

FOGGI



FRIENDS OF GREAT GULL ISLAND

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KENNETH C. PARKES: AUGUST 8, 1922 – JULY 16, 2007

Helen Hays

Gull Islanders were saddened to learn of Ken Parkes death on July 16, 2007. He first came to Great Gull Island in 1966 and continued coming each summer after that for different periods of time through the summer of 1991. His enthusiasm for birds was infectious and he loved netting and helping the students with identifications, by pointing out the diagnostic characters of birds he took out of the nets. He was also a patient teacher when it came to putting up birds and many of the students got their start making skins when Ken was on the island. Ken designed the pair card that has proven indispensable for trapping on Great Gull Island.

Ken was born in New Jersey on August 8, 1922. He was brought up in New York City where he attended the Little Red School House. He served in the Army and did his undergraduate and graduate work at Cornell University. He received his MS in 1947 for *A Survey of Published Colored Illustrations of North American Birds* and his PhD. in 1952 for *The Birds of New York State and Their Taxonomy*.

In 1953 he married Ellen Stone, his wife of 54 years, and became Assistant Curator of Birds at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, where he worked under W. E. Clyde Todd, the ornithology curator. In 1955 Ken became Associate Curator and in 1962 became Curator holding this position until 1996 when he retired and became Curator Emeritus. He was a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union and a life member of the Cooper Ornithological Society and the Wilson Ornithological Society; he served as president of the last in 1973 – 1975. He was a life member of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and twice served terms on its

Administrative Board. He served on the board of the Delaware Museum of Natural History and was a Research Associate at the American Museum of Natural History. He had a very good eye for bird art and was a great admirer of the bird artist Robert Verity Clem. For a number of years Ken thoroughly enjoyed acting as a judge at the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art's "Ward World Championship" carving competition in Ocean City, Maryland.

Ken encouraged amateur contributions to ornithology. He was a regular and enthusiastic visitor to the Powdermill Nature Reserve where he and his assistant curators Mary Heimerdinger Clench and later D. Scott Wood directed a beginning banding program, guiding and advising the banders in charge of the program, first Robert Leberman and later Bob Mulvihill. Contributions for ornithological research can be made to Powdermill in Ken's memory. (Powdermill Nature Reserve, 1847 Route 381, Rector, Pa 15677).

His fieldwork included places throughout the United States, as well as Socorro Island off Mexico, Argentina and the Philippines. His over 500 publications treat taxonomic questions involving many different species of birds. No mention of his publications would be complete without reference to his work on plumages and molts which he co-authored with Phillip S. Humphrey: "An Approach to the Study of Molts and Plumages" published in *The Auk* in 1959, with a further publication on the same subject in 1963. In 1972 Ken co-authored a paper describing a new species of warbler, the Elfin Woods Warbler (*Dendroica angelae*), from Puerto Rico. This paper, on the only new bird species discovered on Puerto Rico in the 20th Century, generated a good deal

excitement when it was published. He was also fascinated with hybrid warblers and published a number of papers on them.

Ken was well known in the field of ornithology for his acerbic remarks and often scathing reviews of papers and books, a kind of Wolcott Gibbs of ornithology! He could be just as caustic about himself and had a good sense of humor. In talking about his undergraduate years he once remarked: "That was a period in my life that whenever I went to a football game and saw the players go into a huddle I thought they were talking about me!"

He often expected the worst and, of course, events sometimes proved him right. For example, he had read that young Cedar Waxwings, when they are just out of the nest, may sit in a row on a branch and when the parent brings in a berry one may take it and pass it to the next young, that young passes it to the next and then it may be passed back before one of them eats it. Ken had wanted to see this. One day he found a family of Cedar Waxwings and had an opportunity. The young were in position on a branch and the parents were feeding them. He stood and watched and was puzzled because he could see the young pass the berry down the branch, but it never came back. Finally, he looked at the end of the branch and there sat a young English Sparrow and it was swallowing all the berries! "Just my luck," he said.

Ken was a regular contributor to *The Auklet*, a satiric spoof of *The Auk*, which was often distributed at the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union. He had a wide variety of interests. He loved limericks, double dactyls and Gilbert and Sullivan. On Great Gull Island he would sometimes between activities sit down and write a limerick on a napkin and then recite it to the amusement of everyone. He could make up poems at the drop of hat on any subject and enjoyed doing it. He read constantly. He and his wife Ellen traveled extensively and many times their annual Christmas card featured a picture taken on a trip. At least once Ken appeared on the PBS children's television program *Mr. Rogers Neighborhood*, where he talked about the egg collection at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. He also guest hosted music programs on his local public radio station.

On Great Gull Island Ken worked with us on all aspects of the project, marking nests, banding young and trapping adult Common

Terns. He was also interested in the netting and would work with the students whenever there was time to net. His tremendous knowledge about a wide variety of birds and the subspecific differences in some of the birds netted fascinated the students. He enjoyed talking to them about everything from literature references on particular aspects of ornithology to schools that offered courses in ornithology. Sitting around the dinner table or outside the headquarters building Ken's tales of fieldwork abroad or the foibles of ornithological greats gave students a perspective on the sweep and human nature of ornithology. He was particularly helpful to students who asked him to read manuscripts they planned to submit to a journal. He was always patient and took time to go over the manuscripts, often several times. His criticisms and this process were something they never forgot. A number were quite flattered that he took the time to do this.

In most situations Ken was cheerful and patient with the students. On rainy days he loved playing Hearts on the island. He usually won and he enjoyed that too. One day a fourteen year old won constantly. Ken was quite frustrated and mystified. How could someone so young win so many times? On another occasion there was an early morning bellow from the nets "Nighthawk!" Ken emerged from the tower where he slept and walked toward the headquarters building. By this time someone shouted "Whip-poor-will!" Ken continued walking and throwing bits of blue Kleenex on the ground (which he later picked up), muttering: "I knew it was a "Whip-poor-will, I knew it was a Whip-poor-will!" He was not patient with misidentifications.

On Great Gull Island Ken's fund of information, which he shared with the students, impressed them, but equally impressive was his willingness to participate in the project, and do all the things they were doing, working with them side by side. We all looked forward to his visits to the island and missed them when it was no longer possible for him to come. Proud to be descended from Charles Carroll of Maryland, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Ken maintained an independence and excellence in his work in ornithology that would have made his ancestor proud. His standard remains.

In 1998 the Linnaean Society of New York awarded Dean Amadon the Eisenmann Medal. Ken contributed the following stanzas in honor of

Dean that were then published in the April 1998 *Linnaean News-Letter*. This is a wonderful example of his creativity and sense of humor. It is appropriate that he have the final word in this remembrance.

In the heart of Manhattan, on Central Park West,
Stood the building about which I sing,
And it housed a collection of birds of the world
Second only in numbers to Tring.

Its ornithological staff, be it said,
Has become altogether much slimmer;
But *then* there was Murphy and Chapin and Mayr
And Gilliard and Vaurie and Zimmer.

Just out of the Army, and anxious to work,
Young Amadon had an ambition;
He went to New York and he knocked on their
door,
And he got back his pre-war position.

He started to study some families of birds,
And no one his age was astuter;
He practiced taxonomy as it was taught
By Mayr as his personal tutor.

