

CONTEST: Project Puffin's 24th Birdathon Hits Maine Islands Next Week

By *Anna Sanders*

Created 05/24/2012 - 12:49pm



Atlantic puffins at Maine Coastal Island National Wildlife Refuge. (Photo: [USFWS](#) [1])

Avian authorities and bird beginners will all agree that puffins are among the cutest creatures around. But the bird's charisma is just one of the many reasons why Audubon's [Project Puffin](#) [2] is so successful: With hard work and enthusiasm, the project has helped restore and sustain puffin and other seabird populations in Maine for almost four decades. To do so, Project Puffin's small annual staff relies on the help and knowledge of volunteers and interns during the seabird breeding season. This summer, come rain or shine, 26 bright interns will hole up in tents and cabins on seven islands in Maine to conduct conservation work and research. But this work can't continue without your help.

Key to the success of the island internship program is the annual [Birdathon](#) [3], now in its 24th year. On May 31, along with volunteers and staff, Project Puffin's 26 interns will set out to tally as many puffin and bird species they can in 24 hours. Supporters can make single donations or pledge a dollar amount based on the number of species found by a specific team, either [online](#) [4] or by mailing [this form](#) [5]. Money raised will cover the costs of supporting summer interns on the islands next year.

“Our goal is about \$20,000,” says Steve Kress, Audubon’s vice president for bird conservation and the founder of Project Puffin. “It will pay for food for the interns, transportation down to islands, for tents, and for scientific equipment.”

Kress adds the Birdathon not only raises money for the program, but gets new interns acquainted with the island.

“We do it to get the interns on the island and to raise money to make the internships possible,” he says.

Beginning at midnight, participants will listen to migration calls and search for owls on the mainland. As dawn approaches, teams will head out to survey islands and coastal habitats. In past years, some 200 species and over 500 puffins were spotted.

“Everybody is trying to see as many species of birds as we can,” Kress says. “Over this wide range of habitats we see a huge variety of birds, all of which are breeding birds at that time.”

The Contest

As part of the Birdathon, you can also enter a contest to win one of two great puffin prizes. While making a donation, guess the number of species and puffins the teams will collectively tally. Correctly guess the number of species and you’ll win a limited edition, signed and numbered lithograph by Swedish artist Karl Mårtens, pictured right. If you correctly guess the number of puffins, you’ll win a Puffin Planter, signed and dated by artist Robert DuLong, pictured below.

To enter the contest without making a donation, simply download the pledge form [here](#) [5] and mail or fax your guesses to Project Puffin by May 31:

PROJECT PUFFIN
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX #265
ETNA, NY 13062-9901

FAX: 607-257-6231



Correctly guess the number of species tallied during the Birdathon and you’ll win a limited edition lithograph by Swedish artist Karl Mårtens.



Correctly guess the number of puffins tallied at the Birdathon and you'll win this Puffin Planter by Robert DuLong. (Photo: Susie Meadows)

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var gaJsHost = (("https:" == document.location.protocol) ? "https://ssl." : "http://www.");
document.write(unescape("%3Cscript src=" + gaJsHost + "google-analytics.com/ga.js'
type='text/javascript'%3E%3C/script%3E")); var pageTracker = _gat._getTracker("UA-
6149536-1"); pageTracker._trackPageview();
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Links:

- [1] <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsnortheast/4188080610/>
- [2] <http://projectpuffin.org/>
- [3] <http://projectpuffin.org/Birdathon.html>
- [4] https://secure3.convio.net/nasaud/site/Donation2?df_id=2140&2140.donation=form1&JServSessionIdr004=ehkjh1ojk2.app306a
- [5] <http://projectpuffin.org/pdfs/2012BirdathonInfo.pdf>