



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TOWN OF STONINGTON**

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**Puffin Pride & Passages: Explore Penobscot Bay's Wildlife Haven**

*Stonington and Seal Island are Your Destinations for Puffins & Pride June 18-22*

STONINGTON, ME, JUNE 5, 2025 –The Town of Stonington's Main Street Committee, comprised of more than 40 local, year-round businesses including the Isle au Haut Boat Services Company, is excited to present **Puffin Pride & Passages June 18-22**. Visitors for the special weekend are encouraged to reserve for and arrive the evening of **Wednesday, June 18** to fully experience the Town and this year's special, puffin-related events during the height of the bird's breeding season on nearby Seal Island, the state's largest nesting colony of Atlantic Puffins managed by the Audubon Seabird Institute. This year's celebration coincides with annual Pride festivities and the opening of the summer's first mainstage production at the Town's iconic Opera House.

The special four days in Stonington launches with an opening reception and special talk by world-class naturalist **Richard Harris Podolsky from 5-7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 18, "Sustaining Maine's Puffin: What Puffins Tell Us About the Gulf of Maine."** Podolsky is a certified senior ecologist and ornithologist based in Camden, ME. His background is in conservation biology of birds with a focus on threats caused by human impacts. He has contributed to the restoration of numerous seabird populations, including the Atlantic Puffin, for which he spent 15 years as senior field scientist for the

National Audubon Society Project Puffin. He was also the founding Science and Research Director of the Island Institute.

Podolsky will also be the naturalist on the first special guided puffin tour, now open for reservations, departing **Friday June 20 at 1 pm**. The weekend's second tour is scheduled for **Sunday, June 22, also at 1 pm**. Reservations may be made through the **Isle au Haut Boat Company** by calling 207-367-5193. Saturday will feature a special puffin-themed sea kayak eco-tour.

"All around me on one of last year's packed tours, as the puffins zinged happily back and forth above our heads, people were saying that Stonington is the best place to see puffins from, as well as the most interesting town from which to launch," said Linda Nelson, the Town's Economic and Community Development Director. "Seal Island not only has Maine's largest colony of puffins, it includes striking colonies of Great Cormorants and other pelagic treasures such as razorbills. This 4-day special event packs other noteworthy puffin & pride happenings around the tours."

Throughout the weekend visitors and residents will be able to drop by Island Approaches on Main Street for all things puffin – including a special Puffin Pride & Passages Selfie Station and commemorative T-shirts.

Puffin festivities continue on **Thursday June 19 from 3-5 pm** with a special workshop at Island Heritage Trust, "Learn to Paint the Iconic Atlantic Puffin in Watercolors" with Kristin Fuhrman-Simmons, a professional member of the Maine Craft Association. Registration is available at [www.islandheritagetrust.org](http://www.islandheritagetrust.org). The evening opens with **PuffTails**, a special cocktail and hors d'oeuvres event at Main Street's Cry Babies Restaurant from **4-6 pm** before featuring the opening of Opera House Arts' mainstage production of **Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream at 7 pm**. Tickets are available online at [www.operahousearts.org](http://www.operahousearts.org).

**Friday June 20** opens bright and early at 10 am with a unique scavenger hunt at the renowned Stonington's Farmers Market, one of the largest in the state. The hunt includes items for Juneteenth-themed recipe cards and is created and sponsored by the Stonington-based **Narrative Food Company**. First Puffin Tour at 1 pm.

**Saturday June 21** features a special Puffin Pride kayak Eco-trip with **Osprey's Echo Sea Kayak company from 3-5 pm**. Prior to that, visitors can also enjoy a casual **Puffins & Muffins at 10 am at 44 North Coffee's Stonington Cafe** in conversation

with Penobscot Bay Press birding columnist Pete Dunne. A family-perfect “Puffin Story Time & Craft” for ages 2 and up follows at **11 am at the Stonington Public Library**. Martin Jenkins and Jenni Desmond’s *Puffin* lets young readers “discover the intriguing world of this charming bird.” The day wraps up with a dinner and dance event to kickoff Island Pride at **Deer Isle Music Hall and BBQ from 7 - 10 p.m.**

**Sunday June 22** concludes with a special Puffin Pancake Breakfast on the waterfront at 27 Fathoms Restaurant and a second guided puffin tour to Seal Island at 1 p.m.