“The ‘splitters,’” said Mayr to his student one day,
“Are simply Victorian chumps;
But now in the ’forties the man who succeeds
Is the man who gets out there and **lumps!**”

Dean started with starlings, not studied since Sharpe,
Whose genera came to just fifty;
But Dean said “That’s too many genera, friends;
I think twenty-four would be nifty.”

The lumping of genera wasn’t enough,
So families fell under his gaze.
“The Corvidae need my attention,” he thought,
“It’s far more than just crows and jays.”

The paradise birds and the orioles, too,
The drongos, cracticids and such
Were placed in the Corvidae. Mayr approved
Of Dean’s taxonomical touch.

“Your papers are good ones,” said Mayr then to
Dean,
“But if in this field you’d succeed,
You’ve got to have letters that follow your name;
A good Ph.D. you will need.”

So he went to Cornell for a half of a year,
As the Grad School said that was enough.
We learned to respect him, not just for his brains,
But his Ping-pong, aggressive and tough.

I had a position myself at the time,
In charge of the Cornell collection,
And I wrote my reaction to what Dean had done,
Which I’d found upon simple inspection.

While in the collection I looked for some geese,
Some plovers and petrels, I vow,
But I didn’t find any, for Dean got there first,
And they’re all in the Corvidae now.

Ernst Mayr, in the meantime, took on a new job,
As the head of the great M.C.Z.,
So he left his apprentice to fend for himself
With results that we shortly will see.

Dean wrote on the starlings all over again,
In a paper some thirteen years later,
And, Lo! and Behold! When you added them up,
The number of taxa was greater.

The genera rose by a total of three,
And much splitting of *species* committed;
In the earlier paper were just 88,
With one hundred and ten now admitted.

So much for the history; I’ve had my fun
In doggerel style reminiscing --
I dare not continue, although I must say
There are lots of Dean stories you’re missing.

In giving our medal to Dean, we acknowledge
The wisdom and kindness he’s mastered;
As a final avowal of love and respect,
Let’s all get deliciously plastered.

I thank Grace Cormons, Joseph DiCostanzo,
David Duffy, Mary LeCroy and Alan Poole for
reading this ms. and making helpful suggestions.



THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL, YES, WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS!

Helen Hays

Many volunteers have helped on Great Gull Island work weekends over the years. Much of what we have accomplished each season would not have been possible without the strong work weekend support we have received primarily from people in Connecticut, but also from some in New York, Massachusetts and Maryland. I want to thank all of you, and to record some of the things you have accomplished which improved living conditions on the island for both terns and people and enabled us to do more and better research.

In the following paragraphs I will outline a short history of the period we have occupied the island, mentioning contributions made by volunteers who not only helped us move on and off the island, but created and maintained enlarged areas for nesting Common and Roseate terns, fenced both of the large gun emplacements, set up and repaired 47 blinds in the spring, removing the sides and tops in the fall and then putting them back on in the spring. They have expanded living quarters for students, renovated the headquarters building, made traps, sewed bird bags, worked on repair and maintenance of the grid, the buildings and the expanded nesting areas, created gardens, brought progeny and sent progeny to Great Gull Island, and given us wonderful send-offs in the spring and welcomed us back in the fall.

When we first went to Great Gull Island we went with Captain Laurence H. Malloy, who lived in Waterford, Connecticut on the west side of the Thames River. Captain Malloy had delivered bread to the army at Fort Michie on Great Gull during World War II. When he first took us to the island in 1964 he landed us at what remained of the army dock in about the same spot he had used when delivering bread years before. There were a few planks left of the dock that we could use to scramble ashore. Winter storms, however, quickly removed these last few planks and between 1969 and 1971 Captain Malloy anchored his boat, the *Annie*, offshore and we rowed gear and people to the island in a small aluminum boat we purchased for checking Roseate Terns at the end of the season. Reports on these early years of the project were published in 1970 in the *Proceedings of the Linnaean Society of New York, No. 71*.

From 1972 to the present Captain John Wadsworth and his captains have taken us to the island. Captain John would tie his boat to what we called the Little Dock, a structure built for the army east of the large loading dock Captain Malloy had used. Captain John's decision to bring us in to the Little Dock made landing much easier for us. Once we made a connection, using planks, between the dock and the shore, we could walk from the boat to the shore and did not have the wet landings and loadings necessitated by rowing to and from the *Annie*.

In 1982 Matthew Male, a student at the time, built a ramp that connected the Little Dock to the shore, and because the ramp regularly washed out during the winter, he has renewed it every year since. Sometimes the ramp could be taken in and used again and sometimes ramps could be salvaged when they washed up on shore. In recent years, Matthew has been able to complete the ramp just before we arrive in the spring to unload our gear for the summer. Captain John, himself, did most of the trips until 1996 when his son Captain Bob Wadsworth took over the run. For the last three years Captain Matt Poitras has delivered volunteers and gear to the island each summer.

In mid-April 2006, I received an email from Captain Matt who reported that while most of the dock pilings were still there, there was only one stringer left of the dock platform. He said there could not be a field season unless the dock was repaired. Matthew Male stepped into the breach. He went to Great Gull to fix the dock the Monday before our scheduled move to the island on Thursday. The first day, Cliff Bentsen and Greg Decker went with him. Greg remained in the boat keeping it near the dock and running the generator for power tools Matthew and Cliff used as they balanced on the remaining stringer, building the dock platform from the sea toward the shore. Matthew returned to the island the following day and again on Wednesday, staying on Great Gull that night. Lisa Neild and Bob Kane went out Thursday morning to help Matthew complete the dock before our arrival and the dock was ready when we arrived at noon!

NEW YORK TO CONNECTICUT

For the last 31 years Joe DiCostanzo has packed the office gear at the end of April and loaded it into the truck for the move to the island. In the first years Gretel Neuberger, a Linnaean member, drove the truck, a number of people drove their cars with gear to Niantic, including Bob Dickerman in 1982. Patrick Malloy, a volunteer on the project, drove the truck in 1984 and 1985. In 1986 and 1987 Tony Lauro lent us a truck and a driver. Chris Thompson, a graduate student in Ornithology, drove in 1988 and 1989. In 1990 Melissa McClure rented a truck and has driven the gear to Niantic in the spring and back to New York in the fall ever since.

GATHERING FOR THE BOAT

In the spring, between 1966 and 1972, we gathered at Captain Malloy's house in Waterford to go to Great Gull Island. From 1973 to the present a number of people gather at Captain John's to help with the move out. John Avallone, John Haggerty, Bob Kane, Lisa Neild, Brian Simpson, Jim Sorensen, and often Kathy Dolan are among the stalwarts who have been on hand to help move things to the island. Between 2001 and 2006 Alex Holder has organized a trip for the Coastal Defense Study Group to come to the island the day we move out and help us with the move. The group is dedicated to studying all aspects of the old U. S. coastal defense system. The core group that comes to Great Gull most years includes Alex Holder, Jon Lincoln, Chris McDonald, Jonathan Prostack, Bolling Smith, and Tom Vaughn. One year Alex brought a group of 50 and we unloaded the boat with a line that stretched from the supply boat to the kitchen. It was the fastest unloading ever. Once we have unloaded the boat the "Fort People" scatter to study the fort, then return to the mainland the following day.

