



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge

*Final Environmental Impact Statement for  
the Comprehensive Conservation Plan*

*April 2005*



**Cover Photos:** Cross Island, *USFWS*  
Harbor seal, *USFWS*  
Atlantic puffin, *USFWS*  
Roseate tern, *Gil Lopez-Espina*



*This goose, designed by J.N.  
“Ding” Darling, has become a  
symbol of the National Wildlife  
Refuge System.*

The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million acre National Wildlife Refuge system comprised of more than 545 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. It also operates 65 national fish hatcheries and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service’s best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge

*(formerly Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge Complex)*

*Final Environmental Impact Statement for the  
Comprehensive Conservation Plan*

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
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Federal Relay Service  
for the deaf or hard of hearing  
1800/877 8339

April 2005



# Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge

## Final Environmental Impact Statement

### April 2005

#### Abstract

**Type of action:** Administrative  
**Lead agency:** U.S. Department of the Interior,  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
**Responsible official:** Marvin Moriarty, Regional Director, Region 5  
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The Final Environmental Impact Statement for Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge fully compares four management alternatives. Its eleven appendices provide additional information supporting our analysis. A brief overview of each alternative follows.

#### Alternative A Current Management

**Refuge expansion of 1,034 acres and continued current management.** This is the “no action” alternative required by regulations under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Although it would expand the Petit Manan Refuge by 1,034 acres beyond the current approved boundary, selecting this alternative would otherwise maintain the status quo in refuge management actions over the next 15 years. Thus, it provides a baseline for comparing or contrasting the three “action” alternatives.

#### Alternative B Preferred Alternative

**Refuge expansion of 2,459 acres and notably expanded management and recreation.** Selecting this alternative would expand the Petit Manan Refuge by 2,306 acres beyond the current approved boundary on 87 nationally significant seabird, wading bird, or bald eagle coastal nesting islands and 153 acres of wetlands on the mainland. It would add six new seabird restoration projects to our present six, and intensify the focus of our biological programs on birds of high conservation priority in the Gulf of Maine. It would increase opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, especially in our environmental education and interpretation programs, build new trails on the Gouldsboro Bay, Sawyers Marsh, and Corea Heath divisions, and open the Petit Manan Point Division for deer hunting. And, it would recommend that 13 Refuge islands in 8 wilderness study areas be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Refuge staffing and budgets would increase commensurately. We recommend this alternative for approval.

#### Alternative C

**Refuge expansion of 6,463 acres and greatly expanded management and recreation.** Selecting this alternative would expand the Petit Manan Refuge by 6,463 acres beyond the current approved boundary, adding 6,310 acres on all or parts of 151 seabird or bald eagle nesting islands and 153 acres of wetlands on the mainland. Its wilderness proposal mirrors the proposal in alternative B. It would create 12 new seabird restoration projects, and allow trapping under refuge regulations on three mainland divisions and Bois Bubert and Cross islands. New trails would be developed on refuge mainland divisions, the same as alternative B. This alternative would also require the greatest budget and staffing increases.

#### Alternative D

**No refuge expansion beyond the current approved boundary and reduced management with minimal human intrusion.** This alternative adopts a custodial or low intervention approach to management. Selecting it would neither expand a refuge nor recommend wilderness designation. It would restore only minimal seabird habitat, focus our public use, environmental education and interpretation on offsite programs, and close all refuge islands to public access. Except for our emergency intervention to avert or mitigate catastrophic events, it would leave refuge habitats and species to the effects of environmental processes.

# Table of Contents

	Page
<b>Chapter 1 Purpose and Need for Action</b>	
Introduction .....	1-2
Purpose and Need for Action .....	1-3
Project Area .....	1-4
Service Policies, Mandates, and National and Regional Conservation Plans Guiding the Project .....	1-6
Refuge Purposes and Land Acquisition Authority .....	1-17
Existing Refuge Operational Plans (“Step-down” plans) .....	1-21
Compatibility Determinations .....	1-21
Refuge Vision Statement .....	1-22
Refuge Goals .....	1-22
The Comprehensive Conservation Planning Process .....	1-23
Issues, Concerns and Opportunities .....	1-27
Issues Outside the Scope of this EIS .....	1-40
Plan Amendment and Revision .....	1-45
<b>Chapter 2 Alternatives, Including the Service’s Preferred Alternative</b>	
Introduction .....	2-2
Formulating Alternatives .....	2-2
Actions Common to All Alternatives .....	2-4
Alternatives or Actions Considered but not Fully Developed .....	2-11
Descriptions of Individual Alternatives Analyzed in Detail .....	2-12
Alternative A: Current Management .....	2-12
Alternative B: The Service’s Preferred Alternative .....	2-43
Alternative C .....	2-114
Alternative D .....	2-131
<b>Chapter 3 Description of the Affected Environment</b>	
Part One: The Refuge Landscape .....	3-2
Landscape-level Features .....	3-2
Socio-economic Characteristics of Coastal Maine .....	3-9
Refuge Administration .....	3-20
Wilderness Management .....	3-30
Cultural and Historic Resources .....	3-30
Part Two: Refuge Island Resources .....	3-34
Islands Overview .....	3-34
Threatened and Endangered Species (Federal-listed) .....	3-34
Seabirds .....	3-36
Waterfowl .....	3-40
Other Resident Wildlife .....	3-41
Island Vegetation .....	3-42
Individual Island Descriptions .....	3-42
Other Islands Affiliated with the Refuge .....	3-76
Part Three: Refuge Mainland Resources .....	3-103
Petit Manan Point Division .....	3-103
Gouldsboro Bay Division .....	3-109
Sawyers Marsh Division .....	3-113
Corea Heath Division (pending transfer from the U.S. Navy) .....	3-117