Puffins are rarely seen from the mainland. Maine ocean islands provide the only nesting sites for Atlantic puffins in the U.S. From Stonington, tours head to Seal Island, part of a downeast coastal habitat for more than 4,000 puffins each summer. June is known as the best month to view the small, photogenic marine birds whose coloring and beak give them a clownish appearance. Once the birds fledge from their islands, they disperse across the ocean and are seldom seen, even from boats. Maine is historically the southern edge of their breeding range.

**Puffin Pride & Passages** guided puffin tours showcase a variety of free and special family-friendly activities in Stonington in early summer – including but not limited to the breathtaking displays of lupine, wild roses, and other wild flowers blooming during this period. In addition, residents and visitors alike are urged to:

- **Wednesday June 18, 5-7 pm, FREE:** Opening talk and reception by noted ornithologist Richard Harris Podolsky at the Connectivity Hub in the Stonington Schoolhouse, 43 School Street. Free registration at <https://deerisle.coursestorm.com/course/puffin-passages-launch>.
- **Thursday, June 19, 3-5 pm:** “Learn to Paint the Iconic Atlantic Puffin in Watercolors” with Kristin Fuhrman-Simmons, a professional member of the Maine Craft Association. Registration at [www.islandheritagetrust.org](http://www.islandheritagetrust.org).
- **Thursday, June 19, 4-6 pm:** PuffTails - crazy frozen cocktails & hors d’oeuvres, Cry Babies Restaurant. 36 Main Street, Stonington.
- **Thursday, June 19, 7 pm:** opening night of Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at Opera House Arts. Tickets at [www.operahousearts.org](http://www.operahousearts.org).
- **Friday, June 20, 10 am, FREE:** Farmers Market Special Juneteenth Scavenger Hunt with Narrative Food. Info at [www.narrativefood.com](http://www.narrativefood.com)
- **Friday, June 20, 1 pm:** Isle au Haut Boat Company Puffin Tour with naturalist Richard Harris Podolsky. Reservations required by calling 207-367-5193.
- **Saturday, June 21, 10 - 11 am, FREE:** Puffins & Muffins with Penobscot Bay Press birding columnist Pete Dunne. Casual walk-in conversation.

- **Saturday, June 21, 11 am, FREE:** Puffin Story Time and Craft at the Stonington Public Library. Martin Jenkins and Jenni Desmond's *Puffin* + paint your own puffin. Ages 2+.
- **Saturday, June 21, 3-5 pm:** Special Eco-Tour with Osprey's Echo Sea Kayaking. Puffins Cousins: Meet the Guillemot. Puffin Snack boxes by Narrative Food will be available. Osprey's Echo works with a Leave No Trace guide. Reservations at [www.ospreysecho.com](http://www.ospreysecho.com).
- **Sunday, June 22, 11 am - 4 pm:** Puffins 'n Pancakes – special brunch at 27 Fathoms Waterfront Grille, 27 Main Street, Stonington.
- **Sunday, June 22, 1 pm:** Final Puffin Tour to Seal Island with naturalist. Reservations required by calling 207-367-5193.

**Puffin Pride & Passages: Exploring Penobscot Bay's Wildlife Haven** is coordinated and sponsored by the Town of Stonington and the following local businesses: 27 Fathoms Waterfront Grille, 44 North Coffee, Boyce's Motel, CryBabies Restaurant, Deer Isle Adult & Community Education, Greenhead Lobster, the Island Agency, Isle au Haut Boat Company, Maine Center for Coast Fisheries, and Opera House Arts, along with additional support from the Deer Isle-Stonington Chamber of Commerce, Island Approaches, and Narrative Food.

For more information on the Town of Stonington and its vibrant year-round business community and opportunities for visitors, as well as a one-sheet on its Economic Resiliency Strategy created with nationally-recognized Camoin Associates, go to <https://www.stoningtonmaine.org/gov/economic-development.php>.

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Photo: The iconic Atlantic Puffin. Photo by Amy Welch-Olson, Capshore Photography.