

Updates From Tuckernuck

June 22 - July 5, 2026

Maria Pisciotta, Coastal Steward

I hope everyone had a wonderful Fourth of July weekend! It was great to see so many of you at the annual TLT meeting and potluck.

If you were there, you heard that many of the chicks on Tuckernuck are growing quickly and getting pretty big!



Five Great Egrets catching fish



Piping Plover testing out their wings 32 days old

Watching the Piping Plovers, I've gotten to see many interesting behaviors. One family at Bigelow's Point has chicks that are getting ready to fly, which begins at about 25 days of age, although they make only short flights until they're around 35 days old. At this stage, they almost look just like their parents, but without the orange bill and some of the black markings.

A few American Oystercatcher chicks are also starting to look more like their parents. The most noticeable difference is that the young don't have the adults' bright yellow eyes, and their bills are darker as well. Even though they're usually running away from me, I'm always happy to see the ones we banded growing up.



Banded Oystercatcher

39 days old



Least Tern with sand lance to feed their chick

More Least Tern nests are hatching, with many well-camouflaged chicks hiding throughout the area. While both Piping Plover and American Oystercatcher chicks are precocial (meaning they are running around within hours of hatching and are able to forage for themselves) Least Tern chicks may remain in the nest for up to two days. They also rely entirely on their parents for food for several weeks, as they eat fish and can't fly yet.

On the morning of the 4th of July, Dick Viet led a field trip to observe the terns at Bigelow's Point, where we were able to see almost 600 terns. While most were Common Terns and Roseate Terns, we also saw some Arctic Terns and Black Terns.



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron



Black terns at Whale Point



Two adult Black-bellied Plovers with their fledglings