	Page
<b>Chapter 4 Environmental Consequences</b>	
Introduction .....	4-2
Effects on Water Quality and Soils .....	4-4
Effects on Air Quality .....	4-13
Effects on the Local and Regional Economy .....	4-19
Effects on Public Access, Educational and Recreational Opportunities .....	4-32
Effects on Cultural Resources .....	4-44
Effects on Vegetation and Habitats .....	4-46
Effects on Threatened and Endangered Species .....	4-62
Effects on Seabirds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl .....	4-72
Effects on Other Native Wildlife of Concern .....	4-83
Effects of Wilderness Recommendations .....	4-93
Environmental Justice .....	4-99
Cumulative Impacts .....	4-101
Relationship Between Short-term Uses and Long-term Productivity .....	4-105
Unavoidable Adverse Effects .....	4-106
Potential Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources .....	4-107
<b>Chapter 5 Consultation and Coordination with Others</b>	
1995 – 1998 Environmental Impact Statement for Protecting Maine Coastal Nesting Islands and Managing Petit Manan Refuge .....	5-2
1999 – 2004 Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Petit Manan Refuge Complex .....	5-4
<b>Chapter 6 List of Preparers</b>	
Core Planning Team .....	6-2
Assisting in Land Protection Strategies .....	6-3
Other Service Personnel Contributing to Plan .....	6-4
Others Who Contributed to Plan .....	6-4
<b>Glossary and Literature Cited</b>	
Glossary of Terms and Acronyms .....	Glossary-1
Literature Cited .....	Literature-1
<b>Appendices (under separate cover)</b>	
Appendix A – Land Protection Plan .....	A-1
Appendix B – Species and Habitats of Conservation Concern .....	B-1
Appendix C – Compatibility Determinations .....	C-1
Appendix D – Wilderness Inventory and Study .....	D-1
Appendix E – Refuge Operations Needs System (RONS) and Management Maintenance System (MMS) .....	E-1
Appendix F – Staffing Charts .....	F-1
Appendix G – Property Tax Impact Analysis .....	G-1
Appendix H – Seabird Viewing Study Results .....	H-1
Appendix I – Summary of Public Comments and Service Response ...	I-1
Appendix J – Consultation under the Endangered Species Act .....	J-1
Appendix K – Consultation with Maine Historic Preservation Commission .....	K-1

## List of Tables

	Page
1-1	History of acquisition at Petit Manan Refuge ..... 1-20
1-2	History of acquisition at Cross Island Refuge ..... 1-20
2-1	Comparison of actions by alternative as they relate to issues ..... 2-144
2-2	All 151 Nationally significant islands which are not protected long-term and are proposed for Service acquisition in Alternatives A, B, and/or C ..... 2-158
2-3	Land acquisition summary by alternative ..... 2-166
3-1	Populations of eight coastal Maine counties ..... 3-10
3-2	Aquaculture operations in Maine under lease as of June 2004 ..... 3-11
3-3	Distribution of coastal excursion companies ..... 3-14
3-4	Refuge budgets from 1998 to 2004 ..... 3-23
3-5	Refuge revenue sharing payments in fiscal year 2002 ..... 3-23
3-6	Rare plants documented on Refuge Islands ..... 3-43
3-7 through 3-37	Nesting seabird species, number of pairs, (and year) observed on:
3-7	Smuttynose Island ..... 3-45
3-8	Upper Flag Island ..... 3-46
3-9	Ram Island ..... 3-46
3-10	Pond Island ..... 3-47
3-11	Lower Mark Island ..... 3-48
3-12	Outer Heron Island ..... 3-49
3-13	Outer White Island ..... 3-49
3-14	Inner White Island ..... 3-50
3-15	Little Thrumcap Island ..... 3-51
3-16	Crane Island ..... 3-51
3-17	Franklin Island ..... 3-52
3-18	Metinic Island ..... 3-53
3-19	Two Bush Island ..... 3-54
3-20	Mantinicus Rock ..... 3-55
3-21	Seal Island ..... 3-57
3-22	Roberts Island ..... 3-58
3-23	Little Roberts Island ..... 3-58
3-24	Bar Island ..... 3-59
3-25	Eastern and Western Barge Islands ..... 3-60
3-26	Ship Island ..... 3-61
3-27	Trumpet Island ..... 3-62
3-28	John's Island ..... 3-63
3-29	Egg Rock Island ..... 3-64
3-30	Petit Manan Island ..... 3-66
3-31	Nash Island ..... 3-68
3-32	Inner Sand Island ..... 3-69
3-33	Eastern Brothers Island ..... 3-71
3-34	Libby Island ..... 3-72
3-35	Old Man Island ..... 3-73
3-36	Outer Double Head Shot Island ..... 3-74
3-37	Machias Seal Island ..... 3-77



