

Gulf of Maine Coastal Program

Building partnerships to identify, protect and restore nationally important fish and wildlife habitat in the Gulf of Maine watershed



For further information, please contact:

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What we've accomplished with partners...

Identifying habitat

We create and share biological databases and GIS maps with partners to help catalyze and complete habitat protection and restoration projects. Our major projects have included analysis and mapping of:

- Important habitat for 91 species -- endangered, migratory birds and searun fish of concern in U.S portion of the Gulf of Maine watershed,
 - Nationally significant nesting seabird islands in coastal Maine,
 - Atlantic salmon spawning and rearing habitat in many Maine rivers (including all of the federally listed rivers),
 - Current and historic range of all species of diadromous fish in Maine.
- Some of this mapped habitat data has been integrated into *Beginning with Habitat*, a statewide partnership to help towns and land trusts protect habitat.
- Barriers to fish passage (culverts, dams) including inventories in selected rivers.

Protecting habitat

We have worked with partners at 372 sites to permanently protect 1.69 million acres of high value fish and wildlife habitat through fee and easement acquisition. Sites include:

- 60 seabird or eagle nesting islands,
- 226 coastal wetlands and associated upland buffers,
- 22 uplands,
- 69 areas adjacent to wild Atlantic salmon rivers, and
- Four landscape-scale Northern Forest projects that prevent residential development, protect freshwater wetland and forested habitat for fish and wildlife, and ensure sustainable forestry.

We help private landowners, land trusts, towns, and state and federal agencies by identifying important habitat and by providing technical, biological, mapping, and funding support to help catalyze and coordinate habitat protection projects. Some of the matching federal funding programs that we successfully use include North American Wetland Conservation Grants, National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grants, Recovery Land Acquisition Grants, Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grants.

Restoring habitat

We have worked with partners at 183 sites to restore more than 23,800 acres for migratory birds, diadromous fish and endangered species. Sites include:

- 81 coastal wetlands,
- 82 river restoration sites,
- 12 seabird nesting islands.

We assist watershed associations and partners with other non-government conservation partners, and state and federal agencies by conducting inventories and assessments to identify high priority sites, providing technical design for restoration projects and coordinating, planning and implementing on-the-ground restoration work, and project monitoring. Some of the matching federal funds we use include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program leveraged with funds from other federal agencies, including Natural Resources Conservation Service and NOAA Fisheries, state and other sources.

Leveraging funds

- \$48.1 million in federal funds linked directly to USFWS sources
- \$144.6 million in non-federal funds

The Gulf of Maine watershed provides vital habitat that supports people, along with "trust resources" of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Our trust resources include federally threatened and endangered species and other animals that regularly cross state and international boundaries -- such as migratory birds and diadromous (searun) fish.