BEGINNINGS

From 1966 through 1968 we visited Great Gull on weekends and occasionally people would stay out for a week at a time. In 1966 we set up a grid on the island so as to be able to locate the marked nests. Richard Edes Harrison, a cartographer and Linnaean Society member painted

signs on some of the fort structures warning people that the island was a Research Station and not to land. We initiated work weekends to repair buildings, remove vegetation from areas where terns nested, spray Poison Ivy and build traps.

By 1969 we had enough people willing to work on the island to stay all summer. Our first project, under the direction of Janaan Jenner in 1969 was to build a tall blind just south of the upper retaining wall at the eastern end of the island where we could watch Roseate Terns. After rowing the lumber in from Captain Malloy's boat, Grace Cormons, Berne Donaldson, Mimi Fries, Mary LeCroy, Catherine Pessino, and I helped Jan who stood on a rickety ladder balanced on a card table to nail the two by fours in place that anchored the four sides together and were the bases for the floor of the blind.

In May it can be quite cold and so for heat we used the bottom of a pot-bellied stove that had been left in the headquarters building. Bob Stephenson, a volunteer, quickly tired of trying to keep warm as people huddled in a smoke-filled room. In 1971 he brought out the parts for a barrel stove and put it together – good draft and no more smoke – a real step forward. In 1971 and 1972 Rikki Harrison painted more signs on the sides of buildings at either end of the island and enlisted a student, Kathy Duffin, who painted terns on the signs. In 1977 Bob Dickerman brought storm windows from his house and installed them in the headquarters building, replacing plywood sheets with small holes cut in them to let in light. The new windows made a tremendous difference.

Each year in the early spring we observe the island from the central tower as the birds come in. The Army's wooden steps to the second level of the tower needed replacing. Bob Shailor, with the help of volunteers built new steps in 1989 - 1990. They have lasted well and we are still using them.

EXPANSION OF NESTING AREAS FOR COMMON AND ROSEATE TERNS

Throughout the 1970s we tried to reclaim some of the nesting areas that had become overgrown. We did this by hand, flooding some of the areas with seawater and raking and removing topsoil in others. It was slow and labor intensive. John Avallone, Grace Cormons, Joe DiCostanzo, Uta Gore, Cordie Grimm, Jill Hamilton, Anne

McFarlane and Jack McFarlane, Lauren, Mary and Sara LeCroy, Catherine Pessino, Brian Simpson, and Jim Sorensen all helped. These were the people who returned to clear on a number of weekends. More people helped, but many, after one weekend of clearing, did not choose to return! In 1980 David Allen head of Chesterfield Associates lent a bulldozer with operator for a day. The reintroduction of the Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) in 1981 and later the purchase of a tractor through a grant from the Norcross Foundation dramatically increased the number of cleared areas where terns could nest. Each spring since 1992, when the tractor arrived, Matthew Male has disc-harrowed, then raked these cleared areas to keep them open for terns. A shed contributed by Taylor Brugman served as shelter for the tractor during the summer until recently when Matthew stored it in the tunnels.

The concrete around the two large gun emplacements on Great Gull, at the far eastern end of the island and at the center of the island above the headquarters building, have been places where 300 to 500 pairs nest each year. The tops of both of these guns are open concrete. At the far eastern end we divided the area with long shelters so that young will not run a great distance when we check the areas during hatching. In addition, in the 1980s we tried a few houses for chicks in the open concrete sections of the island and the chicks used them. In 1990, under the direction of Tim Male, the students built almost a hundred houses for chicks. In spring 2001 the students built about sixty houses. As the colony increased and more and more birds used the open concrete of the gun emplacements we needed still more chick shelters. In April 2006 Matthew Male and his wife Lauren hosted a house-making party producing 800 chick houses. We put 400 on each gun emplacement and could have used more. If a chick hatches on these concrete sections in July and August, it has little chance of surviving if it does not have a house.

In 1995 Bob Kane built several enclosures from of 2" x 12"s above the large gun emplacement at the center of the island. Using the tractor, Mathew Male filled them with dirt and gravel. The concrete here has not begun to exfoliate, as has the concrete on the eastern end gun emplacement so there are no areas on the concrete that the terns can use. Here the terns nest both inside the enclosures and outside them and there are fewer

pairs trying to nest on the seams, where the eggs often blow away. However, even the chicks that hatch in the enclosures need houses and so we plan to build more.

In 1995 after a late-night chat session, Kathy Dolan, Lisa Neild, Melissa McClure and Maggie Zadorozny proposed an excellent fencing method for the large gun emplacements. We had been building wooden shelters and placing them around the gun emplacements so the chicks would not run over the edge as we moved through on check. The wooden shelters were falling apart and Kathy, speaking for the group suggested that, rather than rebuilding the shelters, we should use rebar and wire to fence the guns. It was a very good idea and the following spring Bob Kane did just that. This fencing has lasted very well, though we often have to repair sections in the spring, but the original hardware cloth is still in place.

In the mid 1980s Tim Male led a crew to terrace the south side of the east gun emplacement west of the upper retaining wall for Roseates. Patrick Malloy and Chris Thompson helped.

Later Tim, with Erik Egensteiner, built and set out shelters on the terraces. A year or two later Richard Bednarz and some of his students terraced the area east of the upper retaining wall. In the early 2000s John Haggerty built shelters for Roseates that we put in north of the retaining wall in three tiers. These boxes we called the "Jumble" because some of the boxes open toward the south and some toward the north and the overall impression is a jumble! Roseate Terns have occupied boxes in the terraced areas; however, to realize a real increase in nesting sites and numbers of pairs nesting we would have to build many more terraces. In the early 1990s a grant from the Bernice Barbour Foundation enabled us to build a set of terraces on the north slope of the east gun emplacement. A few Roseate pairs moved in, but not the number that used the boxes on the south side of the gun emplacement.

From the late 1970s through 2001 there were a number of construction projects. Teams that gathered for bringing gear to and from the island increased in size. Work weekend crews moved many feet of lumber, plywood sides for blinds, tons of canned goods, heavy packages of shingles for roofing the buildings and many half cords of wood for heating one room in the headquarters building.

BLIND CONSTRUCTION

Between 1978 and 1984 Matthew Male built thirty observation blinds overlooking nesting areas of both tern species. He used Janaan Jenner's design, making them a little shorter than her blind. We removed the plywood sides of the blinds in the fall and put them on again in the spring. We first carried the sides on our backs to winter storage in the houses, however, since 1992 the tractor made this operation much easier.

By the 1990s the blinds needed some repair. In 1990 Linda Rancourt, Kathy Dolan and Deborah Hanley replaced floors in three blinds and Margie and John Haggerty painted these floors. The same year Bob Shailor, Kathy Dolan and Barbara Bednarz replaced two rotten legs of M-8 and Bob put a new floor in M-2. He also put some wood under the legs of M-18 to steady it. In 1992 Cliff Bentsen, Brian Simpson and Jim Sorensen made three replacement blinds. They also repaired floors in some old blinds. In 1993 Cliff and Kathy cut wood for three more towers and later assembled them. In 1999 Bob Kane and Stirling Danskin made nine replacement ladders.

Between 1995 and 1999 Bob Kane, with help from his nephew Josh, Kathy Dolan and Earl Dojan built seventeen blinds and placed them along the shore from which people could read Roseate bands. All Bob's towers were painted by the end of 1999. These blinds are always useful in the spring and recently have been particularly good in August when the island served as a staging area for Roseates during post-breeding periods in 2001 - 2004 and 2007.

