

Updates From Tuckernuck

June 9 - June 21, 2026

Maria Pisciotta, Coastal Steward

The weather has been warming up, and the nests have been very active. Chicks are hatching across the island, making for an exciting time in the field. I also recently got a new mode of transportation, an electric bike, which took a little getting used to, but I have been enjoying it!



Broken wing display

Another nest of Piping Plovers has hatched, which means their parents are on high alert. When I get too close, they often perform a "broken wing display," acting as though they are injured to lead me away from their chicks. Piping Plovers commonly use this behavior when their eggs have hatched or are about to hatch. By appearing injured and vulnerable, they distract potential predators from the nest. Once they have successfully drawn me away, they quickly recover and fly off.

Some Oystercatcher chicks have grown large enough to be banded. Tucker Taylor and I have banded five chicks so far, allowing them to be identified and tracked in the future. Before long, they will be ready to try out flying, which typically happens when they are about 35 days old.



Oystercatcher siblings freshly banded 18 days old



Least Tern with their two new chicks

Of the 530 Least Tern pairs nesting on Whale Point, a few have begun to hatch. There are also some Common Terns starting to nest within the colony. While Least Terns often nest near Piping Plovers, their defense strategies are much more aggressive when chicks are nearby. They will often dive at intruders, attempting to defecate on them, only sometimes successful.

The Roseate Terns and Common Terns at Bigelow's Point have been very active, and this past week I was excited to spot two Sandwich Terns spending time among them.



Sandwich Tern behind a Common and Roseate Tern



Least Tern standing over their chick



Great Egret