	Page
3-38	Petit Manan Point Division cover types by acres ..... 3-104
3-39	Gouldsboro Bay Division cover types by acres ..... 3-109
3-40	Sawyers Marsh Division cover types by acres ..... 3-114
3-41	Corea Health Division cover types by acres ..... 3-118
3-42	Summary of cover types by location on the Refuge ..... 3-121
4-1	Percent of minority populations in four coastal counties in Maine ..... 4-100
4-2	Percent of families and individual residents living below the poverty level in four coastal counties in Maine ..... 4-100
4-3	Summary of the effects of management alternatives on Refuge resources ..... 4-108

## List of Figures

1-1	Steps in the comprehensive conservation planning process and their relationship to National Environmental Policy Act compliance ..... 1-25
-----	--

## List of Maps

1-1	Gulf of Maine Watershed ..... 1-5
1-2	Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge ..... 1-46
1-3	Kittery ..... 1-47
1-4	Saco Bay ..... 1-48
1-5	Casco Bay ..... 1-49
1-6	Muscongus Bay ..... 1-50
1-7	Outer Penobscot Bay ..... 1-51
1-8	Inner Penobscot Bay ..... 1-52
1-9	Jericho Bay ..... 1-53
1-10	Frenchmans Bay ..... 1-54
1-11	Petit Manan ..... 1-55
1-12	Cobscook Bay ..... 1-56
2-1	Corea Health Division Public Use - Alternative A ..... 2-39
2-2	Gouldsboro Bay Division Public Use - Alternative A ..... 2-40
2-3	Petit Manan Point Division Public Use - Alternative A ..... 2-41
2-4	Sawyers Marsh Division - Alternative A ..... 2-42
2-5	Corea Health Division Public Use - Alternative B ..... 2-110
2-6	Gouldsboro Bay Division Public Use - Alternative B ..... 2-111
2-7	Petit Manan Point Division Public Use - Alternative B ..... 2-112
2-8	Sawyers Marsh Division - Alternative B ..... 2-113
2-9	Corea Health Division Public Use - Alternative C ..... 2-127
2-10	Gouldsboro Bay Division Public Use - Alternative C ..... 2-128
2-11	Petit Manan Point Division Public Use - Alternative C ..... 2-129
2-12	Sawyers Marsh Division Public Use - Alternative C ..... 2-130
2-13	Corea Health Division Public Use - Alternative D ..... 2-140

	Page
2-14	Gouldsboro Bay Division Public Use - Alternative D ..... 2-141
2-15	Petit Manan Point Division Public Use - Alternative D ..... 2-142
2-16	Sawyers Marsh Division Public Use - Alternative D ..... 2-143
3-1	Smuttynose and Malaga Islands ..... 3-78
3-2	Upper Flag Island ..... 3-79
3-3	Ram Island ..... 3-80
3-4	Pond Island National Wildlife Refuge ..... 3-81
3-5	Lower Mark Island ..... 3-82
3-6	Outer Heron, Inner White and Outer White Islands ..... 3-83
3-7	Little Thrumcap Island ..... 3-84
3-8	Franklin Island National Wildlife Refuge and Crane Island ..... 3-85
3-9	Metinic Island ..... 3-86
3-10	Two Bush Island ..... 3-87
3-11	Matinicus Rock ..... 3-88
3-12	Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge ..... 3-89
3-13	Roberts and Little Roberts Islands ..... 3-90
3-14	Little Marshall Island ..... 3-91
3-15	Johns Island ..... 3-92
3-16	Bar, Ship and Trumpet Islands, East and West Barges ..... 3-93
3-17	Egg Rock ..... 3-94
3-18	Petit Manan Island ..... 3-95
3-19	Sally and Abbott Islands ..... 3-96
3-20	Bois Bubert Island ..... 3-97
3-21	Nash and Inner Sand Islands ..... 3-98
3-22	Halifax, Schoppee and Eastern Brother Islands ..... 3-99
3-23	Libby Island ..... 3-100
3-24	Cross Island National Wildlife Refuge ..... 3-101
3-25	Machias Seal Island ..... 3-102
3-26	Petit Manan Point Division and Bois Bubert Island ..... 3-107
3-27	Petit Manan Point Division and Bois Bubert Island Cover Types ..... 3-108
3-28	Gouldsboro Bay Division ..... 3-111
3-29	Gouldsboro Bay Division cover types ..... 3-112
3-30	Sawyers Marsh Division ..... 3-115
3-31	Sawyers Marsh Division cover types ..... 3-116
3-32	Corea Health Division ..... 3-119
3-33	Corea Health Division cover types ..... 3-120