EXPANDING LIVING QUARTERS FOR STUDENTS

Our habitat management in the 1970s and 1980s was successful and more terns nested on Great Gull with relatively rapid increases after 1984. With more birds nesting, we needed more students and volunteers to help monitor the population each season. To provide housing for students, we wanted to use the two officers' quarters, at the center of the island. The south building was in fair condition. In 1976 Helen Lapham contributed a number of mattresses for some of the beds and we used air mattresses and foam pads on others. The north building was dilapidated, actually uninhabitable. A volunteer

from Connecticut, Don Paight, undertook the job of renovation in 1984. With help from a student and Bob Dickerman, the building was ready for occupants by 1988, giving us a total of twenty rooms for students. In mid-April 1988 Sandy and Margaret Ardwin built twelve beds for the new rooms; Richard Bednarz added another later. In 1992 the students added six more.

In 1990 a Norcross Foundation grant funded materials to replace the roofs of both dormitory buildings. In 1990 and 1991 Bob Shailor and his son Greg, with help from Richard Bednarz and volunteers, gave both buildings new hip roofs. I remember being among those trying to help shingle the roof of the north building. As I put the shingles down I noticed the line was not straight so I began raising them to meet the line I had started. Suddenly a shadow fell across my shingles and a voice said, "Need a line?" I didn't know what that meant and so replied, "No, I don't need a line." "Well," the voice continued, "your line is not straight." "I know," I said, "but I'm compensating and will end up in the right place." "Yes," he said, "but it looks like hell - take it out!" I then looked up to find Bob Shailor staring down at me. "Take it out?" I repeated, hardly believing my ears as I stared at my uneven line. "Take it out." he replied and I took it out and redid it. Richard Bednarz added gutters and down spouts to the building, putting 100-gallon cattle troughs below the down spouts to catch water. Once the north building was renovated, Melissa McClure led the painting crews for both buildings.

The newly renovated buildings needed thirty windows. Over the next several seasons John Avallone, Richard Bednarz, and Bob Kane brought out windows and installed them. A number had to be replaced after they were broken during winter storms. In 1993 Bob Kane and the Connecticut crew made shutters and John Avallone made wooden latches for the shutters. Since the shutters have been in place, we have had only a few broken windows.

RENOVATING THE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

The headquarters building contains the kitchen, computer room, banding room and supply room. In 1980 Little Gull Lighthouse was closed and Matthew Male was given permission to take whatever he wanted from the lighthouse. He

returned to Great Gull with some wonderful salvage: a dish cabinet, and two cupboards, one with a rotating shelf – Matthew said he had always wanted one of these. He also presented me with a desk, which I was delighted to have – I painted it blue. That same year Matthew and Tom Van't Hof built a table and two more desks and shelves along the walls in the middle room. We then gave all of them two coats of paint and coated them with polyurethane.

In 1990 more improvements were made in the headquarters building. Cliff Bentsen installed shop lights in the banding and computer rooms. A small generator powers the lights. It is the only building on the island with electricity. Kathy Dolan precut boards at home to make housing for the generator and assembled the housing on site. Bob Shailor added more shelves for storage in the fourth room, over shelves Matthew had built. He also cleaned the stovepipe in the middle room. Richard Bednarz added three downspouts to the building, enabling us to catch rainwater for dishes and washing. In 1992 the kitchen and middle room were painted and now need a new coat.

Finally, the headquarters building is the only building that has had two roofs during our time on the island. The first roof was done professionally in the mid-1970s through the generosity of Helen Lapham. When I asked how long the roof would last? The reply was, "It will outlast you!" That was a challenge! By 2001 the roof had begun to leak. In May, Brandon Graber and volunteers from the Millstone power plant brought us three "witches hats" which we installed in the headquarters building to catch the drips from the leaking roof. In the fall of 2001 Kathy Dolan, who worked for Habitat for Humanity, knew just what supplies to get to redo the roof and working with Cliff Bentsen, Greg Decker, Dee Dove, Sue Hollister, Bob Kane, Matthew Male and Jim Sorensen, redid the roof in two days.

RENEWING THE GRID

On April 14, 1989 Parker Cane went to Great Gull with volunteers and surveyed the island to renew the grid, using a transit borrowed from Tom Siccama at the Yale School of Forestry. There were strong winds and rain the entire weekend. Richard Bednarz and John Haggerty held the meter tape; Michelle Albert held the pole and Barbara Bednarz pushed in orange plastic tent

stakes to mark the points for the grid markers. Margie Haggerty prepared meals the entire weekend, cooking outside over a charcoal fire. High seas meant no Sunday boat. Captain John arrived Monday morning to return the intrepid crew to the mainland.

Bob Kane's brother Greg contributed sign metal for new grid markers and Bob asked George Beauregard, head of the Beauregard Corporation where he worked, to contribute the vinyl for the graphics, machine time to cut sign metal, and computer time to cut the vinyl graphics. Valerie Marcus did numbers and letters for the grid markers on the computer and helped put grid markers in. On April 21 Bob Kane brought out the grid markers, volunteers attached them to fence posts, then pounded these in to the sites marked by the orange tent stakes. In 1991 Joe Waldvogel, using a transit, again kindness of Tom Siccama, and with the help of Great Gull volunteers patched in some markers that had been taken out since the grid had been renewed in 1989. We are grateful to George Beauregard for his contribution to a number of signage projects on Great Gull Island.

MAKING TRAPS

The tern traps we use on Great Gull are treadle traps based on a model designed by Leroy Wilcox, a Long Island duck farmer, who banded birds on Long Island from the late-1920s to the early 1970s. When we first started working on Great Gull we began making traps, but as the colony increased in size I knew we would not have enough. In the mid-1970s Paul Stoutenberg asked his scout troop to make traps for the island. The scouts brought the traps to the island and they were used by all of us to good advantage. In the early 1980s we made traps on rainy work weekends, but there were not enough rainy weekends to keep up with the increase in colony size. One year we borrowed traps from Jeff Spindel, who worked on Falkners Island, which helped, but we returned them at the end of the season and it was clear we could not borrow traps every year. In 1988 Jim Sorensen offered his basement for trap-making on a winter Saturday. I was delighted to accept and in 1988, 1989 and 1990 we spent a Saturday in February or March at the Sorensen's making traps. John Avallone streamlined the sessions by creating jigs for each of the wire

bending operations for the different parts. As people arrived to help, they were given a jig or joined a group assembling traps. We worked hard and produced a lot of traps. I remember only one occasion where people took a break. The event that emptied Jim's basement was a Huskies game that took seven men to the TV room – no question of not watching it. One year we made collapsible traps designed by John that Matt Cormons took with him to the Azores to catch Roseates. Jim's wife Baerbel always gave us a wonderful lunch and a feast that night. We all thoroughly enjoyed those trap-making sessions at the Sorensen's and we finally had enough traps to keep up with the peak hatch on the island.

BIRD BAGS

A number of people have made the bird bags we use on the island. Elena Pessino, Catherine's mother, made the first bags. Later, Gail Duberstein and her husband Norman took me to the garment district where we purchased material for bags. Gail then made the bags and we are still using them. In 1989 David Freund donated seventeen yards of cotton ticking and Nancy Stevens made a hundred bird bags. In the early 1990s Donna Satterlee, with help from volunteers, made 500 bird bags and we finally have enough bags for the peak hatch on Great Gull.

