayshaun Talbert, share the Project Puffin story with thousands of passengers aboard Puffin Cruises with Hardy Boat and Cap'n Fish's Cruises. Photo: Sherrie Tucker

*You can enjoy the new film from the comfort of your home! [audubon.org/puffindoc](http://audubon.org/puffindoc)*



## 2024 CAMP SCHEDULE

**May 20 & June 6:** Hog Island Puffin Day Trips

**May 26-31:** Spring Monhegan and Migration

**June 2-6:** Puffin Exploration

**June 9-14:** Joy of Birding

**June 9-14:** Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens One

**June 16-21:** Field Ornithology

**June 16-21:** Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens Two

**June 23-28:** Mountains to Sea Birding for Teens

**July 7-12:** Arts & Birding Sketching

**July 7-12:** Photography of Maine Birds & Landscapes

**July 14-19:** Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week

**August 4-9:** Family Camp One

**August 11-16:** Family Camp Two

**September 1-6:** Birds of Maine Islands: A Service Week

**September 8-13:** Fall Migration & Monhegan Island I

**September 15-20:** Fall Migration & Monhegan Island II

*\*Dates subject to change*

Learn more at [hogisland.audubon.org](https://hogisland.audubon.org)

Photo: Courtesy of Friends of Hog Island



## Thank You, Juanita!

### JUANITA ROUSHDY, A FAMILIAR FACE AROUND HOG ISLAND

for 15 years, is retiring as Executive Director of the Friends of Hog Island (FOHI). She first participated as a camper in 2008, and was so enchanted by the island and Maine's coast that she purchased a home nearby the following year. By coincidence, this was the year the camp was closed in transition from management by Maine Audubon back to the National Audubon Society. Determined to help Hog Island reopen and achieve a sustainable future, Juanita wrote a business plan and revived FOHI into a highly successful organization with the focused mission to "preserve the legacy and support the conservation and nature programs and activities of the Audubon Camp at Hog Island, Maine."

With Juanita at the helm of FOHI, the organization has raised over two million dollars, donated more than 75,000 volunteer hours to support the camp's operations, and supported initiatives like the solarization of Hog Island and the raising of the Queen Mary.

FOHI remains in exceptional care. Deana Cavan, of Ogunquit, ME, has stepped into the role of Executive Director on October 1, 2023. Welcome to the Hog Island family, Deana!

## Long Live the Queen Mary

### REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU'VE ATTENDED A CAMP

session at Hog Island Audubon Camp, you're likely to recognize the island's Queen Mary building. The iconic structure, located along the island's northern end, perched above Muscongus Bay and supported by the granite shoreline below, has flooded during extreme high-tides and strong storms in recent years. Thanks to a monumental lift generously funded by the Friends of Hog Island, the Queen Mary now rests three feet higher over the water. A winter storm that would've otherwise flooded the building without the lift blew through the Gulf of Maine just one day after the project's completion. Hard work and collaboration between the Friends of Hog Island, the Seabird Institute, and Jewett Builders allows this Hog Island icon to stand tall, and dry!



The Queen Mary building is home to the camp's educational lab on the first floor and provides housing for campers upstairs. Photo: Jean Hall



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