



Audubon Science

SEABIRD RESTORATION

The Audubon Seabird Restoration Program (SRP) protects

Maine seabirds at 13 key nesting colonies. The program also raises public awareness about seabirds and marine conservation. Each summer, SRP places over 50 interns and volunteers on islands that host 15,000 pairs of Maine’s most threatened seabirds. Audubon’s system of restoring these islands is an international model that inspires wildlife restoration efforts everywhere.

The need has never been more urgent. Nearly one third of the world’s 282 seabirds are globally threatened, with the proportion of rare species rapidly increasing. Between 1996 and 2000, the number of threatened petrels and albatrosses doubled from 35 to 71 and the number of threatened penguin species increased from 5 to 10!

Through partnerships with other non-profit groups, government agencies, and hundreds of volunteers and interns, SRP has created the world’s first restored colonies of Atlantic Puffins, Razorbills, Arctic Terns, Common Terns, Roseate Terns, and Leach’s Storm-Petrels. The program has sparked public interest in protecting Maine’s coastal resources. It has also trained hundreds of biologists—from aquaria, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and graduate schools—who now use these techniques in restoration programs worldwide.

Restoration Techniques

Through SRP, Audubon aims to increase the range of rare and endangered Maine seabirds and to restore populations to self-sustaining levels. The Seabird Restoration Program manages a network of 13 seabird nesting islands that comprise The Maine Coastal Island Sanctuaries. This island network extends from Portland to Mount Desert Island. Seven of the islands have resident staff that manage and protect the colonies from May through August. Audubon protects these islands through ownership, easements, and/or cooperative management agreements with state and federal agencies. These sanctuaries provide nesting habitat for 20 species of water birds, including about 95% of Maine’s Atlantic Puffins, 68% of its terns, 63% of its Razorbills, and Maine’s only mixed colony of ibis, egrets, and herons.



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PROMOTING A CULTURE OF CONSERVATION BY CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

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GOALS

- Restore Maine's rarest seabirds by managing seven key nesting sanctuaries.
- Raise public awareness about seabirds and marine conservation worldwide.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Created the world's first restored colonies of Atlantic Puffins, Razorbills, Arctic, Common, and Roseate Terns, and Leach's Storm-Petrel.
- Created new public interest in the overall protection of Maine's coastal resources.
- Pioneered social attraction, techniques now used worldwide in at least 14 countries for at least 41 seabird species by 57 agencies and organizations.
- Trained more than 500 interns as well as seabird biologists from developing countries.
- Set up educational interactive website with seabird cam and outreach program involving at least 25 Maine schools and 2000 children every year.

FUTURE

- Encourage more international seabird restoration projects modeled after the successful Maine coast projects.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Offer your time and skills.
- Make a donation.

Social attraction—the technique of encouraging seabirds to establish new nesting colonies through the use of decoys, mirrors, sound recordings, and artificial burrows—was pioneered by SRP at Eastern Egg Rock. The technique is now used by at least 57 organizations in 14 countries to help 41 seabird species. Audubon staff assist many of these programs.

Education Programs

SRP's education programs help create an informed and caring public. We believe that knowledge about seabirds and their conservation encourages people to become better stewards of marine environments.

- **INTERNSHIPS**—SRP internships have provided more than 500 college students from around the world with an excellent foundation in field biology.
- **INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP**—The Josephine Daneman Herz International Seabird Fellowship was established in 2003 to train professional seabird biologists from developing countries.
- **BOAT TOURS**—Each summer, about 4,500 people of all ages join SRP naturalists for daily seabird-watching trips to Eastern Egg Rock. More than 50,000 have participated.
- **CLASSROOM VISITS**—From September through June, SRP naturalists visit classrooms in over 25 Maine schools. About 2000 children receive annual visits to learn about seabirds and the conservation issues affecting them. SRP education staff also produces curricula, books, recordings, and videos.
- **WEBSITE & SEABIRD CAM**—SRP operates an interactive website (www.projectpuffin.org) that provides information about puffins and other seabirds. Features include a live-streaming, real time seabird video camera (May through August), an archive of SRP newsletters, and information about getting involved with SRP programs.
- **PROJECT PUFFIN VISITOR CENTER**—SRP operates a public visitor center, located at 311 Main Street in downtown Rockland, Maine. The Center features live-streaming video from puffin and tern colonies, seabird art, interactive exhibits, and theatre.
- **ADOPT-A-PUFFIN**—Participants receive a puffin biography, photo, and certificate with their choice of our book Project Puffin or a plush toy puffin. This program generates revenues needed for managing Maine puffin colonies.

SRP is a department with the Science Division of the National Audubon Society. It has an annual operating budget of about \$800,000 to support its seabird conservation and education programs on the Maine coast. Funding comes primarily from individual, foundation, and corporate gifts. A detailed prospective of income and expenses is available.