Joe DiCostanzo takes the bags to the laundry each year, but in 2006 the bags were left on the island. In spring 2007 Brian Simpson took them to the laundry, returning them for trapping in June.

REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

With all the new blinds, renovated student housing, and bird traps built in the 1970s and 1980s, the job of repair and maintenance greatly increased on Great Gull. Between 1986 and 2006 John Avallone set up a repair shop on the island for blind sides, ladders and traps when he came out in the spring. He also undertook maintaining the field crew with great lunches and dinners, making things that we would not have made ourselves, often bringing many of his own ingredients. In addition to work weekends, John often comes to the island for Visitor's Day in July armed with two kinds of potato salad and cooks lobsters. He even teaches those who do not know how to open a lobster how to do it.

After twelve to fifteen seasons, many of the blinds needed new canvas tops. During the winter of 1989-1990 Jill Akel took a sample top and had thirty new ones made. In 1998 David Beauregard made and contributed plastic tags for the canvas tops; they are much the best labels we have had for them. John Avallone attached the new tags to the northeast corner of each top replacing the old, nearly unreadable tags.

In 1993 Kathy Dolan and Lisa Neild replaced windows in the north building and Bob Kane made covers for the water troughs and worked on window frames. In 1995 Erik Egensteiner finished repairing and painting a corner of the floor in the north building. The buildings, of course, were open and dry, but needed lots of things painted, shelves built, and dividers installed in the large rooms to give us extra rooms. In 1993 - 1995 Bob and Lisa repaired windows and replaced broken panes in all the buildings. Bob repaired the gutters and downspouts that blew off in the winter.

In 1995 Michelle and Luis Silva built three outside benches to replace Bob Stephenson's twenty-year-old ones. Hilary Oles, Scott Kocher, and Toby Odenheim replaced the outside table with a larger, sturdier model. Bob Kane and Lisa Neild laid a drainpipe by the dishwashing area and replaced windows in the middle building with windows contributed by Bob Shailor. Luis made ladders for some blinds that needed them.

In 1996 Michelle and Luis contributed their cooking stove to Great Gull and amid much fanfare our refrigerator arrived kindness of Robert G. Goelet, followed shortly thereafter by a freezer, also with Mr. Goelet's complements. Six boys moved the freezer down the dock and onto shore by putting ropes under it and lifting it. Everyone was very pleased when it was settled in the tunnel behind the headquarters building and we could not wait to order things to put in it. Solar panels were installed in 1997 to keep the car battery charged that powered our cell phone. After Verizon told us they would no longer support our old analogue phone in 2007, Gabriella Rosen helped replace it with a new digital cell phone also powered by the car battery.

GARDENS

There have been two volunteers who started gardens on Great Gull: Mimi Fries in the early 1970s and Melissa McClure who provided us first

with food from her garden in the early 1990s, then with bright spots of color from flowers and bushes she planted in the late 1990s and early 2000s and most recently wonderful flowering trees – plum, pear and apple – which attract insects and birds in the spring as migrants move through. Melissa works very hard in the garden, constantly battling encroaching vegetation, which, once taken out, she likes to burn. Melissa also cooks gourmet meals and she also brings some of her own ingredients. At the end of the season she collects clothes and linen left by the students. She takes them home and washes them, bringing them back in the spring for use in the new season. She has started an expanding linen closet!

FAMILY HELP

Over the years a number of families have come to the island to help and provided strong support on work weekends. Between 1969 and 1972 Mary LeCroy and her daughters Sara and Lauren were regular fieldworkers. In addition to helping with check they did growth studies of Common and Roseate tern chicks.

Grace Cormons has worked on the project since it's inception, but took the years 1975 to 1987 off to raise a family. She returned to Great Gull in 1988 with her sons Tom and Peter to work with Roseate Terns. Tom worked 1988-1995, Peter in 1988-1997 and both came out for a week at peak in 1998. Currently she has some wonderful help with Roseate check from Heather Satterlee and Veronica Varela, and in 2008 will complete 20 years of work monitoring the population of Roseate Terns on Great Gull. Grace's husband Matt came to help on several occasions. The Cormons family has made a major contribution, as well, to our work on Roseate Terns during the nonbreeding season in South America and the Azores. Grace, Tom and Peter worked with us on surveys in South America, including aerial surveys where Tom followed birds offshore to locate where they were feeding. Matt headed a team that worked with Veronica Neves in the Azores trapping Roseate Terns. Talvi Ansel, Peter and Grace also worked in the Azores where they trapped Roseate Terns originally banded in Bahia, Brazil as well as on the northeast coast of the U.S.

Michael Male brought his brother Matthew to Great Gull in 1976 when Michael made his movie *Ternwatch*. Matthew returned in subsequent

years and anyone reading this realizes the tremendous amount he has done for the project. Matthew then brought his brother Tim to the island in the late 1970s. Tim, like his brothers, was a hard worker, and took responsibility for projects on the island as well as his independent work. Barbara-Jean Male, Michael, Matthew's and Tim's mother visited the island and worked with us in the late 1970s. In the years her sons worked on Great Gull she sent us many marvelous pumpkin cakes and other wonderful baked goods, including strawberry shortcake with fresh strawberries, all of which we happily devoured. Barbara-Jean returned in 1991 and marveled at our mechanization. In 1995 and 1997 Matthew and Anne Rubega Male brought their children Hannah and Olivia to Great Gull to introduce them to the terns. Anne first brought Hannah to the island at age 23 weeks, perhaps the youngest Gull Islander ever. In 1998 Matthew and Anne brought out all three of their daughters, Hannah, Olivia and Georgia.

Cordie Grimm first came to Great Gull in 1975 and brought her brother, Jay, age nine in 1976. Jay has been a regular participant for a week at peak since the early 1980s and in 2002 brought his future wife Emily-Jane Kirwin out in August. Cordie's and Jay's parents, Teresa and Jay visited Great Gull in the early 1980s. Teresa has volunteered in the Great Gull Island Project office at the American Museum of Natural History since 1984 and Jay has contributed annually to the Project since 1976. The Grimm's generously volunteered their apartment for several Christmas parties and Jay, Sr. makes a wonderful cherries jubilee each year for the party.

Steven Chang and Susan Opotow met on Great Gull in the early 1980s and later brought their children Nathan and Vera on a number of weekends throughout the 1990s. In 2004 Vera came to help for a week at the end of the summer. It happened at a time when we really needed help and it was great to welcome back an "old hand".

In the early 1980s the Macphails held the fort on two weekends while we were away. In 1988 their daughter Lettice came for a weekend and in 1990 their son Gavin worked for a week with us.

Throughout the 1980s Richard and Barbara Bednarz regularly helped on work weekends; Barbara, a consummate trapper, helped during the season at peak. Richard worked on all the work weekend building projects, creating terraces, roofing buildings, bringing out windows and installing

them. He often brought students from his high school classes to help.

In 1988, Richard and Barbara brought their children, Jason, Amanda, and Michael for a weekend in September. Jason returned in 1989 and 1990 for work weekends and Amanda during the season in 2003, 2006 and 2007.

