

Massachusetts Environmental Police respond to injured Northern Gannet

“Officers on patrol in Stellwagen Bank encountered a Northern Gannet with a fishing lure through its foot and body.

Officers were able to safely capture the bird and remove the hooks. The bird was found to otherwise be in good health and was released after a brief observation period.”



Massachusetts Environmental Police photo.
More about the fascinating bird:

“Northern gannets have streamlined bodies adapted for plunging at high speed, including powerful neck muscles, and a spongy bone plate at the base of the bill. The nostrils are inside the bill and can be closed to prevent water entry; the eyes are protected by strong nictitating membranes. There are subcutaneous air sacs in the lower body and along the sides. Other air sacs are located between the sternum and the pectoral muscles and between the ribs and the intercostal muscles. These sacs are connected to the lungs and are filled with air when the bird breathes in. The air can be returned to the lungs by muscle contractions.

The feathers are waterproof, which allows the birds to spend long periods in water. A water-impermeable secretion produced by a sebaceous gland covers the feathers and the birds spread it across their body using their beak or head. Individuals have a subcutaneous fat layer, dense down feathers and tightly overlapping feathers that help them withstand low temperatures. A reduced blood flow in the webbing on their feet outside of the breeding season also helps to maintain body temperature when the birds swim.” -Wikipedia.