



Boston Harbor Islands Volunteer Coastal Breeding-Bird Monitoring

Monitoring Coastal Breeding Birds

Boston Harbor Islands (BOHA) is part of the Northeast Temperate Inventory & Monitoring Network (NETN). NETN collaborated with researchers at the University of Rhode Island to develop a volunteer-based coastal breeding-bird monitoring program for the Boston Harbor Islands. Birds enhance the visitor experience at the islands and their high ecological position in most food webs make them a good indicator of local and regional ecosystem change. In 2002, the Boston Harbor Islands were designated as a Massachusetts Important Bird Area (IBA) because they provide habitat for a significant number of colonial-nesting waterbirds, many of which are species of conservation concern.

The monitoring program focuses on populations of coastal bird species that breed on islands in BOHA; many of these species nest colonially, some in mixed-species colonies. Required breeding habitat varies by species, but includes beaches, rocky shores, cliffs, open ground, shrub and tree communities. Volunteers work with a researcher or park staff to implement this protocol, which focuses on obtaining information on the relative abundance of coastal breeding species by estimating or directly counting nests, incubating adults, or territorial nesting pairs. This project relies on community support, and requires the participation of dedicated volunteers.



**Double-crested
Cormorant**

Carol L. Trocki



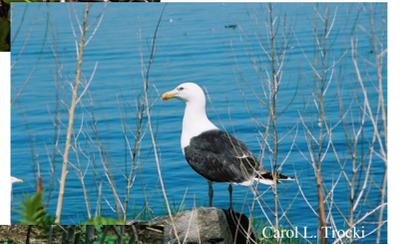
**American
Oystercatcher**

Ronald Killian



**Snowy Egret
chicks**

Carol L. Trocki



**Great
Black-backed
Gull**

Carol L. Trocki



Glossy Ibis nest

Carol L. Trocki

**Volunteers at work:
Right--Searching for
Least Tern nests**



**Volunteers at work:
Right--Counting
birds along rocky
shore and cliff
habitats.**



**Below--Putting out
signs to protect
nesting shore birds**



Island Alliance

**Below--Using a
mirror pole to
count eggs in
a nest**



Sherman Morss, Jr.



Herring Gull chicks

Carol L. Trocki

Female Common Eider on a nest



Carol L. Trocki



Black-crowned Night-Heron chick and egg

Carol L. Trocki



Rebecca Harris

Heronry on Outer Brewster Island

Populations Being Monitored

Beach / Shore Habitats

- American Oystercatcher
- Common Tern
- Least Tern
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Willet
- * (possible populations of Piping Plover)

Rocky Shore / Cliff Habitats

- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Black-backed Gull
- Herring Gull

Ground Habitats

- Black-crowned Night-Heron
- Common Eider
- Herring Gull

Shrub / Woodland Habitats

- Black-crowned Night-Heron
- Double-crested Cormorants
- Glossy Ibis
- Great Egret
- Snowy Egret