In 1990 Alan Poole brought his daughter Phoebe, age 4, for a work weekend in September and David Duffy brought his wife Maria, daughter Dominique, age 7, and son Alexander, age 2, for the same weekend. This was the weekend that Bob Shailor was finishing the roof on the north building. Suddenly, on Saturday morning Phoebe joined us on the roof, hammer in hand, and her father helped her pound a nail into a block of wood. Next a few of Richard Bednarz high school students landed on the roof, like a small flock of migrant birds, then as suddenly they were gone and some of the girls had begun to wash their hair at about 9:30 am below the building we were working on. Shortly after that however, roof crews were organized and ground crews cut and trimmed shingles before taking them to the roof. At the end of the weekend, as we loaded the boat, Bob sat at the end of the dock handing gear and people on to the boat. Dominique became quite nervous and did not want to step into the boat. She began crying. Bob looked up at her and said firmly: "Dominique, stop crying, sit down and step into the boat" She did just that. The following year Bob came out to do the roof on the middle building. He came to the island with his son and an assistant. I assured him there were only a few of us to begin the work, but there would be lots of help coming on the weekend. He paused, picked up his tools and as he headed for the roof he said: "We will finish by Friday" and he did. Phoebe Poole returned to Great Gull as a field assistant in 2002 and did an excellent job.

In 1993 Jim Sorensen brought his son Michael to the island and Michael returned for work weekends in 1995, 1996 and 1999. In 2000 Rachel Page brought her father to the island and later both her parents came for a weekend.

In 2003 and 2004 Roger Reed and Sarah Nichol森 brought their sons Kai and Marley to the island for Memorial Day weekend. They all worked very hard and it was a bonus to have them. Kai later returned during the season.

Sara Avallone has on occasion come to the island with her husband John. She is an

enthusiastic puller of Poison Ivy and is very good keeping the notebook on nest check.

A number of students have brought family members to the island to work. Mary Windels brought her brother Jimmy in the late 1970s. In 1982 Nancy Niemczyk arrived for a weekend and as she stepped off the boat said, "Hello, I'm Nancy Niemczyk and I brought my little brother Leo for the weekend, he's seven." We all survived and so did Leo.

In 1994 a number of siblings arrived on the island. Bear and Huckleberry Fox, Norman and Andrew Lasca, Winnie and Pauline Roberts. In 2000 Bear brought his son to the island. Loretta Stillman brought her sister to the island and later encouraged her nephew Roger Mason, who came in May 2003 and 2004. Roger worked hard, and in addition, left us a number of paintings and sketches he did on the island which are now on the walls of the headquarters building. Sandy Williams has come to help, bringing work crews of two to six from 1998 - 2002. Sandy's mother Janet is helping us computerize the Great Gull Island Project data.

Heather Satterlee brought her mother Donna, brother Zak and cousin Molly Grillo to Great Gull in 2000. Donna returned for several seasons and always made wonderful bread during her visits. In 2003 and 2004 Grace Cormons enlisted her niece Laney to join Roseate check.

Stirling Danskin brought his daughters Jillian and Galen to the island. Jillian has returned for a number of years and in 2006 came for a week on her own and proved to be a very good trapper. Michelle and Luis Silva brought their children Pita and Miles for a work weekend in 2005 and 2006.

PEAK PROVIDERS

In 2003 and 2005 John and Laurie Cairns helped on the island and cooked during peak. Their gourmet meals were a fantastic treat and we all stood back and admired their amazing productions, complete with menus and hors d'oeuvres during Bingo. Everyone gets really tired at peak and to have the Cairns volunteer to cook was a wonderful treat. This was a first for the project and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the meals.

In 2005, Kathy and Ernie Catropa, E. J. Raynor's parents, prepared marvelous meals for the week after peak. We all felt very lucky to have such thoughtful care during and after our busiest

period of the season. In 2006 Ernie returned with large coolers and prepared meals for three days in addition to putting in a water pump for the cistern. In 2007, neither Ernie nor Kathy could come to Great Gull because Kathy's mother was celebrating her 90th birthday, but, Kathy sent two turkeys, a ham, kielbasa and sauerkraut, two kinds of potato salad, coleslaw, macaroni salad, bagels and rolls. Kathy's mother sent two loaves of her delicious pumpkin bread. All the food was ready to eat and could be heated if we wanted to which made it very easy for us.

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

We have had some wonderful groups come to help on Great Gull. In the late 1970s and early 1980s a number of groups came from the Thames Science Center on a spring work weekend. In recent years Grit Ardwin has brought groups of junior staffers from Earthplace, the Nature Discovery Center in Westport. They helped get the island ready for terns in the spring and helped close it in the fall. Cathy Brittingham, of the Nature Conservancy, came for work weekends in 1996 and 1997 then sent staff members out to help during peak. From 2000 - 2002 Alexander Brash, as chief of the NYC Urban Park Rangers, sent Americorps volunteers to Great Gull during the peak. These reinforcements from Americorps, Earthplace, Nature Conservancy and the Thames Science Center were welcomed by all of us.

A grant from the Quebec Labrador Foundation from 2000-2005 and 2007 made it possible for Esteban Bremer to bring a group of Argentineans to Great Gull during the last two weeks in June. In addition to the daily "chick check", they undertake other projects if they have free time because of rain or a late peak hatch. In 2003 they built a room behind the main tower to enlarge our living quarters. In 2004 they added a deck to this building and in 2005 repaired the ceiling of "Paight", the north building. In spite of the rather tight schedule during the week of June 16-22, 2007 the Argentineans found time to get the freezer working and built a new stand for the solar panels. They also touched up the "Little Argentina" sign leading to the western end. Gabriel Castresana, who had endless energy, built a banding table for Roseate work and then, with help from Amanda Bednarz, put together six shelters for Roseate Terns. He also added a towel

tree near the washing area that was very useful. Gabriel also fixed the oven in the kitchen stove.

SHORE HARBORS

For many years Ann Gaylord provided us a base in Niantic. She welcomed us in the spring for a last mainland dinner and overnight and welcomed us back in the fall when we moved off the island, once again providing a wonderful dinner, showers and clean sheets. During the season Smidgie and Alistair Macphail have often come to the island to help in June just before peak. In late summer they have helped tremendously by picking up mail and groceries and delivering them to the boat on weekends when no students were coming to the island.

Since 1981, when Jim Sorensen first came to the island, he and his wife Baerbel have been wonderfully hospitable to Gull Islanders. They let us store much of the island's equipment in their barn over the winter. Baerbel always helps us unload, as does their son Michael when he is home. They always gave me a place to stay before trap-making parties. Baerbel has given us many meals in both spring and fall and she and Jim always made us feel welcome.

FALL WORK WEEKENDS

In the past we had three fall work weekends to do all the chores and close the island. In 2004 and 2005 the crew accomplished on the move-off weekend what we used to do in three. This was particularly fortunate because in both years bad weather due to hurricanes, meant we had no work weekends after move off. On most work weekends people work so hard and so continuously what one remembers are the breaks. One weekend Brian Simpson, the first friend Jim Sorensen brought to Great Gull, dove into the water off the south beach. He surfaced about twelve feet from shore and at the same time, six feet to his right, a seal surfaced. They stared at each other for a few seconds – Brian had a beard at the time and looked very like a fellow seal – then the seal disappeared underwater and Brian joined the rest of us.