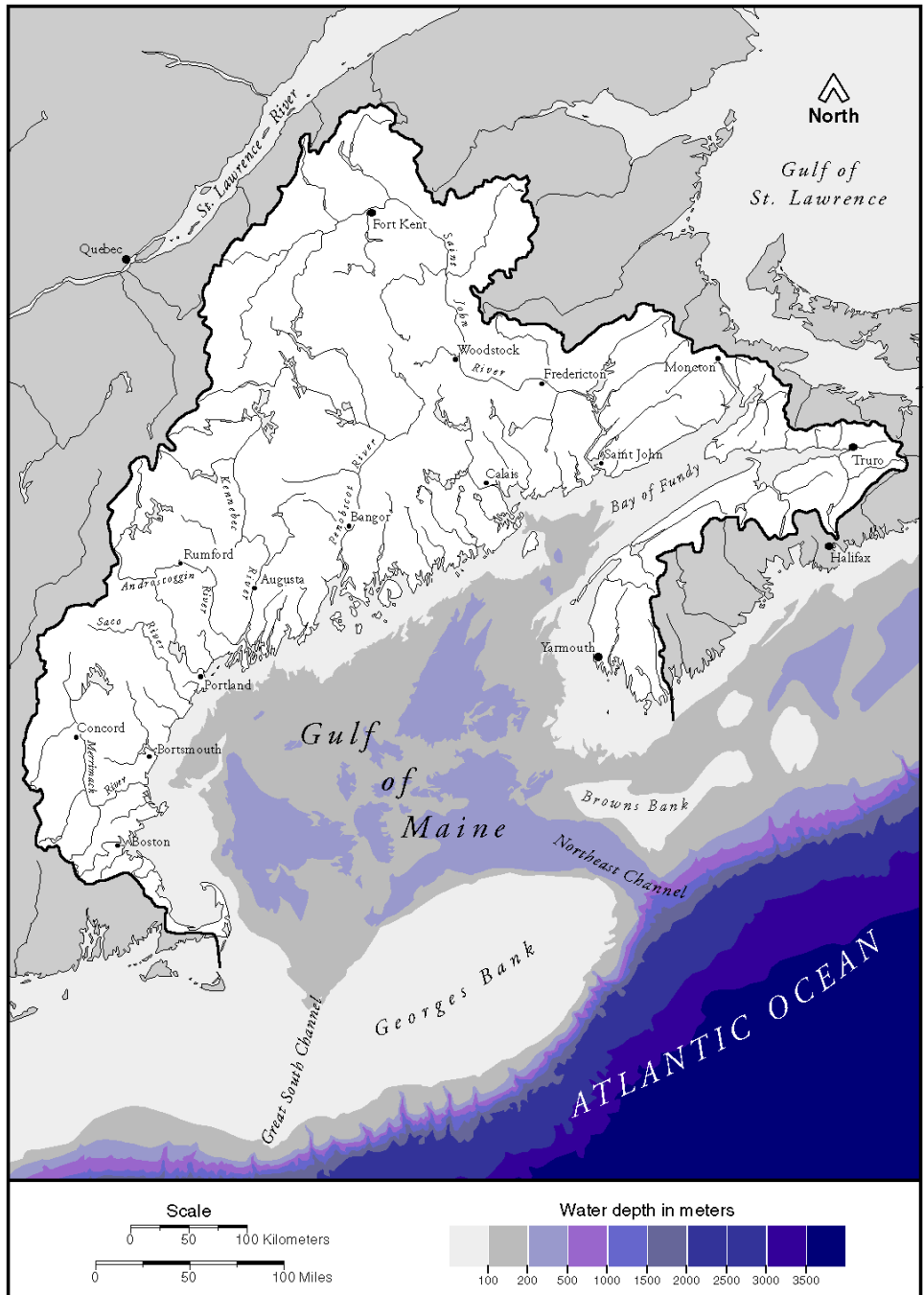
Estuaries, where fresh and salt water mingle, provide home for a broad array of commercially, recreationally and ecologically important fish and wildlife. Coastal wetlands also purify water and help provide a defense against rising sea levels. Mudflats support huge concentrations of worms, mollusks and crustaceans, providing a bounty of food for people and waterbirds. Sand beaches support rare birds -- the least tern and the piping plover, and nearshore subtidal habitats provide home for scallops, flounder, lobster, and waterbirds. Likewise, coastal islands provide essential habitat for seals and nesting seabirds and eagles.

Healthy rivers and their forested surroundings provide wildlife-rich habitat for eagles and hawks, waterbirds and countless other breeding and migratory birds. Rivers also provide migratory routes for once-bountiful searun fish, including Atlantic salmon, river herring, shad, American eel, striped bass, sea lamprey and six other native diadromous species.

Cold oxygen-laden waters subject to constant movement, mixing and upwelling create a nutrient-laden Gulf of Maine marine environment -- historically, one of the world's most productive continental shelf communities. Many who live on the shores of the Gulf of Maine appreciate its biological wealth and have nourished themselves from its bounty.

Coastal watersheds like the Gulf of Maine provide concentrated habitat for endangered species, waterbirds, and diadromous fish -- and it's in coastal watersheds that increasing human population and development pressures continue to intensify. Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, wetland and associated upland loss, overharvesting, oil spills, pollution and other cumulative effects of development threaten the natural resource values of the Gulf of Maine watershed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Gulf of Maine Coastal Program was established to use nonregulatory, voluntary tools to work with conservation partners to identify, protect and restore high value habitat for fish, wildlife -- and us.

Gulf of Maine Watershed



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) protects and restores fish and wildlife resources and their habitats. Nationwide, the Service manages over 500 National Wildlife Refuges dedicated to protecting fish and wildlife. The Service also operates National Fish Hatcheries to raise and stock native fish. Through its Ecological Services program, the Service safeguards endangered species, resolves fish and wildlife issues related to hydropower projects, curbs toxic contamination and restores and protects valuable fish and wildlife habitat on public and private lands through partnerships. The Service also investigates cases and enforces federal wildlife laws. Through its Federal Aid program, the Service directs millions of dollars annually to state fish and wildlife agencies for their use in protecting, managing and restoring habitat and providing conservation education.