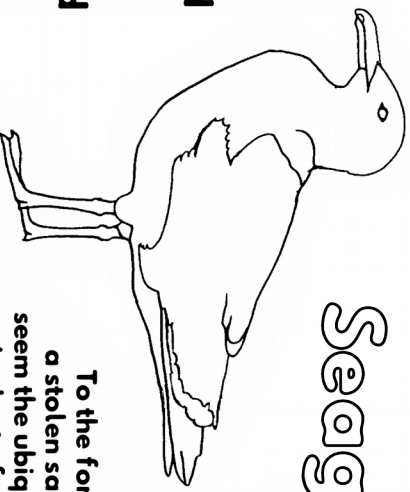


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Seagull Steals Last Sandwich of Summer!

One day two little girls and their mother went down to the beach. In their picnic basket were three sandwiches and some juice. They found a nice space on the beach and started to unpack. As they ate, the three looked at boats on the water and wondered where they were going: they did not notice a hungry seagull swooping around. Lucy put down her sandwich to take a sip of juice, and the gull dove in and snatched it. By the time she leaped up, it was high above and flying away. There was not a hope of catching it; besides, you can't eat a sandwich that has been in a gull's beak. They bathed in the warm water and dug in the sand. As they walked from the beach, they picked and nibbled on round red rose hips. They filled their buckets, and headed home to make rose hip jelly.



Seagull

The gulls in this area are Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*).

To the former owner of a stolen sandwich, they seem the ubiquitous, aerial equivalent of rats, but they

actually have a mixed history on the Atlantic Coast. The gulls almost disappeared here in the 1880s when they were hunted for feathers and eggs. Their population increased again in the first half of the 1900s, but their numbers have been declining steadily again since 1966—perhaps due to overfishing and a reduction in waste thrown overboard by fishing boats. While garbage dumps are food sources for the gulls, chicks raised on human refuse have lower survival rates. Still, when that posse of gulls rolls up at the beach, we are reminded that dinosaurs are basically still alive, and just waiting to regain the title of dominant vertebrate life form.

Beach rose

The beach roses (*Rosa rugosa*) that grow on the coast in New England are actually native to eastern Asia. After having been introduced the US and Europe as an ornament and for their fruit, they have spread and thrived in many coastal areas. Beach roses have escaped cultivation and grown in the wild (naturalized) along the New England coast since at least 1911. They form dense thickets on sand dunes, developing new plants both by seed dispersal and from the roots. In some cases (as in some US states and on the beaches of Northern Europe) these thickets crowd out other native plants, and the species has been designated invasive. In RI, some consider beach roses to be beneficial for stabilizing beaches, and providing cover for birds' nests and other small animals. Others consider them noxious weeds, but they are not formally considered invasive by the state. The red round fruit that these bushes produce are edible. If you pick one to try, begin by nibbling the outside. Taking a big bite will leave you with a mouthful of seeds! Rose hips are high in vitamin c and can be eaten raw, or made into jelly or tea. Try de-seeding a handful, chopping them up and baking them into an apple pie.