We are really fortunate in the crew that returns for the work weekends. Those who come out now for the move-off weekend in September do not need directions. They move around the island like a well-oiled machine, removing blind

sides, picking up traps, repairing fences and making the island shipshape for the winter. These core people include John and Margie Haggerty who work as a team, accomplishing a tremendous amount. In addition Margie makes English muffins from scratch as well as cinnamon buns for breakfast to which I really look forward. Melissa McClure puts the garden to bed. Bob Kane, who came out in 2005 for the week before move off, took the blind sides off all the towers and brought in all but those at the far eastern end, providing a welcome sight for those landing on Friday to do the closing. John Avallone sets up his repair shop and works on traps and ladders, but makes it a point to finish in the morning in time to make lunch and in the evening in time to make dinner. His meals are famous and some people, when thinking of coming to the island, ask when John will be out! Lisa Neild begins working the minute she steps on the island, takes wonderful pictures and has some good shots of seals and the Swainson's Hawk. In addition to all the jobs involved in closing the island Doug Kopsco and Maggie Zadorozny always find time for clipping bittersweet. In 2005 Doug discovered steps leading down the hill from the gun emplacement behind the headquarters building we had never seen before. I'm always surprised and pleased there are still things to discover about the island and about the terns. It is one of the things that make working on Great Gull Island such fun.



SEPTEMBER 2006 – SEPTEMBER 2007

Helen Hays

Strong winds September 2, 2006 pushed waves over the dock, washing away the planks of the platform. Nancy Stevens and I were on Great Gull at the time. I called Captain Matt and cancelled the work weekends because with no dock we could not guarantee the volunteers they could

get off at the end of the weekend. Captain Matt said he would bring the scow at the end of the week when, and if, we had some good weather!

Each morning during the week, Nancy and I took blind sides and canvas off the seventeen blinds put up in the spring, doing a few blinds each day. We stored the sides and ladders under the blinds and stored the canvas tops in one of the buildings. In the afternoons we packed. I went into slow mode during packing, carefully oiling and wrapping banding pliers, then wrapping scales and rulers and finally packing the contents of my desk, while Nancy whirled through the kitchen, middle room, and banding room packing everything in boxes and storing them in the fourth room or one of the other buildings. She had brought a full roll of duct tape to the island that was indispensable for packing. Once Nancy cleared and packed the contents of all the rooms, she returned to the kitchen where she emptied and cleared the shelves and discarded certain spices she considered out of date! I could barely move, just watching her.

On Friday Captain Matt arrived at 4:30 pm. Nancy had already taken about four loads of gear to the meadow while I packed my room and carried ten garbage bags of clothes (my luggage) to the meadow. Captain John, with his mate Jon, brought his Brockway scow into the south beach. The sea was like glass. We have never had such good weather for move off.

Unfortunately, Nancy and I did not have time to put shutters on the windows, empty the water troughs, take down the radio antenna and move the solar panels, batteries and generators off the island. The weather in September and October was windy and not good for landings. Jim Sorensen called Captain Matt at least once a week to see if he and some friends could go to the island to close the buildings and move off the last gear. On October 31 Jim called Captain Matt to ask about going November 1. Captain Matt said, "Well it looks good for tomorrow; let's get it over with. We'll leave at six!" Jim, Cliff Bentsen, Dave Foltz and Bob Kane were ready the following morning.

With Captain Matt at the helm they arrived at Great Gull a little before 7:00 am. Captain Bob Wadsworth took them to the island in the scow and they scattered to begin work. Unfortunately the scow's motor stopped and would not start so it could not be used to pick up people. Fortunately there was quite a lot of wood from the dock

washed up on the shore, so Captain Matt and Captain Bob dragged it with a rope to the boat, then sharing a hammer from the boat, they nailed wood in place with help from the shore crew. By noon there was a path on the dock so those on the island could walk to the boat; a most successful finish for the season!

In 2007 I hoped it would be possible for Matthew Male to repair the dock in the spring, but this year when Captain Matt tied up at the dock there was not enough of it left to support repair. Captain Matt returned Matthew and Bob Kane to the mainland with the message that Great Gull needed a new dock.

In 2006 I had written two people about rebuilding the dock but no one expressed much interest. In May 2007 I initiated a search for a facilitator to help us get the permits for building a new dock. Matthew suggested Keith Neilson of Docko, Inc. Keith responded immediately and I began working with him. At this writing we have two of the three permits required and I hope we will get the third very shortly. Two offices in the American Museum of Natural History then must approve the plans for the dock, and then we can send them to contractors for bids.

In 2007 for each trip to Great Gull, Captain Matt towed Captain John's scow to the island and anchored off the south beach. He then left his boat with one of his mates and motored people and gear to shore in the scow. People liked doing this and some thought it easier than getting onto the dock had been. However, it was harder for Captain Matt, in that it took longer to tow the scow to the island than it would take to bring the boat directly in to the dock and there had to be little or no wind from the south to insure a safe landing. Captain Matt towed the scow throughout the summer and there were few cancellations because of unsuitable weather.

Captain Matt brought us to Great Gull Island on May 4, 2007. Gretta Lee and I rode to Niantic with Melissa McClure in the van from New York. We met John Haggerty, Bob Kane, Doug Kopsco, Lottie Prushinski, Michelle, Luis, Pita and Miles Silva and Maggie Zadorozny on the dock. Alex Holder, Jon Lincoln and Tom Vaughn, – “fort people” – met us at Captain John's to help load the boat and rode out with us to unload at Great Gull. This was a great help to us and very thoughtful of them, as they were not staying because of the uncertainty of a return boat to the mainland.

The weather was good and the landing on Great Gull was easy.

Everyone worked hard during the weekend and accomplished a lot. On Saturday morning John Haggerty and Doug Kopsco counted about 200 terns flying over the island at 5:50 am. The terns were in the air over the island until about 9:00 am. After breakfast Bob Kane and Luis Silva put the Roseate blinds in place at the western end using the tractor. Everyone else set up eight of the tall blinds for the season. Maggie and Doug took the shutters off “Paight”. Bob took the shutters off the middle building. Gretta made a great lunch and cooked butterfly lamb for supper – a first for the island.

On Saturday afternoon Bob and Luis stood up the Roseate blinds in Habitat at the eastern end. Everyone helped stand up two Roseate blinds over the wall at the eastern end and the blind on the beach west of the dock. These last three are heavier blinds and need everyone to lift them. Bob and Luis replaced some of the shingles on Paight.

During the winter a very high storm tide washed over a twenty to thirty foot wide area on the south side of the island. No plants were coming up in the area. Michelle, Lottie, John and I took out dried, dead stalks of mustard and other plants sticking up along the south side of coal area, and cleared areas in the rocks Roseates might use. Next Lottie and Michelle raked vegetation away from rocks along the north edge of the Sahara to clear areas for Roseate nests. In the afternoon they cut Bittersweet in the rocks along the south edge of the island at the western end.

Melissa cleared her garden and cut Cattail shoots that we ate for dinner. She discovered a female Mallard incubating a nest with eleven eggs in the Phragmites mat floating in the Big Gun.

