



# Friends of Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge

Wild Islands for Wildlife

## We're Making a Movie

Filming started on the documentary, *Maine's Wild Islands* last January. This film highlights Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge System, a string of pearls stretching along the whole coast from New Hampshire to Canada. The refuge has been successfully managing and restoring seabird colonies in Maine for 33 years. These islands directly benefit all of us: business people, birders, fishermen, hunters... anyone who loves the wildness of Maine. Producer Steve Thomas, Director, David Berez and Associate Producer and first Refuge Manager, Tom Goettel are currently raising funds for filming, editing and social media outreach. Visit [www.maineswildislands.com](http://www.maineswildislands.com) for more information.



Above: Filming on Seal Island ~ Photo by David Wright © and Right: Newly revised maps of nesting seabird islands are for sale.



## Our Team Welcomes You

If you come to the Visitor Center in Rockland, whether to attend a program, volunteer your time or bring some visitors to share this wonderful resource, you will most likely be greeted by one of our team members.

*Carol Adams* - Nature Store Manager - Carol volunteers her time to provide a diverse inventory for the store, plus oversee the sales.

*Carney Doucette* - Outreach Coordinator - The FOMCI Board contracts Carney's services to coordinate programs and the art gallery.

*Joe Patterson* - Development Coordinator - The FOMCI Board has hired Joe to coordinate the raising of funds, so that we can continue to support the wildlife refuge.

*Sandy Lathem* - Volunteer Coordinator - Sandy volunteers her time to orient new volunteers the needs of the Visitor Center.

With our team and with your help, we are able to do even more to help the wildlife refuge fulfill their mission!





First National Bank sponsored this Whale Ecology hands-on program.



This large screen projection unit allows us to offer programs to bigger crowds.



Artist Susan Beebe inspired youth to design duck stamps. This youth received a top award for her age category.

## Visitor Center Continues to Grow

The Friends' Board of Directors ensure that the Refuge has support needed for its Rockland Visitor Center. This year, we continued to offer a wide diversity of educational events about our natural world, and helped procure some items to enhance the exhibits and programs.

## Programs

We offered 22 programs for all ages, including: the Arctic and polar bears; ocean trash; exploring our marine "backyard;" microplastics in seafood; bluebirds; basic bird identification; bees; native sea-run fishes; seabirds 101 and whale ecology. Our artists also offered hands-on workshops, including designing a duck stamp and sketching birds. People are generous to donate their time and expertise. And we also have had businesses sponsor programs. This year we reached 463 people.

## Art Gallery

Our Art Gallery continues to attract conservation-minded artists who illustrate the wonders of this world through a variety of media. We participated in 8 art walks, which brought in an additional 300 people to the Visitor Center. Some artists also highlighted their art by offering programs.



Artist Karen Talbot educates people about Maine's Native Sea Run Fishes through her art exhibition and talk.

## The FOMCI Nature Store

Our FOMCI Nature Store carries a diverse selection of items for nature lovers of all ages. Our items for children include nature guides, activity books, nature stories, birdhouse and feeder kits, stuffed animals, puzzles, games, coloring books and T-shirts. Adults can select from a variety of field guides and nature books, Northeast nature reference folding guides, puzzles, bags, T-shirts, wind bells, visors, hats, and nature cards from local artists.

This year we are excited to showcase one of FOMCI's signature items - the "Seabird Nesting Islands of Maine" map and two of our newest items - our new Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge T-shirt for men, women and children and a variety of items of American modernist wildlife artist Charley Harper. Our map was updated this year and depicts the significant seabird nesting islands and other permanently protected islands, National Wildlife Refuge boundaries, State Conservation Lands and Acadia National Park. The new blue T-shirt sports a puffin, tern and razorbill in flight. The Charley Harper items include puzzles and coloring books for children and adults, Holiday Cards, games and stickers. All items are very popular with our Nature Store shoppers.

Can't visit us in person? We offer maps for sale through our website, and we will be adding our T-shirts at some point this winter.



## Fundraising has never been so FUN!

Many friends enjoyed our **Annual Seabird Cruise**, despite the fog! An auction was held during the cruise, and everyone enjoyed appetizers and mingling with refuge staff and board members.

We decided to try a juried art show this summer and held our first **Maine Coastal Wildlife Show** for all ages. We had 18 exhibitors, including 2 students with 36 pieces in a variety of mediums. We raised funds through entry fees and sales. Start working on your art projects for next year's juried art show with selections being made on Saturday, July 28, 2018, and then shown in our gallery during August.

Meanwhile, FOMCI has partnered with Blue Planet Expeditions, to offer an **expedition trip** to Norway's High Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, in 2019. We have a number of people already signed up. You don't have to live in Maine to participate. Interested? Contact us. This is a trip of your lifetime!



Seabird Cruise with Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company



Expedition ship in Svalbard

## Volunteers

Volunteers provide essential services to the Maine Coastal Islands NWR. This past year, FOMCI expanded its public outreach and educational programs thanks to the help and good will of its volunteers. Over the past year, 39 people contributed 424 hours of time in support of the Visitor Center. Volunteers worked in the Nature Store; assisted at programs, including greeting the public and providing refreshments; and cleaned the building and grounds.

This year, Carol Adams updated FOMCI's Volunteer Services Guide and prepared a variety of materials to support new volunteers. Currently, FOMCI relies on a handful of people who undertake the majority of the volunteer effort. We look forward to recruiting additional volunteers in the year ahead, so that we can maintain and grow services at the Visitor Center.



Refuge Manager, Brian Benedict with a youth at our Family Seabird Island Adventure at Visitor Center.

## Other Projects

FOMCI continued to help the refuge with acquiring and transferring property to US Fish & Wildlife Service as a means for expanding the refuge. This year we successfully transferred the Snapp property to USFWS. We also are in the process of securing a second down-east property. Thank you to these generous conservation-minded landowners.



The Northern Saw-whet Owl banding station is in its 4th year. FOMCI provided the banding crew housing at the Wehr property. Over 168 owls have been banded this year.

## Thank you from Refuge Manager

FOMCI plays a vital role in the success of the refuge. Programs and a rotating art exhibit help us connect with the community. They raise funds to help with land acquisition, coastal cleanup that removed 3.6 tons of debris from refuge shores, and upgrades to intern housing. With a forecast of declining funds into the future, the role our Friends' group plays will be critical to meeting the mission of the refuge. Thank you for all you do!

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**Annual Highlights 2017**



## 2017 Board of Directors

President: *Charles Walsh*, Thomaston

Vice Pres.: *Meriwether Gill*, Bremen

Treasurer: *Tom Goettel*, So. Thomaston

Secretary: *Dick Tomeo*, So. Thomaston

Other members: *Kevin Adams*, Round Pond; *Pam Bryer*, Rockland; *Don Johnson*, Rockland; *Penney Read*, Tenants Harbor