The trip’s starting point, the town of Jonesport is a typical lobster fishing hamlet on the Maine coast.

The Chief, our ride to Machias Seal Island, was run by Norton of Jonesport, sadly no longer in business.

Heading out on our adventure, we saw harbor seals sleeping on the rocky shore of Nipple Island.

Tree-covered Mark Island was the last sight of land as we motored out into the Gulf of Maine.
A Wilson’s Storm-petrel with its distinctive white rump was the first seabird to appear.

Farther out in the gulf, a Great Shearwater followed the Chief for a while but then sheared off to starboard. Back in 2009 the bird was still called a Greater Shearwater.

A Sooty Shearwater was spotted far off to starboard.

We encountered another life bird, a Northern Fulmar, which also followed our boat but veered off later.
Finally our main target bird came into view – an Atlantic Puffin on the wing.

Now we could see Machias Seal Island and its lighthouse with Alcids flying about the area.

One flyer was this Razorbill headed back to its nest on the island.
In two groups we boarded the skiff towed from Jonesport to ferry us from the Chief to the inclined ramp up to the island (below). Disembarking onto that ramp was a bit tricky.

Our official greeter on Machias Seal Island sized us up from its rock.

Typical blinds on the island with those on top who caused the ‘pitter-patter of little feet.’
The blind was a photographer’s perfect setting to get fantastic shots like this pair of puffins with a Razorbill.

A Razorbill revealed the orange inside of its mouth for the camera.

One puffin had emerged from its burrow soiled by the wet earth down there.

A pair of Common Murres posed conveniently to show the two morphs present – a bridled morph with its “white monocle” (on each eye) and the more normal plumage.
Nest building and feeding of young were evident by this banded puffin carrying grasses and the flapping Razorbill with a beak full of fish.

Landing in these tight quarters was difficult both for the approaching Razorbill and those about to get hit on the rock below.
Atlantic Puffins were not any more graceful in their landings as the Razorbills.

A mated pair of puffins sat in their underground nest. (You can just see the second head in the corner.) The nest is usually made in a crevice in the rocks like this one.

No, not preparing to take flight, but just exercising after being down in a cramped nest.
Other birds on the island were gulls – mostly Herring Gulls here with one Great Black-backed Gull just visible in the center back. Unfortunately, these two gull species prey on puffin nestlings, the reason they gathered on the island.

We had to avoid this Common Tern egg teetering on the edge of a step as we were leaving.

A soggy Savannah Sparrow rested on a stake near the path.
To return to the mainland, our boat had to pick its way through a horde of Alcids – just puffins and Razorbills here.

Looking back at the island, one could see Alcids in every nook and cranny.

This was our last view of Machias Seal Island as we sped back to Jonesport after a very memorable visit.