Captain Matt arrived at 7:10 am on Sunday with the three generators, four propane tanks and car battery we had left in Captain John's barn because they were so heavy. Everyone, but Doug, who was staying for the week, hopped into the scow and left. At the end of the week Captain Matt brought out Jason Wanaselja from Long Island. He stayed for birdathon weekend. On May 13 Doug and Jason left and Matthew Male arrived to disc harrow and rake the island for four days. This was later than Matthew usually rakes, but it worked out well this year as the terns were late and the late clearing delayed the vegetation that takes over the nesting areas each season.

The first Common Tern egg appeared May 21 on top of the gun emplacement at the eastern end. A second nest was initiated May 23 at the far western end on the edge of a path. The first Roseate nest was started on May 23 figuring back from its hatching date of June 15.

Captain Matt brought Ned Barnard and Joe DiCostanzo to Great Gull on June 8. After carrying gear up from the south beach we loaded the cart for the run to the headquarters building. Later Ned brought up five packs of 500 dowels each from the south beach. Between June 8 and 15 we numbered 12,000 tongue depressors for marking Common and Roseate tern nests.

The next boat arrived on schedule on June 15 bringing Esteban Bremer and his crew and a group of Great Gull regulars. Esteban's crew this year included Diego Caballero from Uruguay and Gabriel Castresana, Daniel McLean and Laura Mauco from Argentina. Great Gull regulars included Amanda Bednarz, Grace Cormons, Loretta Stillman, John Walsh and Dick Young. Captain Matt brought people and gear to shore in the scow and the minute the scow hit the shore all passengers leapt onto the beach and began a rapid slinging of gear and supplies from the scow. Grace's assistant Heather Baker distinguished herself unloading the boat and helping tie the scow to a rock during the unloading.

Heather and then Amanda assisted Grace Cormons during the first week of Roseate check June 16-22. From June 22-29, Heather Satterlee and Veronica Varela returned to work with Grace during the peak hatch. Grace estimated a total of 1636 Roseate nests on Great Gull in 2007. She and her team trapped 279 adults, of which 71 were unbanded and 208 were retraps. They banded 1363 Roseate chicks.

In May I marked the first 200 Common Tern nests in order to estimate when peak would begin. No more nests were marked until the start of a full, daily Common check, beginning June 16. In two days we marked all the nests that had been initiated at the eastern and western ends of the island with the exception of the first 200. On the following two days we doweled all the nests. There was then a day of rain and rest followed by four days weeding paths through the nesting areas. The peak hatch began on June 22. In the next two days, in addition to banding chicks and trapping, we put chick houses out around the big gun emplacement and above the headquarters building.

We all welcomed those who arrived June 22 to help. These included: Rich DuFort, Stacy Hanks, Leo Hollein, E.J. Raynor, Diane Riska Taylor, Heather Satterlee, Hannah Tetreault and Veronica Varela. Everyone worked very hard until June 29 when the peak hatch was over for both species. This is the first year the hatching pattern has been so synchronized and matched what the Austin's described as a typical pattern for their colonies on Cape Cod in the mid 20th Century. By the middle of July many young were flying and by July 22 most were in the air.

In 2007 we had a smaller team for working with Common Terns than in other years. The people we did have, however, were excellent and we checked the ends of the island on alternate days rather than two teams doing both ends at the same time. For the first time in a number of years we had no rain during the peak hatch, which meant we could work every day; there were no "rest" days due to bad weather! Yes, people prayed for rain!

Common check marked about 8800 nests, trapped 3,557 adults, of which 746 were unbanded and banded 10,809 chicks. This year there was great excitement when Daniel McLean trapped a 27-year-old Common Tern!

I'm pleased to report that in 2007 numbers of nesting Roseate and Common terns increased a little over recent years, when we had a problem of raccoons on the island. We are hoping the numbers will continue to increase.

Throughout the season this year we had a number of predators. A Turkey Vulture took up residence in May and was still on the island in September when we left. In July a first year Great Blue Heron arrived for a long stay and at least two Northern Harriers visited often. One of the harriers made regular trips to Plum Island carrying food. An adult Great Black-backed Gull helped itself to chicks during dusk outflights from the colony in August and an enterprising young Black-backed picked up a number of chicks at the center of the island at the end of the season. In spite of the predation, a good number of young fledged and I think we will find the 2007 age class will be well represented in island nesters in the future.

Dick Young stayed through July 26 and Loretta Stillman through August 3. Three volunteers, Jena Laux Turner, Nicholas Laviola, and Lika Levy came out to help in July. Dale Dancis and Ned Barnard helped in August and Jill

Hamilton and Melissa McClure came for the Labor Day weekend. Alistair and Smidgie Macphail picked up groceries and mail on several weekends when no students were coming to the island. This was a great help.

After the peak hatch there were fewer young Common Terns hatching than in previous years and these hatched mainly on the concrete platforms, one of the two large gun emplacements or along the path, areas relatively free of vegetation. Fortunately we had enough people on the island in July and August to trap the birds on these late hatching nests.

At the end of the season the island became a staging area for Common and Roseate terns. Ned Barnard, Jill Hamilton and I read over 600 Roseate band combinations during August. We are not sure how many individuals are represented in this group, but should know shortly, after Jacqueline Craft, a colleague of Grace Cormons in Virginia, computerizes the data.

Captain Matt picked us up the Tuesday after Labor Day and brought us to the mainland. Jill drove what little gear we had to her family's home in Bedford. Then Gordon and Connie, Jill's parents, drove the gear into the Museum the following week. This was very nice of them and a great help to us.

Although we worked hard packing and cleaning up the headquarters building there were still some things that did not get done and I scheduled a day trip to the island to finish these. The weather prediction sounded as if October 16 might be possible. I stayed with the Macphails the night before and Smidgie got me to the dock by 7:00 am. The weather was fine and Cliff Bentsen, Bob Kane, Jim Sorensen and I went to Great Gull to finish

the last elements of closing. Jim emptied the water troughs and he and Cliff took down the antenna and the solar panels, while Bob started the tractor. Bob and Cliff went to the western end to bring in the Roseate blinds. I charged the drills so that Jim could use them to take the screws out of the blind sides. I took the canvas covers off the blinds and brought them and the stools to the path. Jim unscrewed all the sides and then went to the western end to help Bob and Cliff bring in blinds and traps. They then used the cart to take the generators and car battery to the south beach for loading the scow. Jim and Cliff took the sides off all the blinds and stored them under the blinds. They then picked up the tops and stools from the blinds and stored them in the north building. Bob moved the tractor to the tunnels, put it up on blocks and greased the moving parts. Bob, Jim and Cliff tipped the Roseate blinds at the eastern end over so they would not be blown over during the winter and I took the flaps out of the Ground Blind, the Lookout Blind and Habitat. Just before the boat arrived, Bob blocked the kitchen door from the inside. At the end of the season the door had come off its hinges and needs to be redone in the spring. Bob and Cliff also reinforced the banding room door and installed a hook and eye to fasten it on the outside. We stopped for a sandwich in the middle of the above jobs. Captain Matt arrived at 3:00 pm to pick us up.

At the dock in Waterford I said goodbye to Captain Matt, Cliff and Bob. We loaded the generators and battery into Jim's car for the trip to winter storage in his barn. Jim dropped me at the New London train station and I was on the train to New York within half an hour. It was a fine end to a very good season. Now for the new dock!

